

Christian Outreach Fellowship Ministry Impact Report Spring 2012

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"For He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you or forsake you'" (Hebrews 13:5). We cannot stop expressing our gratitude to you for your continuous prayer and support which has enabled us to carry on fruitful work over the years and especially in 2011.

In spite of financial challenges, the Lord provided resources for us to successfully organise the centenary celebrations of William Ofori Atta, the first National Director of COF who ministered in deprived and un-churched areas. He was one of the famous 'Big Six' who fought for the independence of Ghana from colonial rule and was Ghana's Foreign Minister in the early 1970's. But for us at COF, we thought it was worth celebrating 'Pa Willie's' legacy of humility, honesty and integrity in public life—principles which he stood for and that characterized his life.

It is not an irony that even though the Lord owns the universe with its unfathomable resources, we still struggle to find resources to carry out His mission in this world? There has been no year of 'smooth sailing' in regard to the financing of our ministry; however, we never give up because we know the Lord is more interested in building our character to reflect His glory. Each year we have witnessed His faithfulness through you. Thank you for your prayers and faithfulness in financial stewardship to support our work. In this report, I am pleased to share with you some of the things we were able to accomplish in 2011.

CHURCH PLANTING We thank the Lord for the men and women who are planting churches in communities that have never heard the Gospel. To the glory of God, in 2011 our church planters were able to plant 34 new churches in Ghana's Northern, Upper East and Upper West region.

Caleb, our church planter based in Gusheigu District, recently shared about the conversion of Chamba, a 65-year-old man. Very ill, Chamba continually sought medical and spiritual healing but never received any relief. Caleb visited Chamba's village one day, and Chamba asked him to pray for him. By God's grace, Chamba was healed and decided to follow Jesus. He removed his fetish shrines and amulets from his home. Chamba and his wife are now serving the Lord with joy.



With gifts for bulls and ploughs—including through WorldShare's Gift of Hope—church planters are able to provide for their families while serving in ministry.

ANIMAL HUSBANDRY To ensure the sustainability of our ministry, we resource our workers with bulls and ploughs so that they can contribute to the economic wellbeing of their families. This initiative has been very successful, and the results of our ministry attest to this. Workers are now able to feed their families while also working in ministry.

In 2011, we were able to recruit seven new missionary couples and resource them with a pair of bulls and a plough each.

Our total number of workers now stands at 107. New workers include Andrew in the Upper West Region ministering among the

Dagaaba. Kofi, Paul and Joshua are ministering among the Kusasi people. In the Northern Region, Addae, Mustapha and Joseph are serving the Dagomba people.

Amos, a beneficiary in 2010, said: "In 2011, I was able to cultivate two acres of land and got eight bags of maize and two bags of sorghum. I thank God and the donors who have made it possible for my family to have enough to eat."

TRAINING Owing to financial constraints we were unable to organize other training programmes apart from one held in January 2011. Our hope is to train more workers in the Scriptures In Use method, equipping them with skills in biblical storytelling to reach out to their communities. The missionaries we have trained are teaching others in the same method. These volunteers are assisting them in ministry on weekends. We hope that we will receive funding to carry out the ongoing training of our staff which is one of the bedrocks for the growth of our work.

WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT In order to strengthen the capacity of women, in May we conducted a training event on micro-financing for 20 women in Tamale. The women were organised into four 'solidarity groups', and each member agreed to act as collateral for the others. Funds were disbursed to them as start-up capital so that they could start small businesses.



In October, a team from Partners International Women (WorldShare's sister organisation in the US) came to conduct training called 'Women in the Window' in Tamale and Ho. The women testified to the usefulness of training in their personal lives as well as their ministries. Afterwards one of the participants, Christiana, a lady from Ho, wrote: "I was so inspired that I wish every woman could get this kind of training. In Ho, I trained 35 women leaders. They were very excited with the biblical as well as micro-enterprise teachings which were mixed with sketches and games. They have all identified the businesses they could pursue and have started doing some business on their

own. Those who were already operating a business were able to add some new features to what they were already doing. Also in Ho, I trained a group of 50 middle-aged women, and things are better for them economically now. It helped them to realise that their problem was not so much because of lack of capital, but because they needed to choose the right business and learn how to market their products. With this experience, I want to hold programmes in Denu, Tsito, Kpedze and Wli, and to appoint some of the women as resource persons. Pray with me that the Lord will bless me so I can achieve this in 2012."

CARE FOR WOMEN ACCUSED OF WITCHCRAFT As part of our God-given responsibility to seek justice for the poor and oppressed in society, COF organised a conference in September to advocate for women accused of witchcraft in northern Ghana. This event took place in collaboration with Gateway of Hope International, Accra Psychiatric Hospital, and the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs. In attendance was the Deputy Minister of Women and Children's Affairs, a Justice of the Supreme Court, and other top public officials.

Our interest in this project sprung from the fact that we came face-to-face with the issue while visiting a 'witch camp' in Nabuli, one of our ministry communities. We heard the accused women's stories and saw the poverty and squalor in which they lived. Since the conference, the government has become involved by providing food and clean water to the women and by stepping up education in communities regarding this issue.

We helped them to register under the National Health Insurance Scheme to enable them to benefit from free health care. We also helped them to cultivate a farm so they could grow their own food. Above all, we spoke on their behalf and collaborated with other stakeholders to create awareness so that this ancient socio-cultural problem will no longer undermine the dignity of women. A follow-up meeting is taking place in early 2012.



Meanwhile, families of some women who have recently been accused of witchcraft are contacting the police for justice. A pregnant woman, Nanjo, was recently accused by a man in her village of being a witch. She was beaten up and later taken to hospital. Her husband obtained a hospital report and reported the case to the police. When the police went to the culprit's village to arrest him he had run away from his community and has not returned. Jacob, our missionary, said, "This is sending a notice to the people that they can no more treat women any way they want and get away with it. Even though the man has not yet been arrested, this case is a deterrent to others. Our message is now getting through to them."

The women harvested corn from the farm we helped them cultivate. While the yield was affected by drought, they were glad that the labour of their hands produced food for them to enjoy.

NEW VEHICLE We are grateful to the Lord for the provision of a four-wheel drive Nissan which has been so helpful to our ministry. It has helped us to travel to almost all our mission fields since its acquisition late last year. Our visits to have been helpful to the workers and their families who expressed the feeling that their work is being appreciated and that they feel encouraged by such visits. It has also helped us to continue to understand and empathise with the workers and their families in their circumstances so that we can better serve and represent them.

MISSION CENTRE The mission centre project started in earnest at the beginning of the year. It encountered a few challenges at the initial stages of construction as a result of the terrain, but has progressed speedily thereafter. The construction is now at roofing level. The wooden frame for the roof has been constructed and we expect that by mid-February 2012 the roofing sheets will have been installed. Funding has dwindled for now, but we expect some additional funding of about \$100,000 to enable us to complete the work. In the meantime, we need about \$20,000 to complete the ground floor and enable us to use it as our ministry office.



BAWKU VOCATIONAL CENTRE We previously reported about the rain storm that ripped off the roof of the Bawku centre. But Noah, our man in Bawku, was able to repair it and the centre is now running. Currently, enrolment stands at 242 as compared to 230 last year. About 180 of the trainees are young women who are being trained in vocational skills. By learning a useful skill they are protected from early marriage. This is a common occurrence in northern Ghana as parents are desperately poor and eager to receive a dowry, often just a few cows, for their daughters. Noah said, "This centre is a dream come true."

FAMILY NEWS Apart from me, all my family members are in school. Mercy will finish her Bachelor of Public Health programme at the University of Ghana in May. That same month, Emmanuel Jr. will finish his bachelor's degree at Whitworth University. Alex is in his second year at Valley View University in Ghana. Eugenia will finish her exams in June and is hoping to go to college in August. Julie has just turned 14 and is in 8th grade.

We thank you for your prayer support. We are most grateful to you.

PLEASE PRAY

- **For good health and wisdom to meet the challenges of ministry.**
- **For more financial resources to enable to complete the first phase of our mission centre project.**
- **For our missionaries and their families, that they would have the Lord's protection, provision and empowerment for ministry.**
- **For the projects that we have initiated to bring wholeness and transformation.**
- **Praise for the positive steps taken to address the issue of Ghana's witch camps.**
- **For the COF Board to have wisdom to shape the ministry for greater service.**