

Victoria & Gloria - now as adults ...

Dear Friends,

I am continuing the stories of previous students who needed some direct intervention in their lives due to their circumstances and challenges. Tragedies like accidents that happened in their homes and families, or incapacitating illness created a desire for us to give them additional help. This article features stories of two young women - then pupils of the Akrampa school - whose life stories touched friends of the Ghana Mission, from 'The Chapel' in Sandusky, Ohio.

Victoria

The educational journey of the first of these two young women, Victoria, almost ended abruptly as a result of a tragedy that hit her home. At the time, she was in the 6th grade. To give a background to the story, to explain the circumstances, Victoria's mother had gone into the forest - a prohibited area north of the village, controlled by the government and out of bounds to all - to fetch wood to sell in the local market as firewood. When the people are not tilling the land, they will undertake escapades into the forbidden forest to collect dry tree branches (which have fallen off). Some of them actually deliberately cut fresh branches and let them dry for firewood, which they later will collect and sell. It was while trying to cut down a limb that she was hit by the falling branch which killed her. Victoria's Mom was the 'bread-winner' of the house, since her husband provided nothing to the family and he had five other little children. Her (cheating) husband had two other wives who also had to provide for themselves. Another woman saw the wisdom in leaving this man so she would not have to endure such a dismal life.

It became obvious that Victoria's educational life would come to an end if she didn't get help. While Victoria was in 5th Grade, there was an FLC family that provided additional support for her, but sadly the family had to suspended their support after a year. Of course no one could have foreseen the tragedy of her mother's death that occurred when she entered 6th Grade. An appeal was made and four of the friends I had made at The Chapel, in Sandusky, took up the challenge together of providing for her. For six years, these four friends in Sandusky provided for her to go through junior and senior high school. Victoria stayed in my house, with my family for the three years of senior high school (10th - 12th grade). Unfortunately, she couldn't pass the national examination for her to qualify to go to the Teacher Training College to fulfill her dream to become a teacher. Julie and I paid for her to have additional training and tutoring for one more year, and that also didn't seem to help so she decided to leave and go back to her people in Akrampa. Eventually she found some work to do as a record keeper in a small shop, and that is where she has remained. Her dream of becoming a teacher has become a distant memory. It is so very tragic. Victoria had such potential, but she couldn't reach her goal because she was still traumatized by the loss of her mother, something I sadly discovered too late. And then she had reached the age that women in her situation preferred to get married more than continue to be in school. But she is not married, at 28 years of age, and doesn't have any qualification by which she could get into a more lucrative and satisfying career. She feels the frustration ever so intensely, ever since she chose to go back to her people, after failing to gain admission into Teacher Training College. The irresponsible father who created a vacuum of unmet needs during her childhood haunted her, and her other siblings.

Gloria

This is another young woman who was helped greatly during the time she was a student at our Akrampa School. One wonderful woman from The Chapel in Sandusky, Ohio heard Gloria's story and wanted to sponsor her. Gloria is a paraplegic. In 2008, when the 'Group of 8' from FLC, were in Ghana, Gloria was attending the Akrampa school in a wheelchair. Her friends helped her to school, pushing her in a wheelchair, which then was in a very deplorable condition, posing a great challenge to the 'helpers', her friends. Theirs was a very arduous task because of the terrain. The FLC 'Group of 8' was touched by her condition and upon their return launched an appeal for support for her to finish the Basic Education Certificate Examination (B.E.C.E) level. This is where our friend from The Chapel stepped in. In 2009, when I returned home from a medical review, I came back with a brand new wheelchair donated by an organization that Gloria's 'sponsor Mom' worked with. This new wheelchair supported Gloria for some 3 years, before requiring that it is replaced. This was done during another medical review in 2013. By the Grace of God, she completed the level of education (B.E.C.E) but because the financial sponsorship was limited she couldn't continue to senior high, even though academically she could have.

Gloria, now 24 years old, is not really able to provide for herself because the only qualification granted upon completing the Basic level is a mere certificate that can never be used to be employed. It merely says that the student has completed Basic/Primary education (through 9th grade). Her mother lives in another village, while she lives with her father. While we could, we arranged that some of the money being sent for her upkeep and education would be put away and this eventually became a resource that she tapped into to do petty trading, in sweets (candies), biscuits & chewing gums, on the roadside. She has been asking for support to learn a trade, some kind of skills training so she can be self-supportive. There are several trades she could learn: soap-making, beads-making, dress-making, and cosmetics. Many young women like her end up with acquiring these skills, while some go into farming and vegetable trading. She wants to learn a trade. If you would like to specifically help Gloria, please contact the Ghana Committee for more information.

Current Students:

There are quite a few students like Victoria and Gloria presently enrolled as students in the Akrampa school, who if they are not helped, will not have a successful future. We try to look for a brilliant, academically strong yet poor and needy student whom we help as much as we can with some additional support. This is part of the monthly budget of money that is sent from FLC donations to the Ghana General Fund for operating the mission. Right now it is about \$100. a month to meet miscellaneous/extra needs for learning. This is just one reason that the Ghana General Fund is just as important, and has just as much impact as the Meal/Breakfast Fund.

Once again I am using this medium to ask for your ongoing prayer for the Lord to continue to provide and meet the needs that we continue to encounter, which are always there and ever increasing in circumstances. The needs are great, and constant. I appealed to you in my last article that if you are able to give, on a monthly basis, or just occasionally, every dollar is a wonderful gift! We cannot continue to minister spiritually or physically to the children and adults in Akrampa without your help.

Please pray! And please give financially if the Lord puts it on your heart. We appreciate you and are grateful for prayers and financial support. ---- Blessings, Pastor Ben