



A Day in the Life ...

February 2018 - letter #92

2017 Trip to USA - Part 3

Dear Friends,

This article is the first one I'm writing to you after arriving back in Ghana, but it will be the conclusion of the '2017 Trip to USA' series by Julie and me. For us, it gives meaning to the entire trip, as it tells the story of our last days in Lorain. These last few days were spent with friends, shopping, and made so memorable by our stay at Pastor Jimmy's home, which has been my home, our home, since the first trip in 1993. We have always been so blessed by Pastor Jimmy's hospitality.

The last week prior to our departure on November 26, was spent in shopping for items (clothes, shoes, and other family needs). It's been awhile since my last visit in 2013/2014 so naturally we needed many things for ourselves and our children that we cannot get in Ghana. Since Julie was with me this time, shopping was more fun.

We ended up going home with six suitcases. Four suitcases of our own and two extra suitcases of gifts & wonderful things to take home to our kids. The extra two suitcases were paid for as part of the travel expenses that had been previously donated. Many people helped us to take us out, some of whom I can't name, but we thank you in our hearts! I would like to particularly mention Pastor Jimmy, Marcia Geary, the Penton's, the Anthony's, and Sharon Koprnicka.

Julie and I were honored to visit the home of a husband & wife team who have been long time benefactors of the Akrampa mission. Over the years they have given significantly to the Breakfast Program, and during this visit they donated \$1,000 for the purchase of Christmas clothes for the primary school children, whom they refer to as 'the Little Lambs'. When I later told them that the donation did not clothe all of the children, they donated another \$1,000. Thank you.

We left the morning of Sunday, November 26, as early as 4:00am. Now, getting a vehicle that would take us with six bags to the airport, would have been a real challenge, but again this was taken care of. Marcia Geary came with a van that took not only the bags but the three extra passengers - Pastor Jimmy, Julie and myself. It was a cold morning! Too cold for Julie, especially. But the fact that we were going back to some warmth was quite comforting, but the thought of leaving behind the warmth of friendship and fellowship was a little hard. So much love and generosity was given to us that made our two months stay so wonderful and very memorable.

We arrived in Ghana on Monday, November 27, surprisingly 'almost' on time, even though the take off from New York was delayed for more than an hour. Our children were there to meet us and we got home before midday (Ghana time). Tired from the almost nine hours of flight, we were eager to go home and get some rest. Our return was just in time, as Julie's leave from work was over just on the 27th. Julie had to return to work the very next day, Tuesday the 28th even though she was so tired.

Also for me, there was some urgency about wanting to get back to work, and to make some urgent trips to Akrampa. Two weeks after our arrival in Ghana, our Akrampa primary school and the junior high were scheduled to close for Christmas vacation and I needed to make sure I spent time with the students before they left. Also, I had promised our benefactors that the children would get their Christmas clothes before vacation. Shopping for the clothes required taking their measurements which took a few days, and then going into town to buy the clothes. We managed to do all this in time, and on December 12th, we were able to give them their new clothes. It was a great day for the whole school, but most especially for those children who got NEW dresses for Christmas.

This day, December 12th, had been dubbed 'Carols Service' by the pupils and teachers of the school. The children sang Christmas songs and read the appropriate Scriptures for such a service, the first time ever that we had done this service in the school. It was a blend of carols and a local cultural display depicting the Nativity. Even as I am familiar with these things, it was such an exciting and colorful ceremony, set to prepare the community for Christmas and the coming New Year. In keeping with the joy of this planned celebration, I felt it was a powerful occasion to give the children their gift of new clothes as a demonstration of the love that had been sent to the students from Ohio, at Christmas.

Meanwhile, the process has begun to construct the 'Garden on Wheels', or raised gardens, that I spoke with you about while in the USA. A carpenter has been contracted with who will begin work soon. I will keep you updated in future articles.

Again thank you to every single person in Texas and Ohio who gave of their time, love, or finances to make our trip wonderful. Every kind word, every friendly conversation that we shared with you was a gift! And we are forever grateful to all of you who touched our lives while we were in the USA in 2017! Thank you!

Blessings, Pastor Ben & Julie