

Trusting Jesus, that is all.

Dear Friends,

This article is about the global pandemic, the Coronavirus (COVID-19) from the Ghanaian environment and perspective. I'd like to share how it is affecting my family, my ministry (the people of Akrampa), and the nation of GHANA, as a whole. We're going to take a break from our previous topic of 'Students in School Administration' to talk about something the entire world is sharing in together.

The title of this article should give you an idea of the mental and spiritual condition of myself, my family and the entire nation. Before the pandemic became a national issue, we heard about it from the news. And for people like me who have access to external means we are able to gain more information from some British and American news outlets and similar media.

The news gave us strong reason to intercede, to pray, asking God to intervene. We prayed that since it is His world that He created - which He gave to man to live in, **according** to His precepts and laws - if by our disobedience, in any way could be a reason, we prayed that He will forgive and heal the world (2 Chronicles 7:14). That is the Ghanaian literal understanding, that when evil comes upon God's creation, then it simply means we have disobeyed His laws.

As of April 4, 2020, while writing this article, Ghana had 205 confirmed cases of the Coronavirus of which 31 have recovered, and 5 dead. By the time you will read this article, sadly those numbers will most likely have increased. On Monday, March 16, 2020, the government released a statement banning any gathering of more than 25 persons, at any place. Funerals were to be private with not more than 10 people, and no church services or religious gatherings of any kind were to be held in person. That was even when we had only 9 cases of the virus. Some of the larger Ghanaian churches are now streaming their worship on the internet, for those that are able to take part.

On Monday, March 29, the Ghanaian president declared a lockdown of the two largest cities - Accra, the capital, and Kumasi - and their environs. Except for our markets (where we can go buy food items, at one's own risk) and some selected financial institutions, and medical clinics, everybody is asked to stay at home. Security personnel, policemen and soldiers have been detailed to ensure compliance for the lockdown. Individuals must have evidence of need in order to venture out even to the few establishments that are still open.

Our mission village of Akrampa is **outside the lockdown** area, just on the fringe of it. My family and I live in the capital city, Accra, since Julie started working here in 2013. As result of our different locations, I am not allowed to go to Akrampa, for any reason.

My family and I are complying with this directive. Indeed except on emergency, no vehicles may move in and out of the lockdown towns. All schools were initially closed except those preparing to write the national end of year examinations (Basic Education Certificate Examinations, B.E.C.E, and the West African Schools Certificate Examination, W.A.S.C.E).

In the sub-Saharan regions (third world countries) and for that matter the Ghanaian situation, this lockdown is going to affect us and severely change our survival circumstances. The average Ghanaian never benefits from government unemployment benefits or considerations, and average subsistence is from 'hand-to-mouth'.

The numbers of those starving have started to rise. In my home and family we were able to buy some food and stock, but if this should go on beyond a month, or go into 6 weeks, we would also begin to wonder how to go out and buy food. The security forces have mandated to stop any vehicle that attempts to drive into the **lockdown** community, even though it is assumed that those bringing food from the farming areas may be allowed, but it is difficult because of the pace of spread of the virus infection. Even if one has money to buy food, there may come a time when the food supply cannot be transported to the areas where it is needed.

There are several roadblocks that have been set up and are enforced on the roads. That alone can be very frustrating and irritating. This now means several things, first and foremost it is the suspension of the building of the special **new kitchen building in Akrampa**. As we told you recently, this building will be used to teach and demonstrate the Home Economics classes and will include a room to serve as the cooking area of the Breakfast Meal. The money for the construction is still intact, waiting for when the ban on travel and other activities is lifted for normal life to go on. I look forward to overseeing the completion of this building as soon as we are allowed. Secondly, if anyone in Akrampa needs the kind of help that I would normally assist with, that will be impossible since I myself am supposed to stay home. I am also unable to go to Akrampa and lead our Wednesday worship services at the school.

We all miss our jobs and normal lives. As I'm sure everyone around the entire world does at this difficult time. Please pray for Ghana as a whole, and for the people of Akrampa.

Indeed, we are trusting Jesus, and that is all.

Blessings, Pastor Ben