



Here I Am!
Isaiah 58:9



[When you] share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, [and] cover him. . . Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; you shall cry, and he will say, 'Here I am.'
Isaiah 58:6, 7, & 9

What is the Meaning of Christmas?

Afenhyia Pa! That is the closest thing the Twi language has to a Christmas greeting. But it really has nothing to do with Christmas. “Afenhyia Pa” (pronounced *afenshia pa*) is actually closer to our “Happy New Year”. There really is no greeting specifically for Christmas and a little lesson in Twi might explain why.

The Twi word for Christmas is “Buronya”. According to Florence Abena Dolphyne it is derived from two Twi words: “oburoni” a term used to refer to Americans or Europeans and “nya” which means to obtain or to get; (*A Comprehensive Course in Twi (Asante)*, Ghana University Press, Accra, 1996, pg. 7). If we take the literal meaning of the word Buronya our “Merry Christmas” could translate into “I wish you a happy day on which Americans get stuff (but you don’t).”

Now this was a sobering bit of language study for me. I found myself ashamed that when Christians introduced

Christmas to Ghana it resulted in the Twi-speaking residents choosing a name that means “the day when white people get stuff”. And it motivated me to ask, what can we do to take the “Buronya-ness” out of Ghana’s idea of Christmas?

The logical answer seems to be that we ought to allow the Ghanaians to see us giving instead of getting at this time of year. I am not implying that my family will not be involved in exchanging gifts this year. I hope we will do so as a private and balanced part of our overall celebration of Christmas. But I hope we can be involved in modeling “Buronma” (Americans give) more than “Buronya” in celebration of God’s ultimate gift of his Son to us this year. And I invite you to join with us in this.

On page 2 is a list of prayer requests that might just be a dangerous thing to look at. Years ago, while I was

building a retaining wall for my driveway in Wisconsin, I remember calling out to the Lord in frustration, “Won’t you send me just one big stupid guy to help shovel all this dirt.” Quietly but unmistakably I got an answer, “I did, now get back to work.” That day I learned the importance of being careful what you pray for because you might just become the answer to your own prayer.

But despite the danger, I ask you to pray. Please ask the Lord to remove the “Buronya-ness” from the Ghanaian concept of Christmas by moving his children to give this year. Please ask the Lord to provide for the needs of our brothers and sisters in Ghana during this holiday season. And please dare to ask God how he might want you to use this opportunity to give as a means of hearing from his heart to yours, **“Here I AM!”** during this Christmas Season.

Inside this issue:

<i>What is the Meaning of Christmas?</i>	1
<i>Worshiping the Lord through Prayer</i>	2
<i>Colleen’s Corner</i>	3
<i>Dinah’s Doings</i>	3
<i>Here We Are, Update on the McIntyres</i>	4



Worshiping the Lord through Prayer

Prayer truly is worship. Praises are opportunities for us to thank God for accomplishing what only He could do and Petitions are opportunities for us to remember that God alone can do the work that He has called us to in Ghana. So as we pray, we are acknowledging God's holiness and that is definitely worship!



Praises

- We have been granted our **work permits** which should pave the way for our Residency Visas (Green Cards)!
- We have been promised our **Residency Visas** within the next 10 days.
- **Baby Karen** continues to do well. She is crawling all over the place (is a mobile baby something to be thankful for?) and is pulling herself up to her feet so she can grab anything within reach.
- **Colleen** arrived safely back in the States and is enjoying time with her family.
- We thank God for you.
- But mostly, we thank God for Our Savior!

Petitions

- Please pray that God would provide the one-time expenses (housing and transportation) as well as the monthly **Support Needs for Pastor Kofi Gaisie** as we seek to bring him on the FIM-Ghana staff as the church planting director beginning in February.
- Please pray for **the Building Project for GGBC**. We are asking the Lord to provide a piece of property on the main road through Frafraha and for a building that we believe would add legitimacy to this ministry and that God would be pleased to use to draw people in this community to Christ.
- Please pray for the property issues r.e. the **FIM-Ghana Property in Dofoa**. This is property, purchased by Pastor Kwao before he passed away, continues to be in dispute . Pray too for God's provision for the balance due on this property.
- Please pray for **Dinah's visa** to be granted by the U.S. Embassy for her furlough in January 2009.
- Please pray for **Colleen as She Is on Home Assignment (Deputation)**. She is scheduled to travel with Dinah to visit churches and individuals interested in hearing about FIM-Ghana's Medical Ministry.



Colleen's Corner

Colleen is Home for Christmas!

And to be honest, we are all a bit envious. But God has been pleased to allow Colleen to spend the holidays with her family as she is back in the States on home assignment. That is why I am writing this article for her as she enjoys the Winter Wonderland of Whitewater, Wisconsin.

Colleen plans on visiting individuals, groups and churches while she is home, taking the opportunity to share the work of FIM-Ghana's Medical Outreach Ministry. Then in mid-January, Dinah plans on arriving in the States so the two of them can travel to some of these appointments together.

If you would like to hear more about this evangelistic

effort here in Ghana, please contact Colleen using the contact information to the right. I know it would be an encouragement to her to hear from you and I am also confident that you will be encouraged and blessed to hear what she and Dinah have to share with you about what God is doing through their efforts.



Colleen's Contact Information:

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Phone : (608) 883-6732

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Please Send Support to:

FIM, 555 S. 24th St.
Allentown, PA 18104-6666



Dinah's Contact Information:

P.O. Box 10182, Accra
North, Accra, Ghana

Phone :011 233 243 464 062

E-mail: dkwao@fim.org

Please Send Support to:

FIM, 555 S. 24th St.
Allentown, PA 18104-6666
Phone: (610) 435-2641

Dinah Can be contacted through FIM's Home Office while she is in the United States.

Dinah's Doings

Dinah Hopes to Join Colleen on "Home Assignment!"

Well, I guess it is not technically "Home Assignment" for Dinah, but you know what I mean. It is Dinah's hope to be able to travel to the U.S. to visit those who have supported her over the years. It has been four years since she has been able to see you and she wants very badly to be able to make the trip in January.

Please be in prayer with her concerning this furlough time. First, please pray that the U.S. Embassy here in

Ghana will grant her the necessary visa for her to make the trip.

Secondly, since all three of her children are currently attending college in Ghana, Dinah will be travelling alone. Please pray for peace of mind as she leaves her children here for the first time and that all will go smoothly as Dinah's sister stays with Jeremiah and Ruth in the Kwao's home.

Thirdly, please pray for contacts for Dinah while she is in the States. Of course she desires to contact as many of you who have been supporters over the years as she possibly can. But both

Dinah and Colleen would love to introduce new people/churches to what God is doing through their ministry. So please, pray that God would open doors for such ministry. And if God should bring someone to mind, please feel free to contact Dinah using the information on the left. Please note that once Dinah is in the States, she can be contacted through FIM's Home Office whose contact information is also included.

On behalf of Dinah, Afenhyia Pa (see article on pg. 1) and Merry Christmas. May God bless you during this season and the coming year.

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Check us out at
WAMMInc.org

Please Send any Support to

FIM, 555 S. 24th St.

Allentown, PA 18104-6666

(Indicate for whom the support is intended)



Merry Christmas

This will be the second Christmas our family spends away from all that we have become accustomed to at Christmas time. I have not missed shoveling snow, but I have to say that I do miss looking out the window and seeing snow during this time of the year. One friend suggested we cover our lawn with rice, but with the price

Here We Are

Update on the McIntyre Family

of that commodity these days, we opted out.

So we will celebrate another 90⁰ Christmas, look at our snow globes a lot and watch Linus read the Christmas story on *A Charlie Brown Christmas* while we miss the lights, the decorations, and even the snow. Of course what we will miss most of all is the people with whom we are used to celebrating Christmas.

But we pray (and covet your prayers) that we will be able to truly celebrate this Christmas. We are seeking to downplay the gift giving here where gift giving isn't a major part of this time of the year because people simply can't give gifts as extravagantly

as we are used to in the U.S. We want to make sure that we are not part of the unfortunate mindset that surrounds even the Twi name for Christmas (see article on page one of this issue of *Here I AM!*).

And please pray for our family (especially the children) as we miss what we have come to enjoy during the holiday season. Please pray too that we will be able to be an encouragement concerning what Christmas should be about. We want Jesus to be clearly seen through our celebration of this joyful and enjoyable time of year.

Pastor Brian for the McIntyres