


The Harvest Times

The Newsletter for Kirk and Nicole Sims

 The Mission Society

Volume III, August 2006

August 2006

The one year mark

It is hard to believe that we have now lived in Ghana over one year. That means that our youngest son, Eli, has spent more of his life in Ghana than in America. In many ways, our children are the best missionaries in our family as they have made the adjustments with more flexibility. We are glad that God made the boys such friendly little missionaries.

As many of you recall, we spent a large part of our first year in the city of Kumasi so that we could immerse ourselves in language and cultural learning. We can already see that our time spent in learning has been beneficial for the long run. Since we are living in a very different culture than that of our homeland, it has been good to understand before attempting to "fix" or help. We recognize, however, that we still have a lot to learn as we attempt to bring Christ and His mission and not our own cultural baggage to Ghana. In April, we moved to Accra, the capital city. Now, after living in the most modern city in Ghana for a few



months, we realize the great wisdom of living in the "hinterland" to learn about the real Ghana. It gave us incredible insights into the more conservative aspects of this society. In looking at missiology and long term change, it is best to seek to engage the core of a culture rather than the fringe. Still, we are happy to be in the capital city now as it is the right place for building relationships with key leaders who have

influence throughout the whole country. Our transition to Accra was a difficult one, and we are happy to have it behind us. We were unprepared for the issues we would face in setting up a house here in Ghana. Issues we take for granted like running water and electricity for example, took us an extraordinary amount of time to resolve. We are happy to report that we are now "settled" and ready for visitors and work teams. God is good!

We have a "permanent" address!

Living in a new culture has made us think about virtually every part of life we did not tend to think about in our home culture. For example, when we were without water for a week, someone suggested that it might be helpful to wash our clothes at a laundry mat. Unfortunately, laundry mats do not exist here. Another question people have raised concerns our address. In the US, because of well over 100 years of rural delivery, we assume the new house number as the

new address. That too is different here. Mail is delivered to post office boxes, which are incredibly difficult to obtain. After visiting a number of post offices, we finally found one post office where the postmaster had about a dozen boxes to distribute at his discretion. After rejecting two other folks while I was in his office, he showed favor on us, and now we are able to rent a box.

The following should be a permanent address for the duration of the time we are in Ghana. Please

update your records accordingly.

**PO Box LG 824
Legon
Greater Accra Region
Ghana**

You can also call or e-mail us. (We only ask that you use restraint in sending e-mails with attachments, and then, please keep them under 500KB.)

**kirkssims@gmail.com
011.233.24.302.9037
nicolesims@gmail.com
011.233.24.302.9038**





Aidan's 3rd birthday



We were asked by a friend to preside over the naming ceremony for a new baby. The men are wearing traditional clothing from the northern part of Ghana.



Worship at a children's home. An old oil jug makes a great drum!



Eli's 2nd birthday



Aidan encounters a bulldozer!

Our neighborhood

Living in Ghana has brought such a new world of experience to me. Never before in my life have I lived so close to the equator. Of course, I need to be aware of the intense sun—both blisters and knowing that melanoma has been present in my pasty white family. By living at 6 degrees north of the equator, many rhythms of the day are very predictable.

Oh how I recall playing baseball at dusk around 8pm with my brother as a child or delivering UPS packages in the 5pm dark during the Christmas seasons. But here in Accra, I can count on something every day just after 6 pm: the setting of the sun. If I am inside and miss the change in light, I have another reminder of dusk: the call to prayer from the loud speakers atop the minarets of our neighborhood mosques.

When we moved to Accra from Kumasi, we had all intentions of mobilizing the Church for mission.

After all, Christianity is strongest in the southern part of the country, and thus the followers of Jesus here are the ones most in need of the imperatives of reaching out. I had just thought that we would find ourselves amongst Christians taking Christians on trips to the least reached places in Ghana and beyond—encouraging the Christians to engage in mission. We weren't going to be the front line folks; we were to be encouragers for *them* to go the front lines. After all, Nicole

and I have been pastors, and that is what we have been doing. That is what I envisioned the Lord leading us to. Of course, that *is* our "day job" as we relate to the division of Evangelism, Mission and Renewal in the Methodist Church Ghana.

When we were looking for a house, we found it a very difficult task. Some people said, "You must live in neighborhood A where all the expats live and where you can relate to people like yourselves." However, that never resonated as we are not here to

reach Americans! Accra is a rapidly developing urban area, so we did the natural thing in looking at where people are moving. We looked to a neighborhood in the "suburbs"—just at the edge of development: where the city converges on old towns. Literally within a stone's throw away (maybe 100 yards), we are to the city limits of a much older town, Madina—yes it is a town named after the place in Saudi Arabia. Mosques are all around us. Every night at dusk—just a few minutes after six, we are reminded of the Muslim call to prayer. Muhammad and Yusef



Our street is often frequented by Fulani herds-men. This picture of sheep and cattle grazing was taken about 20 feet from our front door!



Eli cheering on Ghana in the Soccer World Cup

are among our nearest neighbors—little boys about our boys' ages. Their father is insisting that they follow in his footsteps in Islam. When I was interacting with some Muslim men working on my car, I was challenged to think about my ministry when they all had to break for prayer. "Lord," I asked, "How are you calling me to interact with these devout followers of Allah? How is my life a testimony to the grace of Jesus Christ? How, Lord will you shape me to shine my light before these souls created in your image?" In this vein, I ask that you all pray for us—to know how to reveal the living Christ in our neighborhood. —Kirk



World Methodist Conference

In July, it was an honor to represent the United Methodist Church and the North Georgia Conference to the 19th World Methodist Conference in Seoul, Korea. It was a blessing to be exposed to more of what God is doing around the globe. We were able to meet and network with many world-wide leaders. A highlight for us was being a part of a prayer service at the border of North Korea. We pray that the Lord will use this time in Korea for the Kingdom. Oh, it was a treat to be able to eat a Big Mac and Krispy Kreme doughnuts for the first time in a year!



At a prayer service for peace at the DMZ in Korea.



In front of the Kumnam Methodist Church, the largest Methodist congregation in the world at 130,000 members



Nicole teaching new evangelists in Kumasi



Now we can pound fufu!
Margaret,
Nicole & Gifty



One of our newest missionaries is Margaret Buell, from Mississippi. We have invited her to live with us, and she is a great addition to our household. Miraculously, we are learning that Georgia Bulldog Kirk can get along well with MSU Bulldog Margaret. :)

Teaching

A major role that has emerged for us has been in the area of teaching. We have been asked to be a part of training emerging leaders. We have also been asked to speak at conferences in many parts of the country. Recently, we had the honor of sharing about church growth at the lay conference of the Methodist Church Ghana.



Kirk teaching at a leadership conference in Techiman



We and the Methodist Church Ghana are deeply grateful to Trinity on the Hill and an individual who put money toward this new 15 passenger van. We plan on breaking it in when we journey on a mission trip to Burkina Faso in the next few weeks. This van (trotro) is another praise!

Prayer Requests

Praises:

- God's provision as we have found a home in Accra.
- For Jesus Christ being the same yesterday, today and forever. (Heb. 13:8)
- For our ministry team that continues to undergird us with finances and prayers.

Prayer Requests:

- For deepening our ties with Rev. Emmanuel Asare-Kusi and other leaders who are working in the areas of evangelism and mission.
- To keep our eyes fixed on Jesus and his calling for us here in Ghana.



Kirk and Nicole Sims



 **The Mission Society**

Please send support to:

The Mission Society
PO Box 922637
Norcross, GA 30010

Please designate gifts "Sims Support
5/286/ST"

Please send mail to:

Revs. Kirk and Nicole Sims
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Legon

Greater Accra Region
GHANA, WEST AFRICA

kirkssims@gmail.com; (233)24-302-9037
nicolesims@gmail.com; (233)24-302-9038

Rainy Season



At any point in time, I can wish things were different. I can wish that my clothes would dry out on the line even though it's rainy season. I can wish that my children were both potty trained. I can long to see my family. I am certainly learning more than I ever wanted to about my need for greater contentment in all circumstances. On any given day, I have a choice to make; am I going to focus on the many things that aren't quite right or am I going to focus on Christ and the good he has surrounded me with right now? Unfortunately, there are days that my eyes have glazed over as my vision has become unfocused. After living a year now in Ghana, I can easily admit that I have a lot more rough edges around me than I ever knew about in the states. I am learning how if I had wanted to pretend to be some spiritual giant, I should have never decided to bear children and move to Africa.

And so out of my own struggles, I hope to challenge and encourage you. Where is your focus today? How is your contentment barometer? Are you focused on the details of life that will change or are you focusing on Christ and his sufficiency? Everyday, you and I have a choice to make; will the rain that comes into our life make us wet and soggy or will we insist that it makes us grow and live for Christ? —Nicole

"Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God" (Colossians 3:2-3).