



What Is in the Best Interest of the Child?

“What is in the best interest of the child?” This question has become the mantra of almost everyone we talk to regarding orphan care in Ghana. And this is good. But we have learned at least this much in our time in Ghana: Don’t assume you know what someone means, Ask them!

And so we sought and were granted an audience with the national leadership of the Ministry of Social Welfare. We wanted to know what Ghana officially believed to be in the best interest of the child when it comes to orphan care.

We had been told (and this meeting confirmed) that Ghana desires to move away from the traditional institutional approach toward a foster care model. But what we did not know was that Social Welfare desires foster care to be the ultimate solution to orphan care, rather than an intermediate solution on the way to a more permanent placement such as adoption.

This contradicts our belief that permanent placement in a family is truly better for a child than long-term temporary placement in a foster family. But the authorities here insist that adoption is only to be a last resort. They see “permanent” foster care as the ideal for children who will not be reunited with family. This caused us great concern and no small amount of anxiety. We came to Ghana to glorify God by doing what was in the best interest of orphaned children. Now we were being told we weren’t going to be allowed to do what we thought was truly in their best interest.

But then, quietly and calmly God whispered some things to our troubled minds. He reminded us that what is in the best interest of an orphaned child is that he comes to know Jesus Christ as his personal Savior and Lord. We had been focusing on foster care as the intermediate step to the ultimate goal of adoption. God reminded us that even earthly

adoption is an intermediate step to the ultimate goal of eternal adoption. And eternal adoption into His family can happen even from within a foster setting.

Then we began to see that foster care might give us a greater opportunity to share the gospel with children on a consistent basis and in a more controlled environment. It would make it easier for us to give them opportunity to grow in their relationship with God. And such a setting would give us more of an environment of accountability with the caregivers, an issue about which current events have made Ghana very concerned.

You see, God was reassuring us that He is in the decisions being made here in Ghana even when we don’t understand His ways. He was reminding us that there is no contingency he has not considered. In an Elijah-like way He was again saying to us, in His still small voice, ***Here I Am!***

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An Addition to the FIM-Ghana Team



Pastor Kofi Gaisie
(#1 Qualification: Kofi Loves Coffee)

We have been asking you to pray concerning the addition of Rev. Kofi Gaisie to the FIM-Ghana Team. At our most recent FIM-Ghana board meeting, the decision was made and Pastor Gaisie was invited to become our Church Planting Director.

Pastor Gaisie brings years of experience as a pastor here in Ghana. He is also currently the president of the Association of Fundamental Baptist Churches (AFBC) in this country, an

organization of independent fundamental churches committed to the extension of the gospel and the planting of churches throughout Ghana.

We continue to ask you to pray with us for his support and for a one-time gift needed to provide housing for he and his family. We will need to pay two-years up front in order to lease a house (the typical way Ghanaian rental agreements are made).

So please pray with us concerning the \$1,000.00/month we are seeking for his salary and ministry expenses and approximately \$8,400.00 of one time need to provide him with a home and office space.

If you would like to help with this need, please contact Pastor Brian McIntyre at <bmcintyre@fim.org> and I will be happy to talk with you about how you can be involved in extending the gospel through church planting in Ghana.

A Balanced Diet

What a Find! In fact, since the last newsletter we have discovered two things that are making our time in Ghana a bit more bearable.

First, we discovered that our favorite little import store (where we can sometimes find such things as Jif Peanut butter and Mrs. Butterworth's syrup) has now begun to serve

cheeseburgers. I mean it—real cheese burgers that the owner imports from the U.S. Now perhaps if you would come for a visit, you might not be all that impressed, but after 16 months, they taste pretty close to American fast food.

Secondly, I was driving down the road and I not only did a double-take but put on the

brakes and turned the car around immediately. Why? I found a little store that imports Famous Amos Chocolate Chip Cookies.

So now, we can have a truly American Meal. Coke is available and with Cheeseburgers and Cookies, who could ask for a more balanced Meal?

A New Family for Abena



Abena (AKA Baby Karen)

As of the date of the writing of this article, Abena's (Baby Karen) new mom is in Ghana for the first court appearance relating to her adoption. But more importantly, this will be the first time that she gets to see her beautiful little girl.

Please be in prayer for Abena, that she will adjust well to her new family (I am sorry that we

can't share a family profile at this time for confidentiality's sake). But God will know as you pray.

Also, please pray for Abena's new family, that they too will adjust and that they will have the patience needed to endure what can be a long adoption process. They are excited to welcome her home.

Finally, please pray for us as we go through the process of separation being foster parents brings with it. It is the hardest part of what God has called us to do.

And praise God with us that this, the first of the children we have been allowed to care for, is being placed in a Christian Ghanaian family.

Dinah's Doings

I want you to know, brothers, that I have often intended to come to you (but thus far have been prevented)
(Romans 1:13)

Sometimes, for reasons undisclosed to us, the Lord decides to prevent things from working out the way we intend them to. Paul experienced this when God prevented him from travelling to Rome even when he thought it was needful for him to go for the sake of mutual encouragement. It seemed like the right thing to do, but God had other ideas.

As you know, I have been planning to come to the U.S. to see you all again for over a year now. I wanted to thank you personally for all the assistance you have given us for the past 4 years. And it seemed like the right thing for me to do because it was time for my scheduled furlough with FIM. But, in his sovereign wisdom, God has decided not to allow this to happen. He has made this clear through the U.S. Embassy's refusal to grant me the necessary travel visa. And after

three attempts, FIM has asked me to make no further applications at least until next year.

And so it is with a sad heart but with confidence that the Lord knows what is best that I write to you. So, since I will not have a chance to see you face-to-face to thank you for your financial and prayer support, Please know that I do appreciate your assistance which enables me to continue to serve the Lord here in Ghana.

Together in Ministry, Dinah Kwao



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Update on Colleen

You will notice that *Colleen's Corner* does not appear in this issue of **Here I Am!** That is because Colleen has found it necessary to resign from FIM and to remain at home in the U.S.

As you may recall from the December newsletter, Colleen travelled home to spend some time with her family for the

holidays and to wait on the Lord for additional support she would need to return to Ghana.

But God chose to answer her prayers differently than she expected. Rather than bringing in additional support, he showed her through the offer of a job back at Inspiration Ministries that his desires for

her right now are for her to be back home with her family.

We pray that she will be able to come back on some short-term trips and that God will use her mightily where he has put her just like we prayed he would use her while in Ghana.

Does Your Family Eat Bananas?

This is the question that I was asked just three days ago. Does your family eat bananas? And so, still rather naively, I answered, "yes." To which a dear man from our church responded that he would come by the house in a few minutes.

When he arrived I went to the front door to find our care-

taker walking out the gate with him to help him carry his load. It was indeed bananas. As you can see by the picture, it was a lot of bananas. It was probably 75 pounds of bananas. He had simply bought and brought the whole stalk with him.

Tommy loves bananas. So when he saw this mother-load

his first thought was, "Wow when they get ripe I can have two every day." I responded, "Tommy, when they get ripe you can have two every hour!" (since they will all ripen at the same time).

Oh well, another day in Ghana.





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(Indicate for whom the support is intended)*



Derek, Brian & Debbie, Jessi, Tommy

We Need Prayer!

In the feature article on page one of this edition of *Here I Am!*, I shared with you what we have learned concerning orphan care here in Ghana. It has become very clear that foster care is the direction of choice not only of Ghana Social Welfare but also of the Lord.

This means we find ourselves in the position of having to develop a foster care plan that will be in keeping with

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governmental guidelines and that will maximize the opportunity to introduce at-risk children to Jesus.

Please pray with us as we seek God’s wisdom on how to develop such a program. Ghana is open to Christian influence within such a program, and for that we are thankful. So as you pray would you please bring these items to the Lord on our behalf:

- 1) We need to clearly define our plan for orphan care in a foster setting.
- 2) We need the human resources necessary to operate this program (including a licensed social worker on staff).
- 3) We need to develop a foster parent training program to equip Ghanaian Couples to

parent and disciple these children

- 4) We will need the resources necessary to provide for the care of children
- 5) We will need facilities in which such care can be given.

Thank you for your support and concern in the past, please continue to uphold us in prayer.

Pastor Brian for the McIntyres