



Dear Friends,

As some of you remember in the past my daughter Ida and I wrote about our family. Ida and I wrote the April, May and June 2012 articles to tell you about Julie and my children. Then in January and February of 2013 I told the story of my call to ministry. If you missed them, they are online in the Ghana archive.

This article is about me. One of our readers requested that I write about my own family from which I was once separated, because just like everybody else, we come from distinct families. After marriage we gain extended family.

It's a story, a narration for those who have not known me from the beginning. In 1993 I first came to Lorain. On several occasions during recent trips, I have had a few people walk up to me asking or inquiring about me and my family. What I believe is that they would like to know the story of my life and that of Julie. This article is about me and my own family, parents, siblings, and other significant members.

I was born some 64 years ago in a coastal town called Winneba, whose main traditional economy is that of fishing. My parents were not natives of my birthplace. My father, Kwamina - who worked for the Ghana Cocoa Marketing Board as a Purchasing Clerk would from time to time move (transfer) their employees from place to place. He had been stationed at a town not far from this coastal town. He attended the basic school and completed with a certificate but never attended a secondary school because his father couldn't afford it.

My mother Margaret, was a housewife and never had the benefit of formal classroom education. She was an illiterate. She could neither read, write nor speak English. In her later years as an adult, she was able to read the Bible in our dialect because she availed herself of the adult literacy classes that the church facilitated for people in her age group. She engaged herself in petty trading, a very typical and usual habit of many unschooled women as a means of earning extra income for the home to support husbands in raising their children.

As far back as I can remember, sixty percent of our school fees came from what my Mom made from her petty trading. My father was originally from another coastal town called Apam. My mother was from the farming area in the mid-central part of Ghana called Agona Nyakrom. My father was from a family of fishermen and actually went fishing occasionally while going to school.

My mother's side of my family are known as royalists and ascend Stools to rule over small communities. If my mother were a male, she would have been a chief of the traditional area of her hometown, known as Agona Traditional Area, with the Stool name of NANA NYARKU EKU. It's a paramountcy that covers several towns. Indeed, if I weren't a Minister of the Gospel, I could be the OMANHENE (Chief of the towns) of the traditional area.

My wife Julie also comes from a traditional area where, even though they don't inherit chieftom, her family is a significant member of the community of the Saltpond Traditional Area. Next month we will talk more about Julie's family.

My Dad met my mother during one of the transfers that resulted while working for the Ghana Cocoa Marketing Board at a place north and west of Winneba, called Tarkwa. This town is popular due to its location in the gold mining belt of Ghana, and because it was also in the rainy part of Ghana. The production of Cocoa thrived. My mother was then staying with a Methodist Reverend Minister as the house-help.

My parents, Kwamina and Margaret, had thirteen children; six females and seven males. I am the eleventh in the line of my siblings. Two of my sisters died very young, before they could even crawl or walk. Three of my brothers have also died. Surviving are my three brothers, me and my four sisters. We are quite close, even though we have our individual and private pursuits in life. In the order of birth, these are the names of my surviving siblings: Phydora (80 years), Gladys (78 years), Juliana (74 years), Africanus (69 years), Veronica (66 years), Ben (me-64 years), Charles (62 years), and Ebenezer (59 years).

Unlike my parents, all of my brothers and I went beyond just basic education, acquiring secondary and tertiary education qualifications. My youngest brother, Ebenezer, is also a Reverend Minister of the Methodist Church.

Sadly my Mom died at age 54, while my Dad died at the age of 80. I will share more next month.

Blessings, Pastor Ben