

**Encounter
With**

GHANA



**Touching Leadership In Ghana
Through Bible Resource Centers**

DICKSON

Encounter With Ghana

Roger E. Dickson

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Scripture quotations from *International King James Version*

Cover Photo: With Ransford Essuman and Ghanaian chiefs – 2014

INTO ANOTHER PARADIGM

What you are about to read is in reference to what might be for you a new paradigm of world evangelism. You will be familiar with pieces of the paradigm, but all the pieces together as a whole may be quite new to you. We ask that you keep an open mind. Because this new paradigm of missions is quite different from some traditional means of world evangelism, do not come to the conclusion that we are promoting the thought that we should discontinue past methodologies. On the contrary, we should continue such methodologies that will continue to take us into this new paradigm, for in many situations the old has become the foundation of the new. However, please keep in mind that if we seek to hold on to the old to the exclusion of the new about which we will speak, then the wineskins will break. We have simply moved into something that is so awesome and worldwide in impact that it must become our priority.

What is now happening in the religious world is something that is truly awesome if you have resided within the cocoon of your own religious group. Maybe it could be illustrated by what several traditional preachers have asked of us over the last two decades. A preacher of one of these worldwide religious groups approached us after he had graduated from the Bible college of his particular religious group. He said, “Dr. Dickson, you must now mentor us. We want to know and teach the Bible.” This particular preacher was the preacher of a religious group that had its beginnings in the Reformation Movement five hundred years ago. In much of the world today, we do not experience all the religious prejudices of Western denominationalism. Over the years we have had hundreds of preachers as this individual who have expressed their unquenchable thirst to study the Bible. They received little Bible from their traditional Bible schools. Because of our global outreach over the past decades, these religious leaders know who we are and what we teach. Their number is in the tens of thousands. Are we to extract them from their groups of disciples in villages and towns throughout the world and place them in our favorite Bible college in order to validate them with our diplomas? Or, should we package up our Bible curriculum and just send it to them? The new paradigm that God has opened up to us is the latter.

This book is about how we have been packaging up our curriculum for several years, ignoring the diplomas, and just turning the word of God loose on sincere and dedicated men as the one mentioned above. God is doing something exceedingly wonderful. A door has been opened for us for years to reach millions by helping those who minister the word of God to churches throughout the world. Instead of snatching singles out of the camp of what we presumed to be the enemy, God has revealed that there are thousands of camps everywhere that are thirsting to go on to perfection in the word of God.

The Bible Resource Center

When Paul, Timothy, Silas and Luke landed in Philippi, the Bible text states that they stayed there only a “few days” (At 16:12). During those few days, a jailor and his household were born into the body, as well as a traveling salesperson by the name of Lydia, with her household. Paul, Timothy and Silas then went on to Thessalonica. Luke stayed in Philippi. What is so amazing about this small body of members in Philippi is that they sent “once and again” unto the support of Paul, Timothy and Silas in their preaching of the gospel in Thessalonica (Ph 4:16). They immediately took ownership of the purpose of the universal body of Christ to evangelize the world. The jailor and Lydia took ownership of bearing fruit in other areas through their support of the evangelists to preach in those areas (Ph 4:15).

We would assume that Paul stayed in Thessalonica again for a short time. A great many Greeks obeyed the gospel, with some leading women of the city (At 17:4). From Thessalonica, Paul went alone to Athens, and then to Corinth (At 18:1). In Corinth, he found and joined with Aquila and Priscilla in the tentmaking business (At 18:3). The tentmaking business was not sufficient to support him, so the Thessalonians sent support to Paul while he preached in Corinth and all the region of Achaia (2 Co 11: 8-10). The Thessalonian disciples, therefore, took

ownership of the function of the universal body of Christ to evangelize the world. They went to work immediately after their conversion to freely preach the gospel to others as it was freely preached to them. Their faith was immediately functional financially after they were born into the organic body of Christ.

But Corinth was a different story. Many of the Corinthians heard, believed and obeyed the gospel (At 18:8). But there was a problem. Aquila, Priscilla and Paul later moved on to Ephesus after about a year and a half in Corinth and Achaia. But the Corinthians never sent a cent to help them on their way. The Corinthians were financially dysfunctional disciples. Throughout the letters of 1 & 2 Corinthians, Paul chastised them for their ungrateful and dysfunctional behavior of not being financially functional as a part of the universal organic body of Christ.

The Philippians were financially functional from the very beginning of their walk in the faith in order to evangelize their province. The Thessalonians were also financially functional from their beginning in the faith to evangelize their province (1 Th 1:6-8). But the Corinthians were financially dysfunctional in supporting evangelists. Paul discussed their dysfunction in two letters of rebuke. He said that they had made him a “church thief” in order to edify them as newborn disciples (See 2 Co 11:8-10). Within a few

days after their birth into the body, both the Philippians and Thessalonians took ownership of their responsibility to evangelize the entire province of Macedonia, which efforts even reached beyond Macedonia (See 1 Th 1:6-10). But the Corinthians, even after a year and a half of exhortation through letters and visits, did not understand the responsibility that each member of the organic body of Christ must assume. They were so financially dysfunctional that other churches had to be robbed in order that evangelists come and teach them.

Today, we live in a world of too many Corinthian churches. After over a half century of robbing other churches for their own edification, many Christians have still found it difficult to take financial ownership even of their own regions. Instead, they have extended a cuffed-hand to other churches of other regions for so long, that the disciples in “Philippi” and “Thessalonica” are still having to send “once and again” unto evangelists who struggle to awaken these dysfunctional second and third generation members to take ownership of their own responsibility to support their own.

But there is good news. This paradigm of cuffed-hand thinking on the part of what was considered mission areas, is changing. In many places that were previously considered “mission points,” some are starting to realize that in order for nations of the world to be evangelized, the Christians within these nations must now take ownership of their own nation. This change has taken decades to hap-

pen. Instead of it being a “few days,” as in the case of the Philippians and Thessalonians, it has been a “few decades” for these Christians to take ownership of their nations. Nevertheless, we rejoice in the fact that there is a change into a biblical paradigm of organic body growth.

The concept—and it is a concept—of the **Bible Resource Center (BRC)** is an effort, or means and method, to help disciples in nations to take ownership of their nations. With special literary evangelistic tools, the BRC is a platform of evangelistic outreach by which local disciples can both edify the body and evangelize their own country.

We thought it necessary to relate to you the purpose and function of the BRC concept. We want to use the example of the grand opening of one BRC in Ghana to illustrate how a BRC begins and functions in helping the national believers to build up the body of believers in order to reach entire nations. As we journey through this exciting adventure of development, please keep three things in mind: (1) These are only early beginnings of the BRC concept. We have been in development for only five or six years, and thus, there is still a long way to go. (2) The foundation of people upon which this worldwide effort is based is not a company of those of one particular religious group. The greatness of the effort is that people who believe in Jesus as Lord, and the word of God as His authority on earth for all matters of faith, are joining together to use the BRC concept to reach their nations. (3) This is a long process of resto-

ration within a nation. We must be very patient and allow the word of God to do its work.

We are working with people where they are in doing the best they can with what they know and believe. We are seeking to mentor in the word of God in order to help others study their way to a greater knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Pt 3:18). We are growing together. We are preaching Christ and Him crucified, the foundation upon which we all come closer together. Therefore, the birth and promotion of the BRC concept was not to advance a particular religious group, but to preach Jesus in order that people be given the opportunity to be added to His body upon their obedience to the gospel. What has amazed us be-

yond what we could have ever have expected in the beginning of the concept is the overwhelming acceptance of people from all religious backgrounds to get on board and go to work with the study and distribution of the products of Africa International Missions that are offered through the BRCs. This has just been an exhilarating experience, far beyond our wildest imaginations. It has proved Paul right in the words, *“Now to Him who is **able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think according to the power that works in us ...**”* (Ep 3:20). If we would seek evidence of the power of God that works in us, then the BRC is that evidence. The ongoing successful outreach of the present BRCs is not of man, but of God.

Section I

The Bible Resource Center MANDATE, PURPOSE AND PRODUCTS

The objective of a functioning BRC warehouse is to provide a printed Bible curriculum that will offer local Bible students in nations throughout the world a road map in Bible study in order that they teach and edify local groups of disciples in the word of God.

The church has grown exceedingly throughout the world. It has grown past the ability of a few traditional Bible schools to train the great number of leaders who now minister the word of God to a global body of believers who are searching themselves out of religious confusion. This is a global family of Bible students who are thirsting after a greater knowledge of the word of God. These Bible students throughout the world have grown past first principles. The Hebrew writer stated exactly the present need of those who seek to study beyond first principles. *“Therefore, leaving the elementary principles of the Christ, let us go on to perfection ...”* (Hb 6:1). And this is what the universal body of Bible believers seek to do. Unfortunately, we have held up most from going on to perfection because we are often bound to traditional systems to impart a greater knowledge of the word of God. We have put an educational stranglehold on growth and confined the world church to the stagnation of “elementary principles.”

Over the years we have discovered that Bible education is usually accomplished primarily through the means of the traditional classroom. And in order to find this classroom, the church leader has had to quite his job and travel some distance at great cost in order to find the teacher of the classroom. But in order for the worldwide church to grow up in all things, we must move past exclusive focus on this system of continued education in the word of God.

When the disciples seek to go beyond the “elementary principles” in order that local elders and Bible teachers be able to teach the weightier matters of the will of God to churches throughout the world, we must seek other alternatives. The classroom system is for the few, and often the young. It is slow and costly for a body of believers that is now global and expanding rapidly throughout the world. It is a worldwide body that is so large and growing so fast, that it is impossible for old systems of the impartation of Bible knowledge to take the masses beyond “elementary principles.”

We must add to this the fact that the need for taking advanced Bible teaching to the masses has far outgrown the financial ability of one group of disciples to cover the cost of the worldwide body of Christ. And besides, one group of dis-

ciples in just one part of the world does not manifest a financial equality (partnership) among all the disciples of the worldwide body. It is simply not manifesting the worldwide fellowship of the body for one group of disciples to shoulder the cost of Bible education for the worldwide body of Christ. This practice is against the principle that Paul revealed in 2 Corinthians 8:13,14. Paul spoke of equal financial responsibility among the members of the universal body. The historical context that brought out this financial equality (partnership) was in reference to sending famine relief to the disciples in Judea. *“For I do not mean that others [in Macedonia] be [financially] relieved and you [in Corinth financially] burdened; but by an equality [a partnership], that now at this time your [financial] abundance [in Corinth] may be a [financial] supply for their need [in Judea]”*

It is simply not biblical behavior for one area of disciples of the universal body of Christ to shoulder all the financial needs of the universal body when there is a need in some place of the world. And when it comes to taking the universal body of Christ from “elementary principles” on to perfection, then there must be a financial partnership between everyone. **No one disciple has the right to steal the ownership that another disciple should assume to take himself on to perfection in the word of God.** Others can aid in providing the opportunity, but the Hebrew writer, and Paul in his letter to the Corinthians, were teaching that individual disciples must take own-

ership of their own spiritual growth. This describes exactly the nobility of the Bereans. *“These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind and searched the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so”* (At 17:11). The Bereans took ownership of their own spiritual growth.

The concept and function of the Bible Resource Center (BRC) is a ministry by which local disciples can, through partnership with other disciples, take ownership of their own spiritual growth. The BRC is the global body nourishing itself unto growth. It is an effort to take the written classroom studies of a Bible school curriculum into every nation of the world. Instead of holding up a few church leaders in a classroom over an extended period of time, the BRC seeks to offer all the classroom curriculum to Bible teachers who are supporting themselves in their efforts to edify small groups of disciples (churches) throughout the world. It is an effort to call into financial partnership the worldwide body of Christ to function according to Paul’s definition of the organic body in Ephesians 4:15,16:

But speaking the truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working of each part, causes growth of the body to the edifying of itself in love.

When the whole universal body of Christ takes financial ownership to supply the educational needs of the whole body, then the whole body grows up in Christ where it is not *“tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of teaching, by the trickery of men in cleverness of the deceitfulness of error”* (Ep 4:14). This is the function of the Bible Resource Center.

BRC CAMPUS WAREHOUSE

A Bible Resource Center might be considered a “Bible Curriculum Warehouse” designed for those who want to access a Bible school curriculum. In many situations, young men can pack up and go off to a Bible school. But in the developing world, **it is best to pack up the school, and send it off to the students.** This is particularly true in reference to preachers and teachers who are already in their secular jobs supporting themselves, and yet, are seeking to minister the word of God to a local body of disciples. A BRC warehouse is established within a particular nation in order to make a Bible curriculum accessible to everyone of all religious groups in the nation.

The BRC is a concept of edification and evangelism. Since in the developing world we do not have the privilege of printing and shelving a great variety of books, or have the opportunity for expensive Bible training in resident Bible schools, the BRC seeks to provide a Bible school curriculum for Bible stu-

dents that they can buy and use while continuing to teach in their local areas. A BRC is not a distance training Bible school. We have had over four decades of distance training experience. The disadvantage with the distance training system was that it took an average of seven to ten years for one to graduate from the curriculum of courses. The system was simply too slow and too limited to reach the tens of thousands of Bible teachers that we are now reaching through the ministry of the BRC. We have printed two volumes of all the curriculum of a resident Bible school, or distance training school, and made them available to every preacher in every nation where a BRC is established. The BRC center is a warehouse within a country to which local Bible preachers and teachers can buy the entire Bible curriculum, and thus continue in their ministry of teaching the Bible. The curriculum is made available to everyone of all religious groups in order that Bible teachers take people from where they are in their knowledge of the word of God on to perfection. And as you will see later, it works.

The literature products we use to accomplish the above ministry are designed to take on to perfection those who have a knowledge of “first principles.” In order to accomplish this goal, we have printed only four volumes in order to accomplish the purpose and mission of a BRC within a nation. The literary products that must be printed to accomplish the objectives of a BRC are the follow-

ing: (1) A Holy Bible with a study guide on how to understand, study and teach the Bible. (2) A commentary on the entire Bible. (3) A series of books that takes Bible students through advanced studies in Bible knowledge. This is a series of books published in one volume. (4) A fourth volume can be added to these three, which would be an evangelistic New Testament with a study guide on how to understand, study and teach the Bible.

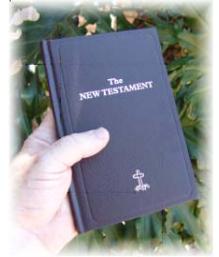
The concept of a BRC can be established in any language group where there are enough materials in the local language that can be printed with the preceding objectives in mind. All that one must do is bring the existing materials together into two volumes that accomplish the objectives of points 2 & 3. If a Bible is printed, it is very important that the Bible come with a study guide that aids novice students to understand, study and teach the Bible. The Bible school studies are in the commentary and Biblical Research Library volumes. This is the core of the program.

In producing the above volumes, we have had two objectives in mind: (1) We must offer specific spiritual books that focus on the designated objective of the BRC, and (2) the printed products must be produced according to the economy of the local residents. We believe we are getting close to these objectives, having fulfilled the first objective with the books that accomplish the purpose of both church edification and regional evangelism. The following is an explanation of the products (books) that we have devel-

oped for the objective of the Bible Resource Center:

INTERNATIONAL STUDY NEW TESTAMENT

PURPOSE: This volume was produced to be a mass evangelistic tool to reach those who are serious about finding their way to Jesus through His word. The volume was designed with novice Bible students in mind. It is essentially the road map to the gospel for anyone who is searching for the truth of the gospel.



DESIGN: At the time, this volume was referred to as the *Study New Testament*. The New Testament portion of the volume is an edited revision of the *King James Version*. Since the *King James Version* is considered the “Greek text” for many in the developing, English-speaking world, the decision was made to produce this version as the text for our mission. It is an easy-to-read revision, and thus, it is very “user friendly” in the world of novice Bible students. This is a very important point when developing the materials that will comprise the volumes of a BRC. And easy-to-read text of the Bible is essential in helping novice students to better understand the message of the Bible.

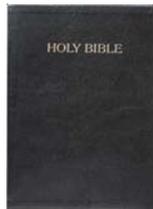
We have found that distributing the Bible alone is not enough. The religious world has so confused people in refer-

ence to understanding the Bible, that it is almost impossible for the novice student to come to a knowledge of the truth. Therefore, every *Study New Testament* and Holy Bible that a BRC distributes must have a study guide. The *Encyclopedic Study Guide* that we use was designed to be the “teacher” of the New Testaments and Bibles that we distribute. Since the *Study New Testament* is directed to those who know little about understanding the Bible, the *Encyclopedic Study Guide* is the “teacher” who helps people to do three things with this volume: (1) Learn how to understand the Bible. (2) Learn how to effectively study the Bible. (3) Know what to teach and preach of the Bible. Of the over half million *Study New Testaments* that we have distributed throughout the world, these “little evangelists” continue to do their work of teaching the people.

THE MISSION BIBLE

PURPOSE: The publication of the complete *International King James Version* was for the purpose of offering at the lowest cost possible, a text of the entire Bible. After several years of development, this text of the Bible became an integral part of the outreach of Africa International Missions in 2006.

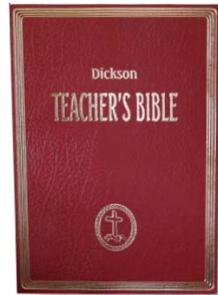
DESIGN: As the *Study New Testament*, this volume also comes with a scripture



footnoted text of the entire Bible and the *Encyclopedic Study Guide*. The text is an easy-to-read version of the Bible that was designed for those who speak English as a second language. This volume was designed for low cost production and distribution. We presently publish the volume with a softback vinyl cover on 33 gram paper. Africa International Missions holds the copyright of this version.

THE TEACHER'S BIBLE

PURPOSE: It is the purpose of the BRC to reach the masses when the masses cannot go to a Bible school. The *Teacher's Bible* was designed to be the “teacher” of the



entire text of the Bible. This volume offers an expository study of the entire text of the Bible for those Bible students who do not have the opportunity to sit at the feet of Bible teachers in a classroom environment. The function of the *Teacher's Bible* is to take the teacher to the student.

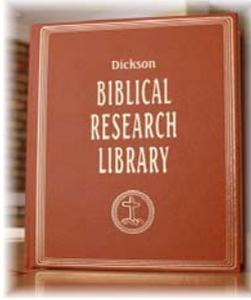
DESIGN: The *Teacher's Bible* was designed with four goals in mind: (1) Provide an easy-to-read text of the Bible. In this case, the Bible text is the *International King James Version*. (2) Provide a teaching commentary of every book of the Bible in one volume. (3) Provide footnoted, cross reference scriptures for

Bible study and lesson preparation. (4) Provide a study guide to aid students to understand, study and teach the Bible. In this one volume, the *Encyclopedic Study Guide* is also included as a “teacher.” All these study helps are provided in one volume for the purpose of bringing the printing costs of the volume into the economic standards of the developing world.

BIBLICAL RESEARCH LIBRARY

PURPOSE :

This is the most demanded volume of all the products of the BRC. The reason for this demand is that the *Biblical Research Library*



offers students the opportunity of studying through an organized presentation of specific subjects of the fifty-five books of the volume. The *Teacher's Bible* is a verse-by-verse study of the text of the Bible. But the *Bible Research Library* is a subject-by-subject study of important Bible subjects. It was produced in order to offer students the opportunity of studying themselves out of the chaos of religious confusion through a systematic focus on key Bible studies. This is the advanced “Bible school” curriculum of the BRC.

DESIGN: The concept of the *Biblical Research Library* makes it possible for this type of volume to be produced in any language where several books on key

Bible subjects have been written. What we have done is to bring together in one volume several books through which Bible students should study in order to be grounded in the word of God. In the 2014 edition of the *Biblical Research Library*, there are fifty-five books in one volume. These books are printed in this one volume in order to bring the cost of printing books into conformity with the purchasing power of the typical student. If the fifty-five books of this one volume were printed as individual books, the cost would be too high for people to afford. And beside, the recipients would possibly buy only a few of the books, and thus not have in their possession the entire library of books for Bible study and teaching that is offered through the *Biblical Research Library*. The multiple number of books of the volume, therefore, are published in one volume in order to guarantee that the recipients receive all the books. When churches have questions over any subject that is covered in the *Biblical Research Library*, they have a “biblical research library” to which they can go for answers. The *Teacher's Bible*, and *Biblical Research Library* are the ideal set of books for the isolated group of disciples who are often far away from any Bible source from which they can receive answers for their questions and conduct advanced Bible studies.

As previously stated, the concept of the BRC can be established in any language group throughout the world, as long as the necessary books are available to produce volumes with the purpose of

the *Teacher's Bible* and *Biblical Research Library*. These two books are the foundation upon which the ministry of the BRC is based. Once the products have been put together and printed, then a BRC can be established.

PRINTING THE PRODUCT

In reference to printing, we had to move from our present location of printing in South Africa to China in order to bring the cost of the products into line with the purchasing power of the developing world student. For example, it is

40% cheaper for us to print in China than in South Africa. This brought the cost of the products that we offer through the BRC down by 40% for the potential purchaser. We are presently using Amity Printing in Nanjing, China. (Go to www.amityprinting.org) This is the printing company used by the United Bibles Societies. We have had tremendous help from the Amity people to accomplish the mission of the BRC. Anyone who might want to use this printing company should contact us. They are a company that prints over thirteen million Bibles a year.

Section II

The Bible Resource Center THE GRAND OPENING

One of the most exciting things that we have ever experienced is to be at one of the grand openings of a Bible Resource Center. What we try to do to start a BRC is first send a Starter Container of materials to a location where a dynamic leader, or group of leaders, have determined to establish a BRC for their country. After several months of operation, a grand opening is conducted in order to advertise the BRC throughout the country in order to expedite the operation of the Center. Church leaders and government officials from around the nation are invited to come and understand what the Center is all about, and to see the products and who is involved in the operation of the Center. This is really an exciting event. Let me take you on a trip to Ghana where the local BRC leaders conducted a grand opening in Gomoa Jukwa. The trip will give you a taste of what happens during a grand opening. It will also reveal how God works in order to get the truth of the gospel to an entire nation. It was really a great personal experience with the people and culture of a nation, but most important, with the type of people for which we look to establish and operate a BRC. For a BRC to be successful, very organized and spiritual people must take the leadership in establishing a Center. The example of a grand

opening that we experienced in Ghana will give you some idea of what it takes to have a successful BRC. So as Paul wrote to Philemon, so we wrote to one of our Center directors in Ghana, “... *prepare for me also a guest room ...*” (Pl 22).

OFF TO GHANA

The older you get the more difficult the long flights are. The flight from Johannesburg, South Africa to Accra, Ghana seemed like the plane was on its way to Australia. I figured from my itinerary that it would be only a little over four hours. But I had forgotten that there was a two-hour time difference between Johannesburg and Accra. So after two movies and some fake sleep, I felt the solidity of mother earth again under me as the Boeing landing gear screeched down on the runway and the plane taxied to the terminal to release a claustrophobic crowd of weary travelers.

It had been thirty-five years since I last walked on Ghana soil. I thought I would never come this way again. I fell in love with Ghana those many years ago, and so God probably thought that this trip should be in my bucket list. My first travels to the Gold Coast of Ghana were in the late 1970s when I came to teach in

the Bible college in Kumasi, about an eight-hour adventure in those days from pot hole to pot hole to Kumasi from Accra. Those were good years in the Ashanti Region. They were memorial years when I fell in love with the hospitality of the Ghanaian people who have a tremendous heart for God.

So I was not rudely awoken or shocked at the normal reception of the Ghana airport. The arrival at the airport was usual. Everyone wanted to do something for you for a tip. There were offers to pull my carry-on luggage, even to carry my carry-on luggage. And as I left the terminal, there were those who made me feel like I was some long lost relative returning home. They were “professional greeters.” But after their greetings, and half way escort to my real friends, they asked for a tip. You have to say that the Ghanaians are quite ingenious.

This trip to Ghana was to participate in a grand opening for the BRC that was conducted by Ransford Essuman in Gomoa Jukwa, a small town about an hour and a half out of Accra. I was also there to meet with Fred Nii Kotey in Accra who was also launching a BRC in an urban environment. The Gomoa Jukwa Center had been in operation for almost a year, though the first container shipment to this area was about five years ago. We first sent out shipments of *Teacher’s Bibles* and *Biblical Research Libraries* that were to be distributed free to the preachers throughout a region. These were the “advertisement distributions” to get the material known by the



This is a great location to conduct a grand opening for a BRC. Fred Nii Kotey rented the conference room of a hotel in order to have a neutral place to which to invite leaders of all religious groups.

people in a particular nation where a BRC was to operate. The BRC in Accra had been operating with the sell of materials for only a few months and was slowly beginning to develop.

The two BRCs in Ghana operate differently and are in different social environments. One is in a rural town setting and the other is in a large city of over three million. We have found that the BRCs that are established in a rural environment seem to do better in reaching the entire nation, whereas in the large urban cities the Centers seem to stay more within the city. It is best to have at least two BRCs in a country, one in a rural setting and one in a key urban center. By establishing BRCs in these two environments, there is a better opportunity to reach the entire nation, which is the fo-

cus of the BRC. But for some reason, the smaller the town where the BRC is established, the better it seems to function. But if a center is established in a small town, it must be on a main road. It must be on a road where buses pass by for the rest of the nation.

Distribution from any location within a nation is usually by buses. After the BRC is advertised throughout a nation, the independent distributors (explained later) call in their orders. The independent distributor deposits the money for the order in the national BRC account, and then the director of the BRC boxes and sends the order by bus to the distributor. In Ghana both Centers were using this system very well.

IN CHRIST ONLY GRACE IS FREE

In advertisement for the sell of the *Teacher's Bible* and *Biblical Research Library*, over 5,000 *Teacher's Bibles* were first distributed by the Gomoa Jukwa BRC. These were generously provided by contributors and were given specifically to all the preachers of all religious groups throughout southern Ghana. This was the advertisement that greatly opened the door for the subsidized sale of the same books that would come later. We no longer give out free shipments of the *Teacher's Bibles* and *Biblical Research Libraries*.

We targeted the preachers first with the free distribution in order to let them know the value of these two volumes. If

you have been a supporter of Africa International Missions in the past, you need to understand how these volumes are being used in Africa where the church leader has nothing else as a Bible resource. When I first went to Ghana several years ago I learned about "dawn preaching." A preacher would develop a five to ten minute lesson. He would then walk very slowly down the streets in the towns every day. Every five or ten minutes he would preach the lesson over and over again. Where there were no radios, it was the morning devotional for the villagers. Now on this trip, things had changed somewhat in the larger towns, and especially the cities. The preacher got their hands on amplifiers and large speakers. So every morning in the town of Gomoa Jukwa, as well as in the urban center of Accra, the preachers would come on the radio or proclaim through loud speakers Bible messages. In Gomoa Jukwa the preachers preached for two hours in the morning, beginning around 5:00am.

Now this takes a lot of preparation and material. The preachers of all religious groups took turns preaching on the radio that was aired through loud speakers in the area of Gomoa Jukwa. And so where did many of them get a great deal of their material? Think about the *Teacher's Bible* and *Biblical Research Library*. And so we never know where our writings go. Those who have supported the distribution of these volumes need to understand that their support has made available the content of the books

for thousands of sermons that are preached across Ghana every morning—whether the people like it or not.

But now it was time in Ghana to go from “free” to “sale.” We never receive enough funds to continue the “free,” and thus, out of necessity, and if we are going to reach the masses, the recipients in the developing world must come to the financial party and take ownership of the spiritual well-being of their nation.

The “free” is now over. It is time to sell the materials in order to promote the continuation of Bible distribution. This is never an easy transition. For example, we are left with the word “missions” in the name “Africa International Missions.” And in most developing world countries, when the word “missions” is used, a cuffed hand is extended. It is often like a missionary on furlough. He extends a cuffed hand where ever he goes, and people try to side step his coming. This problem is in many developing countries. The people are often in a cuffed hand posture whenever there is someone around from the West. This culture is now changing, but it is difficult still in many areas of the developing world that has been spoiled for years with foreign aid and handouts from churches of the West.

Where there are Christians, it is time that they take ownership of their own spiritual destiny. And to do this, the developing world Christian must partner in the production and distribution of necessary Bible tools that are to be used for church edification and regional evange-

lism. We must become functional as the Philippians and Thessalonians. This is the objective of the BRC. It is an opportunity for everyone who claims to be a Christian to assume their responsibility to do what is needed to accomplish the preaching of the gospel and edification of the body.

We were once in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe and parked at a shopping center. A young man was walking by and noticed on the side of our vehicle a sign that read, “Africa International MISSIONS.” The word “missions” just jumped off the vehicle door and went straight to his brain, which was naturally interpreted into the statement the young man said to we, “Sir, do you have something to give to me?”

So it was time to change the paradigm from a cuffed hand culture to taking ownership of oneself. So we responded to the young man, “You see that word ‘missions?’ If you claim to be a Christian, then that word means, GIVE!” Of course, we had set the young man up for our response by asking him before if he were a Christian and to what church he belonged. He had claimed to be such and identified the particular church of which he was a member. Nevertheless, his cultural reaction, or response to the word “missions” was only “Third World natural.” Having lived in a past colonial country that had roads and schools and hospitals all built by former colonial powers or NGO agencies or church mission groups, and having lived in a “foreign aid” culture after the colonials left

over 50 years ago, what else could we expect? The cuffed-hand culture runs very deep in many developing world cultures. It will take generations for this horizontal hand to once again return to being vertical as it was before the Europeans arrived over two centuries ago.

The cuffed-hand culture of the developing world has tried to redefine the word “partnership.” To the typical developing world resident this word means “give me the money and I will do the work.” The word was first redefined in the beginning of the European experience in Africa. The old African explorer, or “great white hunter,” would come to the continent with a handful of money. He would then proceed to “hire” his entourage of local porters who would carry his supplies on his expedition. He had the money and the porters got the job done by carrying the weight. This was “partnership.” Right?

So out through the jungle the entourage went, the trackers with the machetes in front clearing the way of bush and beast alike. The great explorer and leader of the expedition followed, with 20 to 30 African folks “partnering” by bearing the burdens of labor of the expedition. In some places in Africa, the concept has not changed much. The hard working Africans are just bearing the load of the work and the man with the money is directing the way. It is not easy, therefore, to redefine the word “partnership.” The “mission” (explorer) is still paying the bills and the Africans are still willing to carry the loads. But when it comes to

Christianity, our Bible still reads, “Let each one bear his own load” (1 Cor 6:6). This is the biblical definition of partnership. If you want a more lengthy definition, read carefully the following “Bible dictionary” definition of partnership:

*But speaking the truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the head, even Christ, from whom **the whole body** being fitted and held together **by what every joint supplies**, according to the effective working of **each part**, causes growth of the body to the edifying of itself in love (Ephesians 4:15,16).*

Each one of us as members of the universal body must pay for and carry our own load. As parts of the whole body, each member is in partnership with one another in reference to supplying the needs of the body. And as parts of the body, we cannot grow unless every part plays its part. When it comes to money, this means that no one is to take all the financial load while others are considered unequal because they carry no financial load. Need a passage?

For I do not mean that others be relieved [financially] and you burdened; but by equality [partnership], that now at this time your [financial] abundance may be a supply for their need [in famine in Judea] (2 Corinthians 8:13,14).

If each part of the body does not give his or her financial supply, then we are not equal in the body. Knowing the serious-



YES, as these two Ghana sisters illustrate, we are excited about taking ownership of our mission to partner with others to preach the gospel to our own country.

ness of this, the Christians in Macedonia begged Paul to take their contribution for the famine victims of Judea (Read 2 Corinthians 8:1-4). We are in a financial partnership to carry our own loads for the

Lord in order that the body grow. (The forthcoming Book 57 of the *Biblical Research Library* that can be downloaded from www.africainternational.org will cover this subject extensively.)

The paradigm of the BRC is about everyone bearing the load of finances and distribution. Everyone (contributors, printing managers and recipients) are working secular jobs to support themselves and provide finances to make the BRCs work. They are in the work together (See At 20:34,35; 2 Th 3:6-9). Everyone is involved financially. Contributors work and contribute to Africa International Missions to produce products for the BRCs. These are only subsidizing funds, for the recipients must also



And sometimes we are honored too much, as Ransford gave us honor on this building that he built many years ago as his home in Gomoa Jukwa. Nevertheless, the embedded enlargement of the sign on the building gives honor first to "God Almighty and Jesus Christ."

pay for the books that are offered. Between the contributors and recipients are dedicated distributors who seek to get the AIM products from the printing press in Nanjing, China to the recipients in some far off village of India, Africa or wherever a BRC is established. All the recipients of the BRC products partner with the “mission” of the BRC by paying for what they receive. Nothing is for free as in the old days when the “colonial missions” took care of the local people. That was fine when all the local folks were unbelievers. But now the organic body must function internationally as everyone joins in to make the word of God available to the world. We do not take contributions from unbelievers as the early evangelists did not do so (See 3 Jn 6,7). But when one claims to believe in Jesus and His word, then we seek to be true financial partners to preach Jesus.

After we explained to the young man in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe the biblical definition of “mission,” that it meant to partner financially in the mission to preach Jesus to the world, he responded by simply saying, “I’m sorry.” It is time for a lot of people who claim to be Christians and live in developing world environment to say, “I’m sorry.” And then, they must truly get busy partnering with the universal organic body. This is the paradigm of world evangelism of the BRC. This is not a charity handout mission. It is an opportunity for every part of the universal body of Christ in every country where there is a BRC to take ownership of his or her own country.

Admittedly, it has been difficult for some to make the paradigm shift of changing from being mission points to being mission churches. The function of a BRC necessitates this change in behavior. With the great leadership of the directors of the BRCs, we can say that at least we are on our way of taking ownership of our nations in order to be points with a mission to our own nations. The West is no longer hiring porters. We are joining in a true partnership in the function of the organic body to take the gospel into all the world.

THE GRAND OPENING

What an amazing day! I went to Ghana to do a grand opening for two BRCs, one in Accra and the other in Gomoa Jukwa. Both centers function in different ways, and are effective in their distribution. But I thought the occasion of the grand opening of the Gomoa Jukwa would best illustrate for others how to conduct a BRC grand opening in a small town setting. So in this book I will use this grand opening in order to help others plan their grand opening events, for many of the BRCs are working out of small towns in order to reach their nations.

Ransford Essuman and his team of many workers planned and executed the Gomoa Jukwa grand opening. The results of their hard work to plan an effective and successful opening paid off in the results of the event.

Two months before going to Ghana,



In Accra, Fred Nii Kotey also set up local interviews for radio stations.

I considered what should take place in a grand opening of a BRC. I can say that Ransford taught me how it must be done, for I do not think he left anything out of the planning and execution of the event.

Ransford planned for TV, radio and newspaper reporting to record and broadcast the event. Religious leaders from across the southern part of Ghana were invited. Invitations went out to leaders not only in the south, but also to most of the northern provinces of Ghana. As a result, church leaders from many religious groups came from as far as a 10-hour bus trip from the north. This is about half way to the extreme north of the country. Those who could not come, phoned to apologize for not being able to make the trip. I think Ransford invited every dignitary and government official in the provinces surrounding Gomoa Jukwa. As a result, clan leaders and officials in the



Before I arrived in Gomoa Jukwa, Ransford had already bought a refrigerated shipping container, and then started the construction and renovation of the container for a Bible Resource Center. The sign at the right was painted on the front of the container. This BRC Warehouse is located on the main road through the town, and thus is advertised to everyone who comes by.



surrounding area were there. By the time I arrived, I must confess that I was overwhelmed with the presence of so many people who were interested in what Ransford was doing with the BRC.

The evening before the event, several notable political figures and clan (tribal) leaders came to officially welcome me and adopt me as an official member of the Ghana family. I was gracefully adopted as a “citizen” of Ghana and I willingly accepted. Ghanaians are some of the most hospitable people in the world. This is the magic of the culture which I had experienced 35 years before.

The delegation that came to welcome me to the event and country were clan leaders, police officials (that brought some comfort to a weary stranger in a foreign place), politicians, and a list of other dignitaries I have since forgotten. It was a truly humbling experience to be in the presence of such people, people who were sincerely interested in the religious health of their people. Our joking and laughing together into the late night truly gave me a warm feeling of welcome by a people I have grown to respect. They gave a great welcome to a complete stranger, such a welcome that truly identifies this people as a great culture.

A HISTORICAL PLACE

What better place to have a grand opening for the distribution of religious literature throughout a nation than in a historical place of worship that was in



In order to inaugurate a historical event, we met in a historical place, the old Methodist church building whose foundations were laid in 1914.

2014 one hundred years old. I do not think anyone fully appreciated this, but the old Methodist church building in the middle of the village in which the grand opening was conducted was a century old in 2014. The foundations for the building were laid in 1914 and the building was completed in 1922. It was a historical place, and thus what better place to conduct a historical meeting for the distribution of the Bible and Bible materials. Everyone in southern Ghana knew where this old building was located.



So there Ransford and I were advertised on the front of the Methodist church building. I was dressed in a winter coat, which picture he lifted from my book, *Passage to China*. He, on the other hand, was dressed for summer.

Because the Methodist church wanted to be a part of the BRC and the distribution of Bible materials, they

wanted to have the meeting in this old building to let everyone know that they wanted in on the action of distributing Bible materials throughout Ghana.

We have found that if those who operate a BRC do not bring into their system of distribution those of all religious groups, they are doomed to fail from the



This was very innovative. Ransford had the shirts made for all this BRC team members. The top picture is his son who is one of the BRC team members promoting the distribution of the Bible.

beginning. If they try to stay within the cocoon of their own fellowship, others will not come to help. They have failed before they get started. It is the mission of the BRC to provide Bible materials to help everyone in all religious groups to accomplish two very important goals: (1) We are in the business of teaching people to observe all things that Jesus has taught us. If we shut ourselves up within ourselves, then we are dead and denominational. (2) It is our business to promote unity as everyone seeks to establish the word of God as the foundation upon which this unity can exist. The BRC is an opportunity for everyone to come together in a common effort to print and distribute Bible material, as well as print and distribute a “Bible school” of information through the *Teacher’s Bible* and *Biblical Research Library*.

Teaching and unity is our business as members of the organic body of Christ. It is as the behavior of Paul, Silas and Timothy. “*Now when ... they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews ... Paul, as his custom was, went in to them ... and reasoned with them from the Scriptures*” (At 17:1,2). This is our business. We go in with the printing of the Bible. We reason from the Bible with the commentary of the *Teacher’s Bible*, and we seek to convince through the *Biblical Research Library*. Again, this is our business as disciples of Jesus. We do this business through Bible literature because we have this advantage over Paul, Silas and Timothy. And thus, we can reach hundreds of

thousands of people in “synagogues” (religious centers) throughout the world.

A HISTORICAL MEETING

From a historical building we conducted a historical meeting. There was no way for us to determine the number of churches of all religious groups that were represented at the meeting. It was just a phenomenal turnout, which proved one very important point. **There is a great desire on the part of religious people of all faiths, even among traditional churches there is often a desire to work together in the distribution of Bible literature.** The BRC is the perfect opportunity for promoting this unity.



Preachers from all religious groups want to help in the distribution of Bible literature from a Bible Resource Center. God is doing something in Africa to bring people together upon the foundation of His word. We need to work with this.

We estimated that there were at least **fifty different religious groups** represented by those who attended the grand opening. All of these groups know exactly what is taught in the materials that are distributed by Africa International

Missions through the BRCs. The *Teacher's Bible* and *Biblical Research Library*, with several other books that we have sent to southern Ghana over the past seven years, have made it clear what we teach and what we want to accomplish. Ransford had distributed this material throughout the southern part of the country to all the preachers of all religious groups. And since about 1995, some of these preachers were students of the International Bible Institute that Martha and I conducted out of Cape Town. Their coming to the grand opening was an awesome indication that something great was happening in this portion of God's vineyard. The word of God was producing something wonderful. God was raising up a movement! If we would be patient with all those who love Jesus and His word, something good will come. But if we are bent on contention and debated out of a spirit of strife, then we will eventually end up in our own cocoon, denominated from those we seek to take into eternity. It is amazing what loving patience will do in our relationships with those we seek to guide in the word of God.

What was so awesome about this type of meeting was that all the participants felt a great sense of solidarity that was based on a common cause to get the word of God to the people. Everyone present represented different religious traditions, but everyone believed in Jesus, the gospel, and the absolute necessity of making the Bible available to everyone. I wish that every possible contributor to the printing of the Bibles, the *Teacher's*



I wonder who will make it possible for these young people to have a copy of the Bible, either now, or when they grow up?

Bible and the *Biblical Research Library* could have been at this meeting. You would, the rest of your life, direct all your resources to helping these people receive copies of these Bible materials. I promise you, if you have a love for the word of God, you would sacrifice something to give a Bible to these people. Think about this. If you sacrificed going out to eat one time in America, you could print **seven** Bibles for Ghana for the cost of an average steak dinner. Think about this the next time you put down a Porter House steak.

Now when you read the following experience I had with a church in Ghana, keep in mind that we have been working with the preacher of this group for several years. He studied with us in the Institute. He taught the group for which he preached the material that he learned in the courses of the Institute. You must also keep in mind that there are thousands upon thousands of men and churches as this throughout the world who are looking for someone to mentor them in the

word of God. They are doing the best they can with what they know and have. But they need some direction out of the confusion of twisted theologies that they have been handed by their forefathers or denominational structures.

A JOURNEY OF RESTORATION

Every opportunity I have I try to visit the assembly of some religious group. It keeps me from living in a religious cocoon and becoming religiously narcissistic about my beliefs and religious traditions, and by such becoming the judge and lawgiver of others. And too, it helps me to keep loving others while I disagree with some of their opinions and religious traditions. So I was walking down a village road on Sunday morning. A preacher of one of the local village churches previously asked me to come by for a visit on Sunday. So I walked into this “no name” church building and sat down amongst the group of about 100 dedicated worshippers who were assembled there. Of course, I brought with me all my preconceived prejudices by which I would judge this group, since they were not of my religious heritage. But after I stumbled over the stones and rubble of the dirt floors, I made my way to a dilapidated bench, and as self-righteous Jonah, sat myself down.

As the assembly began and progressed, I was caught off guard with my premature judgments. The first order of assembly was some beautiful acappella singing by the choir of the church, whereupon all the

people joined in with a melodious praise of God. Then came a lengthy Bible reading from Ezekiel. Everyone who had what was left of some old worn out Bibles with the first half of Genesis and the last half Revelation worn away, followed every word that was read. Then the assembly had prayer, and again that beautiful singing in some language I knew not. Then the entire assembly rose while a young reader at the front read Romans 8. Then with an open Bible, a lesson was given by one of the members on the Parable of the Sower. Then more reading from the Bible. They asked me to please say something. The only thing on my mind after this experience was the Bible, so about the Bible I spoke. I spoke about the blessed gift of the Bible that was given to us by God, to which everyone, including the ancients (elders), were thoroughly thankful afterwards. With much clapping of hands and rejoicing over the message, the people said, “Amen!”

During the assembly I was overcome by the atmosphere and Bible focus of the assembly. I leaned over and asked the preacher, “Are all the people of this religious group throughout the country so into the Bible as I witnessed in this assembly today?” He answer, “Well, certainly! Isn’t that what we are about?” I thought what a tremendous opportunity! What an incredible open door! While in the assembly I could not help but sit there and pray to God, “Please God, can You not raise up someone to help this religious group throughout all the country to have Bibles? Maybe a million or so.” I must con-

fess that I was overcome with joy mixed with frustration.

I asked the preacher afterward, "What religious group is this?" He answered, "We are a ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH."

After catching my breath, I said to the preacher, "You are not a very good Catholic, and neither is this church. I came from South America and the Catholic priests there want no Bibles near the people." I found out later that the Catholic Church in Ghana is the largest religious group in the entire nation. What an opportunity for the distribution of a study Bible! You have just read a Macedonian call. Don't think that God is not doing something in Ghana with the Roman Catholic Church.

THE PHOTO SHOOT

We were all on the red carpet for the BRC grand opening. If Kodak film was still in production, we would have increased the sales of the company in a day. Our smiling muscles became weary. The digital camera age was a blessing for these events. We all just had a good time taking picture after picture of one another. I stood in one place and people shuffled in and out of the picture.

Thirty-five years before when I went to Ghana I took this very technical piece of electronic equipment with me. It was new on the market and everyone wanted one. It was a pocket calculator. But as I stood there in a small Ghana town, people were taking my picture with their Ipads, cellphones, digital Nikons,

and Canons. Ghana has come a long way since I last passed this way. I asked the group in Accra how many were connected to the Internet. No less than 90% of the assembled group said that they were online. Of course these were the city folks. Electricity has not yet reached most of the villages of nations as Ghana. Nevertheless, the downloading of information off the Internet has become a very real opportunity for church edification and world evangelism.

We have this year rebuilt the website of africainternational.org. The mission of the website is to go into all the world. This mission is becoming a reality by the downloading of **5,000 to 10,000 books a month** from the website. And these downloads are coming from **over 100 countries**. The key to this is free. This is not a website where one "adds to his cart," and then looks for his credit card. You will never reach the world with a "mission website" if you have money on your mind. **Give it away! FREE!** If one plans to use a website for missions, then he must get the concept of capitalism out of his mind.

We have set up zip files on the website where the entire *Bible Research Library* or *Teacher's Bible* commentary can be downloaded in compressed folders. I have seen on Ipads in Africa the entire Library and commentary. When the recipient wants to read a book, or consult the commentary, he simply clicks the appropriate book on his Ipad. But think about this. There are presently fifty-five books in the 2014 edition of the *Biblical*



During the grand opening meeting, three singing groups from three different religious groups were ask to sing during the ceremonies. I don't think there is any culture that can sing as Africans.

Research Library. If one downloads the zip file of the *Biblical Research Library*, then he has a collection of fifty-five books right there on his computer, or in his hand if he has a notebook or Ipad. The grand opening became an opportunity for people to put the author of the material on their Ipads with a picture. It was quite humbling. Such occasions have a tendency to decimate one's humility. This would be a good way to become a narcissist. I identified with the Millennial Generation whose cameras are full of selfies.

One of the interesting pictures that someone took for me during the meeting was a picture of the clan leaders that were present (see cover photo). These were some very humble people. I have found

that in the Western world, we often swell up and lose our words when meeting important dignitaries. Maybe such comes from our respect for such men. But I must assure you that you will have no such feelings around humble people as the clan leaders of Ghana. They are simply real people who like to have a good time meeting others. They are approachable. They have my greatest respect because they are some of the most humble people you will ever meet. Maybe it is just Ghana culture in general. But of all the dignitaries that I met of the clans (tribes) of Ghana—35 years ago and now—I have never met a puffed-up leader. Maybe some of the leaders of other countries could learn from these leaders.

What set these leaders apart from

so many politicians of the world was that they were present at a meeting where the distribution of the Bible was being encouraged among the people. I have always wondered that if we had a grand opening of a BRC in a Western city how many dignitaries would pitch up. If you live in the West, you know the answer to this. But Africa is different. Here are people who are with the people who want the people to be nurtured by the word of God, even the Roman Catholic Church. I have found it sad that many who could contribute have almost lost their desire to partner with these people to get a copy of the Bible to their people. It is simply a travesty of church history that we all seem to go the route of the Ephesian church. In the beginning of their journey of faith, the Ephesians burned their witchcraft books to exalt the truth (At 19:19). But in their spiritual death, they lost their first love for the truth (Rv 2:4). It is simply the way church history is and it happens with everyone who considers their church a restoration movement. And now you know why we must develop the concept of the BRC. We in Africa, or India, or wherever must take ownership of our destiny, for those as Europe who brought us our faith, are losing it.

CUTTING THE RIBBON

During the grand opening some came running to me as I was heavily involved in conversation with some of the visitors. “Dr. Dickson, they are looking

for you to cut the ribbon!” So off I scurried to the new BRC building. A crowd had gathered to witness the official opening of the BRC. The BRC team had encircled the building with ribbons, balloons and decorations. The building was almost finished, and now, it was time to inaugurate it as a BRC Warehouse for Ghana.

(Now I must say something here for everyone else who might want to establish a BRC Warehouse. Ransford came up with what I thought was a brilliant idea. He bought an old 40-foot refrigerated shipping container and dressed it out with a roof and porch (see pictures). It was brilliant and low in cost to build. The key is to buy an old refrigerated container because it is insulated and has smooth surfaces. When dressed up, it does not look like a shipping container.)

Once they escorted me to the front of the BRC Warehouse (shipping container), the proceedings began. This was all after the five-hour meeting of speeches and introductions that had taken place in the Methodist church building.



The “official” cutting scissors were decorated with a bow, and then delivered to the “official cutter.”



Witnessed by tribal leaders, political dignitaries and religious leaders of southern Ghana, a statement was made by our actions that we can all work to get the word of God to the people.

It was now about 3:00 in the afternoon. We started at 9:00 in the morning.

While I stood in front of the Warehouse, they wanted some sort of inaugural speech, which any preacher is willing to do. At this historical moment only one thing came to my mind while looking out over such a God fearing, Bible believing people who represented over fifty religious groups throughout southern Ghana.

“One thing I see and have experienced today,” I said, “is that all of us in all of our differences are at least united in the cause and purpose of this BRC. We are united by our faith in Jesus, and our efforts to get His printed word to all of Ghana.”

That statement brought a resounding “Amen!” It reminded me that at least we can be united by the purpose and mission of the BRC. These centers are the impetus to bring some in a divided Christendom together. Whether a particular BRC continues to exist is an option. What is important is the moment of memories. The greater the grand opening celebration, the greater the opportunity to at least get God-fearing, Bible-believing religious leaders together for an occasion as this. If the Center becomes dysfunctional, at least we made some great memories and distributed a phenomenal amount of Bible literature.

All this ceremony and excitement surrounding a grand opening of a BRC

is the very reason to have such. It is an opportunity to bring everyone of the religious community together for a common cause. It gives the religious community of a nation the opportunity to experience the fellowship of a common cause for the spiritual health of a nation. It is thus an occasion where the religious leaders of a nation can take ownership of the spiritual growth of a nation through the distribution of the Bible products that are offered through the BRC. We want to encourage the spiritual leaders of every nation to invest in such a project for the spiritual health of their nation.

EATIN' GHANA COOKIN'

We were the guest speaker for the Gomoa Jukwa BRC grand opening. And in order to be a good guest, we requested that Ransford feed us good Ghana food while there. Two things honored guest should never do at such occasions. One is to stay off somewhere in an isolated



And then there is all sorts of cooked stuff. Don't ask me what it was.



Small corners for shopping are always close by in the small town.

hotel, and the other is not to dine with local food and folks. We need to always remember that John the Baptist slept in the bush and ate grasshoppers. If one would think himself better than John, then he probably better stay in the cocoon of his own environment. If one cannot eat everything that does not crawl off the table, then he is probably not a good traveler. Part of experiencing the culture of other people is sleeping where they sleep and eating what they eat.

So I was eating all sorts of stuff in Ghana. There was kinke (sp) with meat I did not recognize, and fufu with fish, and recognizable oranges. There were some "meat" pies of every kind and some other stuff that tasted fine, but I have long forgotten what it was. It was all good, but different, just like in China. There



Just cook it on the stove outside.



Cooking and house maintenance takes water, and when you connect with a woman of Africa, you have acquired a “half-ton truck.”

were sometimes when I thought to myself, “Yep, one would have to grow up eating this.” But I had no complaints. I have learned that one can eat almost anything if it is dead and cooked. Thirty-five years ago in a village outside Kumsai, Ghana, we all feasted on rats.



All the food was graciously served and thoroughly enjoyed. Ghana folks are very hospitable.

My Western readers probably just went, “Yuk!” But at the same time they might go out after a rattle snake hunt in Oklahoma and eat snakes. And then what the



At the end of the day, sometimes you can pick up your “Walmart store” and take it home.

Robertson clan might think a delicacy in eating fog legs—I saw that episode—such would strictly be a taboo in Ghana. So when it comes to eating all sorts of stuff, I am biblical. After all, Paul wrote, “*Therefore, whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God*” (1 Co 10:31). So eat up to the glory of God! Make travel an adventure in foods, and enjoy watching Anthony Bourdain in his eating travels for CNN.



Ransford’s wife makes a good plate of fufu, squashed cassava with plantains.



Mama Essuman made sure that each one of her sons had duties to fulfill. I always wondered how long some American boys would last in Africa. Maybe they would be better husbands if Mama Essuman took them for a couple years to prepare them to be good husbands.

FOR THE WEST ONLY

There are no fences in village life in Africa. It seems that everyone is everywhere at every moment. People are coming and going without a glance or hello, for they will pass by one another a few minutes later. A hundred people are living and interacting with one another in their daily routines as a Western family would in the kitchen, living room and bedroom of one house.

As I sat outside writing my journal on the recent trip to Ghana, there were about ten children kicking around a soccer ball, for whom I had to make a few headers, and then a kick or two from an out-of-bounds ball. Women were cutting away at potatoes or pounding maize (corn) or cassava for the evening meal. I was right in the middle of a communal



And after all the eating, don't forget that there are the dishes that must be washed.

social life that has prevailed for centuries in the African village. I thought, "Heaven will surely have this type of community, the type of which we often get a taste on a Sunday in the house fellowships in Cape Town where we have created the same relational community



No one is left out by always have something to do for the family. And, you do it with a smile.



After all the clothes and dishes are washed, then we can sit back and watch a little TV, that is, if we have the antenna high enough on a bamboo pole for good reception.

among brothers and sisters. Martha and I leave about 8:30 in the morning and return about 3:00 in the afternoon, some-



Don't forget to sweep my floor, the duty of Ransford's son.

times later. Every fellowship group is different, but there is always a great deal of fellowship, Bible study, fellowship, prayer, fellowship, lunch, and again fellowship until the assembled have

shared and discussed their week with one another. Such meetings are the reunion of a spiritual family that never seems to want to go home. We are trying to restore the "Africa community," or possibly the first century organic body life in a complicated urban environment whose citizens live a hectic life in the industrial/business world. We have found that some have a difficult time with this type of organic function because all they want is a God who is approached only between an opening and closing prayer. As I learned on this trip into Africa, Westerners alone are not the only ones guilty of creating this "worship hour" god after their own busy schedules. The brethren in Accra explained to me that the church in the big cities of Africa have become quite stagnant because the people have no desire to be active outside their "opening and closing prayer" religiosity on Sunday morning. This is often true of many urban churches in South Africa. Our material quest to succeed has a tendency to do this to us. It helps us to understand why Paul reminded Timothy to remind the rich to "be rich in good works" (1



Always and forever washing clothes. It is an endless task that must be done by everyone in the family.



Does this give you any idea of how many people are coming and going at this house?

Tm 6:18). The problem with having money is that you have a tendency to hire someone else to do your good works for you. The rich will give the money, but they will often not give themselves in doing the works. It is an attitude that lends one to giving to a program that has a great number of staff members. In supporting a highly staffed program, the rich have a sense of security that the work is getting done while they are not doing any good works. And by doing the work, we do not mean having a meeting to make decisions. We mean “boots on the ground.” We have discovered throughout the years that the rich would rather wear polished shoes to a business meeting than boots into the battlefield. Unfortunately, in the urban churches of Africa we are getting too many “polished shoe Christians” in our urban churches.

PREACHING JESUS TO THREE BILLION PEOPLE IN FOUR SECONDS

We are not fanatics about sports, simply because there is so little time to

waste much time on such. But when it comes to the finals of the World Cup in football (soccer) that happens every four years, I want to be there for those last few games. When the five week event is down to the last games, there is a world unity over a sport that comes to the surface that is simply great to experience. And the final games were to be played while I was in Ghana.

My favorite team, because my family and I once lived in Brazil, was humiliated out of the championship play-offs. They eventually had to settle for fourth place. After the Netherlands had defeated Brazil into fourth place, Brazil had to go away from the Cup to rebuild their team throughout another four years when they could try again. But this year over three billion people watched as Germany triumphed over Argentina in the final game in order to take the Cup home.

I will always remember where I was when that last game was played, not because of the game, but because of what happen during the game. I was in Accra, Ghana, sitting on the porch of Fred Nii Kotey’s house watching an old TV set. But what I saw during that game has been burned in my mind, as well as the minds of the more than three billion people who were watching. It was a historical camera shot that had never happened since the creation of the world and will never happen again for so many people who had their eyes glued to the game between Germany and Argentina. In the middle of the first half, while the game was being played, I assume an auxiliary cam-

eraman radioed to the controller of all the cameras that he was focused on an awesome angle of the moon. He probably cried out to the controller, “Turn to me! Turn to me!” The controller switched to his camera angle for just two or three seconds. I would assume that the controller said, “Keep it there until it is perfect and we will be back.” After a few minutes, and while the game was still going on, the controller switched back to that amazing and awesome shot that will never happen again. **It was a shot that preached Jesus to over three billion people in four seconds.** This was during the play of the game when every pagan, Muslim, Hindu, Spiritists, etc. throughout the world was buried into their TV screens and hypnotized by the World Cup final game. They, as me, were immediately and forever imprinted with the image of that large statue of the outstretched arms of Christ in Rio de Janeiro perfectly stood in the silhouette of a full moon. It was just awesome! It was an incredible four

seconds. It seemed that the final game of the World Cup just vanished out of our minds. I still get chills today with that imprint on my mind and the realization that God must have had something to do with this. **He preached His Son Jesus to over three billion people in four seconds.** (This picture was also shown on the scoreboard of the Estado [stadium] of Maracana on July 13, 2014. A memorial picture. Take that, Satan.)

WE SEEK TO PREACH JESUS

So all my “World Cup talk” brings me back to the concept of the BRC. As in the teams that went to the World Cup, in the beginning of a potential BRC, we plow (play) in hope. We are in hope that a particular BRC will be successful in partnering with subsidized Bible materials and then selling the materials to pay for their share. We call the first shipment of materials the Starter Container. The materials of the Starter Container must be sold in order to raise sufficient funds to pay about half the cost of printing the second container of materials. Each container shipment that follows is subsidized in order to continue the distribution of the Bible and Bible materials. We all know that hopes sometimes get tripped up on cultural realities and the bad business management of the initiators of a BRC. It is often the cuffed-hand culture of the country that runs the BRC into dysfunction. This cultural trait is so strong in many countries that it is almost impossible for good-hearted di-



rectors of the BRC warehouses to financially function, for local folks sometimes want to beg for free materials.

One country in Africa that is paying its bills is Nigeria. Two BRCs of this country have been sending in their funds for printing, one for the last five years, the other for two years. These two centers have done well in marketing the AIM products to the general public. The Nigerians seem to know how to pay their bills when it comes to operating a successful center. Through these two BRCs we have distributed five containers of materials to the nation of Nigeria.

What a BRCs must be careful about is starting the project with a great deal of fanfare and optimism, but then realize that the printing bills are too high in order to continue printing the products. If directors do not financially plan their operation, then they will become financially dysfunctional. We do have a lot of folks who want to build the tower, as Jesus said, but are not able to complete it (Lk 14:28-30). They want to start a BRC, and do, but because of poor judgment and management, they are not able to finish what they determined to do. We ask everyone to remember what Jesus said, *“Otherwise, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all who see it begin to mock him”* (Lk 14:29). It is for this reason that we do not do a grand opening for a BRC until it has been in existence for some time. All the dignitaries and principle religious leaders of the Ghana BRC were present to witness the hopes and dreams of the BRC in

Gomoa Jukwa. But Ransford has been operating this center, with a good team of workers with him, for some time. The Center has the support of many religious leaders in Ghana who will make the effort successful. But a warning must be posted for those who want to start a center (build a tower of light to a nation), but fail to continue after receiving the Starter Container of materials. Those who start BRCs and fail will certainly be embarrassed in their community if they financially fail to sell the contents of the Starter Container in order to pay for the subsidized price of the next containers.

So you might be asking why we continue the effort of starting BRCs while knowing that a particular BRC may become financially dysfunctional, and subsequently fail. Keep in mind that throughout the development of a potentially dysfunctional BRC, the AIM products were being distributed to the people. Out of dysfunction comes success. The key thing to remember is that the local leadership at least gave it a good try. The material was still distributed and the word of God continues to teach through the distributed Bible study aids, regardless of the dysfunction of the Center. The region in which the BRC was established loses a resource center for Bibles and Bible research books, but those Bibles and books that were distributed from the initial Starter Container are in the hands of the people and will continue to teach. It is better to have tried and failed, than not having tried at all. We thank those leaders who have worked their best to

reach out to the people with the concept of the BRC.

A 50-50 PARTNERSHIP

Supporters who contribute to partner with a BRC must remember that we are all in a partnership in order to get the word of God and Bible materials distributed to the world. The partnership involves a 50-50 financial outreach. The contributors give 50% to the cost of printing the Bibles and Bible materials. The recipients also give 50% to printing by purchasing the materials. **The contributors thus double the effect of their contributions by the payment of the recipients who pay their 50%.** In this way the purchasers take ownership of their own spiritual growth, and the contributors take ownership of their responsibility to financially functioning as members of the universal body of Christ. Contributors, therefore, must remember Philippians 4:17, that we “*desire the fruit that abounds to your account*” because of your sacrificial giving to make a BRC successful. Those who buy the products of the BRC spiritually grow because they have taken ownership of that which is the foundation of faith building (Rm 10:17). Contributors partner in this spiritual growth. This is what God meant it to be as we all function as partners in fellowship with one another in the universal body of Christ. Therefore, we commend everyone who catches this vision of the purpose of the BRC. We commend the recipients of the products because they

have partnered in payment for the products with people they will never meet. This is the global body of Christ organically functioning throughout the world. Everyone is bearing his load and no one is trying to take a free ride (Gl 6:5).

STARTING A BRC

We receive endless requests from different places of the world from those who want to establish a BRC in their country. These requests come from very sincere and dedicate church leaders of all religious groups who are very interested in the spiritual welfare of their countries. Most are very zealous religious leaders who want to do something for God. Unfortunately, most do not understand the concept of the BRC, and particularly, many do not have the business management skills that are necessary to successfully operate a BRC. Those who have a great zeal for God (preachers) are often the worst people to start and operate a BRC. They are preachers with a big heart, and thus, it is very difficult for them to say “No” to those in their own country who approach them with a cuffed hand. They thus give away their stock and are then out of business. I have always told those preachers who want to start a BRC, “Are you willing to make people mad at you?” Some brothers just get mad when something is not freely given to them. This is the cuffed-hand (entitlement) culture.

The BRC is a financial partnership. The contributor feels good about his give-

ing because the receiver is financially partnering to also pay the printer. Both parties have truly joined in a financial partnership to make the Bible and Bible materials available on a continuing bases in the targeted countries. This is the functioning organic body at work to take the word of God to all the world.

We remind folks of Proverbs 23:23: *“Buy the truth and do not sell it”* If one does not first buy the word of God, then he cannot sell it, which he should not. Buying the truth means taking ownership. As distributors of the Bible, we have to offer people the opportunity to take ownership of a Bible. Too many people have been spoiled with a history of foreign aid. They will place the emphasis of Proverbs 23:23 on “do not sell it.” But their interpretation of the passage is wrong. The meaning of the passage is that we must take ownership of the truth, and then, not give it away. It is when people do not take ownership of the word of God that makes it impossible for a BRC to financially function in a particular culture. Before most recipients even get to



There are preachers in Africa who are going forth to preach the gospel. They sell Bibles from the BRC in order to support themselves in their preaching of the gospel. It worked in America until the 1980s. It is working in Africa.

the “do not sell it,” they have not yet bought it. But everyone must understand that unless the regional leadership takes ownership of their own spiritual growth and destiny, and the spiritual growth of their nation, they will never experience the joy that comes from buying a Bible. The United Bible Societies have for years been giving people the opportunity to buy a Bible that is sold in partnership with contributors. The BRC is the same ministry. It is an effort to multiply contributed funds in partnership with those who buy the AIM materials.

So we have worked out a prospectus of action in order to start and continue a BRC. And since this book will be circulated worldwide, we ask those who want to take ownership of the spiritual growth of their nation to email for a copy of the **BRC Prospectus**. This is a tremendous task with tremendous results. You will reach millions of people through an effective BRC outreach. But remember what Jesus said: *“For which of you, intending to build a tower, [establish a BRC], does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it?”* (Lk 14:28). Local leaders should not consider building a BRC unless they can manage it to complete the task. Otherwise, they will end up not being able to bring it to its final goal, that is, printing Bible materials that are necessary to continually stock the Center.

We know of no other ministry of the word of God that is more effective and comprehensive than a BRC. Other outreach ministries reach a great deal of

people. But when one considers the fact that a BRC is putting Bibles and Bible materials into the hands of thousands of preachers and Bible teachers in a country who are teaching millions in the country on a continuing basis, then the effect of the BRC is most incredible. For example, we have shipped four containers to the BRC of Gomoa Jukwa. **These four containers provided a *Teacher's Bible***

for 17,600 preachers and the *Biblical Research Libraries* for 7000 preachers and Bible teachers who are every Sunday teaching tens of thousands of people. And this is just one BRC. Go figure what this has done for the entire nation. An ongoing and effective BRC is not only a means of reaching the masses, **it is a means of reaching the millions.**

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 Book 33: *21st Century Restoration*
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 Book 35: *Worship God*
 Book 36: *Worship Freely*
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