



# Ghana Trip - January 2011



## My First Taste of Africa

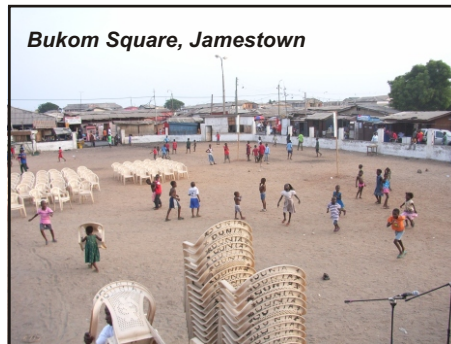
My first taste of Africa was stepping out of the KLM Boeing 777 on to the steps and being hit by the incredible heat. After going through security we met up with Pastor Osmond, the rep from IGO. Very soon there were many people from Osmond's church around us to help us carry our bags. We were bundled in to a mini-bus and began the 1½ hour drive to the hotel. This was quite an incredible journey, having never experienced Africa first hand. Although it was dark and late the roadsides were busy with traders selling their wares - some from roadside market stalls, which was basically just a table, and others from little shops which were just steel containers. By far the majority of sellers were mainly young women carrying goods in baskets on their heads, weaving their way between the traffic. Over the course of the week we soon found that you could purchase anything from these traders - phone cards, water, plantain crisps, fish even toilet rolls.

## Conference and Crusade

Tuesday, the first day was a preparation day, we were due to meet and pray with President Attah Mills but he was out of the country attending to some state business. In the morning we met with some of the local pastors who were to be

involved in the conference and crusade and then after lunch explored the surrounding area of Kokrobite, where we were staying.

The IGO Pastor's Conference started small on the Wednesday morning but grew as the week progressed. We had three messages each morning; Kingsley Armstrong started off each day, then over the next three days myself, Trevor Pimlott and Bob Searle spoke twice each. The theme of the conference was 'Change' and we certainly were all challenged by the messages. The women of the team did not attend the conference every day as they visited some schools and villages and met with the locals.



Each evening, from about 4pm, we all met up in Bukom Square, Jamestown, not far from Osmond's church for the open-air crusade. I was imagining an enormous place where thousands could meet, but it turned out to be a relatively small square, probably about two-thirds the size of Wisbech Market place. The square was a playground for children and a meeting place for local people to talk and where stall holders set up little tables and traded after dark. It was surrounded by homes and shops and the people were extremely poor. I had not seen poverty at this level before. This square soon began to fill up as people came and took their seats and the place

rocked with people praising God and dancing. About 20 people responded for salvation the first night and about 50 on the second night. I had envisioned scenes similar to what Reinhard Bonnke experiences with thousands coming forward but that was not the case. On Friday, the last night of the crusade, a make do screen was set up, a white sheet stretched between two poles, and we showed the film 'The Passion of the Christ' - this drew hundreds of people into the square. There was an amazing response as the appeal for salvation was given - about 100-150 people came forward, including many children. What an awesome God, that Friday night was electric as praises filled the air and God received the glory.

## God Experiences

Saturday morning we were back in Jamestown for an IGO ordination service. This was really powerful service as six candidates were being ordained into IGO. All their families were present, when we arrived at the church at 11am we learned that they had been there since 8am. This ordination service continued until approx 2pm. This was personally a truly amazing experience, as we were called upon to pray for the candidates. The first man I prayed for went out under the anointing as soon as I laid hands upon him. I placed my hand on his chest and began to pray, the power of God came upon him and he jumped up and fell backwards, hitting the concrete floor hard. As I continued to pray with the other candidates, they all went out under the power of God. I don't think I have ever experienced anything quite like that before. After the service we went back to the hotel to prepare for Sunday. I had arranged to meet up with Perpetual and



*With Perpetual and Michael*

Michael later during the afternoon, and they came up to the hotel and we spent about an hour talking and sharing. It was good to meet and find out about the work of GEM in Ghana, and to learn more of the church that has been started. They are truly lovely genuine people and we bonded straight away.

In the evening we were invited for a meal with an English couple who lived next to the hotel. They are from Pastor Rodney Breckon's church in Northallerton, serving God in Ghana.

On the Sunday we all split up and went to various churches all over Accra to minister and preach. I went to a small church, *God's Grace Prayer Ministry* in Osu. Again the power of God fell on the service and I had an experience which will always be with me. I preached for an hour on 'Enduring Faith' about Jairus and the Woman with the Issue of Blood. Afterwards I gave an appeal and the whole church came forward for prayer, about 80-100 people. Another hour soon passed as I prayed for each one, some more than once. God began to stir up prophetic gifts in me as I ministered into the lives of many of those that came forward. I finished up completely soaked through with perspiration.

### ***At the Heart of the Nation***

Monday was our last day of ministry, we spent the morning resting and preparing for the banquet with the parliamentarians.

We were visited at the hotel by some school children who wanted to perform a song and dance for us. The children were then presented with T-shirts, a gift from one of the UK churches.

We also had the pleasure of being present for an engagement ceremony, a Ghanaian girl, Becky, who was one of Osmond's team, was getting married to a man from Wakefield, who had arrived that morning from UK for the wedding. The ceremony was held in the hotel during which we prayed over the couple and blessed the union in Jesus' name. Jon and Becky were married very early the next morning.

Around lunchtime I met up with Perpetual again, she was getting ready to return to Kumasi and wanted to see me once more before she made the trip back.

Later in the day we left the hotel for Parliament. When we arrived, Osmond's team were busy preparing the tables. The time was awesome as the meeting started in Parliament Square, with testimonies from the Chief Whip and other members of parliament. We spent much time praising, dancing and praying for the nation. Kingsley spoke to the M.P's and encouraged them to keep God at the heart of the nation. Then we sat down to eat a magnificent buffet style hot meal. It was truly an honour to be part of this significant event in Ghana. The whole event, except the meal, was recorded for broadcast on state TV. The evening was late and we didn't get back to

the hotel until well after midnight - even stopping en route at the roadside to repair a punctured tyre. Where in the UK will you get a tyre repair place open at 11.30 at night?

The next morning we went to the Cultural Village, a type of indoor market, for some 'souvenir' shopping. When we got back to the hotel we spent the last couple of hours on the beach and swimming in the sea before packing and leaving for the airport to begin our journey back to UK.

I can honestly say that this trip has certainly had a big impact on my life - God has done something in me which will stay with me for eternity. I've met some great people who will remain my friends, and had some awesome experiences. Many have asked me if I will ever go back - the answer is not if but when; how can I not go back? I feel deep down that I've left a small part of me back in Ghana.

Pete Warren



*Praying for the nation at the Banquet*



*With the leaders at God's Grace Prayer Ministry*

