

# **Africa Journal**

(Sun) Feb. 28, 2010

Hello Friends,

I thought it was probably high time that I began journaling our travels here in Ghana. My cousin Phil Yoder and I left Indiana with snow flurries and wind on Feb 26. We flew out of South Bend to Chicago and from there to Frankfurt, Germany. Our tickets were through United Airlines in partnership with Lufthansa. We had wonderful flights with exit row seating on the flight from Chicago to Germany. Upon landing in Germany, we discovered that through several earlier changes to our flight schedule we had no booking on the flight from Germany to Ghana. Instead they only had the prior booking for the 25<sup>th</sup> of Feb and this was the 27<sup>th</sup>. After checking at two different desks hoping to get a confirmed seat on the flight and to iron out the misunderstanding, we approached the third ticket counter with not a little trepidation and many prayers. God is gracious and the friendly Lufthansa agent not only straightened out the issue, she gave us a free upgrade to business class and we rode in style with lots of eating and plenty of room to stretch out. Wow! Is God good? Amen!

Arriving in Ghana on Saturday the 27<sup>th</sup> we made it through immigration and customs fine and were greeted by Ron, Carter and Arielle. After a very dusty ride over Ghana's roads that are eternally under construction we arrived at the Bontrager's very welcoming home and were greeted by Audrey, Kalli and Savannah. We unloaded the tubs for Ron's at their place and took a short tour of the house, and then Ron took Phil and me to the guesthouse that is just around to the back of Ron's. We were shown to very nice rooms and got sort of settled in before heading back to Ron's for a supper of pizza, salad, and bread sticks. After sitting and chatting over supper, we moved into the living room while Ron, Audrey, and the children gleefully opened the tubs from home. What rejoicing and exclamations as the children found one treasure after another! Little Savannah brought quite a number of items to me on the couch and deposited them there before heading back for another discovery. Then it was bedtime and after a nice cool shower, I drifted off to sleep. Got up this morning at 6:00 am to work on the message for the morning and get ready to be at Ron's by around 8. We had a breakfast of baked oatmeal before piling in the van and heading to Ayaa for worship at the church pastored by Pastor Ema. We got a little turned around and backtracked a few times before finally showing up in the middle of Sunday school. We enjoyed a rousing time of worship African Style where virtually everybody leaves their seat and dances and sings before sitting down for the sermon (perhaps this would eliminate some sleeping our own services). This morning there were two sermons. I preached first on Gen. 16 and the God Who Sees and then Phil followed with a sermon on "Walking as Children of Light." Following the main service we had special prayer and anointing for the sick and then took a quick tour of the village. Pastor Ema showed us the harvest from the crop the church had planted to raise money. What a wonderful idea. When they purchased land for their church they purchased a little extra so that they could raise money by working together to farm the land and raise a crop. By the way, I forgot to tell you, although it was snowing on Friday when we left, we are experiencing the height of summer

right now. It is very warm. I believe my body is trying to figure out why I don't just climb out of the oven and go shovel snow. We returned to Ron's and two of us went straight for the fans and hogged the spots where the airflow was the greatest. I don't mind telling you that one of the two was John Yoder. After a wonderful lunch of meat, potatoes, carrots and salad topped off with a wonderful FROZEN (that word is wonderful) pineapple dessert, Phil and I headed to the guesthouse where Phil is sleeping and I am typing this email. Tonight we will be at the church that Pastor Steven leads in Adeisu. Please be in prayer for the churches here in Ghana. Pray that we could bring a message of encouragement and blessing and sound doctrine.

**(Mon) Mar 1, 2010**

Hello All,

Greetings in Jesus' name from a wonderfully hot Ghana! What a day we have had! But first I must bring you up to date with the happenings of last night. After a good rest Sunday afternoon, Phil and I headed back to Ron and Audrey's for some watermelon, popcorn, and wonderful mangos. ☺ After supper Ron, Phil, and I drove to Adeisu to visit the church pastored by Pastor Steven. When we arrived the service was in full swing. Traffic is unpredictable around here so we were late arriving. The littlest things can cause a snag. Wow! The sights, sounds, and smells ☺. The church last night was larger than the church in the morning. The church is growing. It is amazing that this church that fit in one room in house a year and a half ago is now meeting in this new big building and had it decently full. PTL! Phil and I both spoke again last night and things appeared to go well. We got done in a decent time. After the service Ron told us that he had received a call from Pastor Joseph (one of the other CFC pastors), saying that his wife was very sick and he wanted to take her to the hospital but they didn't have enough money to admit her. So we ran some money to him (about 45 minutes further one way) and by the time we got back to Ron's it was around 10:15 pm. Phil and I headed back to our rooms and headed off to dreamland. This morning, Phil and I opted to stay at the guesthouse and study for the upcoming seminar. It was a good morning but rather quiet. Phil got room service this morning of tea, toast, and an omelet. I'm not sure why they by-passed my room. It must be Phil's travel savvy. He continues to give me little travel tips ☺. While we were whiling away the morning hours in the relative comfort of air conditioning, our fearless director on the ground here in Ghana, was up at the land directing the lifting of the poly tanks and digging a trench and laying water lines. And his industrious wife was busy with the children and whipping up a lunch for at least one hard working man and the two resident bookworms. This afternoon our project was to drive to the seminar location with Pastor Felix to prepare for the seminar. Ron decided it was time for me to cut my teeth in Ghana traffic, so I took the wheel rather hesitantly. Well, I took them on a rather tame ride except for the bumps (you remember the little knee bouncing game "This is the way the ... rides?" Well in Ghana, it is the way the bronco buster rides). We eventually made it to the school and then sweated our way through an inspection of the facility. Ron offered to let me drive further, but I declined thinking I had enough excitement for one day ☺. Pastor Felix hopped out and made arrangements with two local chop bars to provide lunch for the participants of the seminar. After those arrangements were made we stopped for notebooks and then at the Toyota dealership. Wow! When we stopped at the

Toyota dealership, Ron asked if we wanted to come in. Since he was just stopping to get a bill redone, I assumed that he would only be a few minutes. I said we would just stay in the van and wait. Here again Phil showed his travel savvy and immediately stated that he was curious as to what this Toyota dealership was like and hopped out to go with Ron. I bravely remained at my post feeling much like the wiener in a slow cooker. After several minutes, Ron returned with a steaming cup of machine coffee in his hand and asked if I didn't want to join them in the AC. While I was enjoying the slow cooker experience, I thought I should probably check it out, I mean it is not every day you get to see the inside of a Toyota dealership in Ghana. Turns out it was a good thing Ron came when he did. By the time they were able to rework the bill, I believe this wiener would have been well done. Because he was feeling so much cooler after drinking his cup of coffee in the AC, Phil was pretty sure that he had evidence that drinking a warm drink on a hot day cools you off. As you can see we're a fairly scientific bunch over here. We made it back to Ron's where Audrey had a delicious stew and cucumber and tomato salad with garlic toast and topped off with mango milkshakes. Awesome! Before supper we played a little ball with the children. Carter, Arielle, and Callie all had their turns at bat and Carter even hit two balls over the fence. Now here I am again, thanking God for you, our friends, who are praying for the mission over here and also for seminar that is just another day away. Please pray that God will speak to each one who is a part of the seminar. Pray that God encourages the pastors here in their very difficult job. I have a new respect for the job these men do as we have been going and visiting their churches. Continue to pray for the ongoing work of building the school. Nothing is easy in Ghana. God is able to do much more than we can ask or think. Keep on praying.

**(Tue) Mar 2, 2010**

Good evening friends,

Greetings again in Jesus' name. His name is wonderful, and right now I am thankful for His grace in designing cool air and giving someone the idea of making air conditioning. Wow! Today was a scorcher reaching 100 degrees in the shade. Talk about drinking lots of water. Not only was it a scorcher, but today the AC went off around 8:30 and stayed off until about 5:30 pm. It is amazing how many parts of your anatomy get rather sore and rashly in this heat. 😊 This morning started off fairly quiet, Phil and I stayed in the guesthouse studying and Ron headed off to the land to raise the second water tank and get the water hooked up. He then went to Nsawam to see about getting a refrigerator repaired. While there, the repairman said he believed he could repair the AC in the van so Ron called and asked us to bring the van to Nsawam. So my second bout with Ghanaian roads, this time it wasn't so much the roads, but the parking lot. Since I missed the shop on the way in, I had to backtrack and this meant that I had to find a break in the traffic and then make a quick sprint for the driveway. The Shop is set back from the road about 75 to 100 feet and to get to it you drive over a cliff, plunge in between taxis in various states of repair and brake sharply before the row of miscellaneous appliances.

Something tells me that in Ghana, you simply hit the gas, close your eyes, steer wildly while honking the horn and then pray for grace. ☺ The repairman did fix the AC. PTL! It appears it simply needed a Freon charge. Now to get out of the parking lot was another matter. I'm believing that some grappling hooks, chains and some stout hiking boots would be better equipment for getting out of the gorge and back onto the road. I simply could not get enough of a run to back up that slope. On the dusty uneven ground, I continued to spin out. After some expert coaching from Ron, I was able to get turned around and then get enough of a run to charge up the slope of Everest and bound onto the road nearly cutting off a chugging Tro Tro. Phil and I then had a rather uneventful ride back to the land site for the new school. We drove up to the school and thought about stepping out of the glorious AC which the newly fixed van was cranking out. When we finally figured we must face the inevitable heat, we oozed out of the van and I nearly stepped on a lizard (they sure are frisky little fellows). Down the hill a ways the workers were mixing cement and making block. We wandered down there as we waited for Ron, but it was so hot we couldn't even enjoy watching them work. In all seriousness, the work is going well and progress is being made on the land, I am quite impressed with the seriousness and excellence with which Ron is approaching this project. I was also blessed to see the workers and the respect they have for the ministry. God is truly building this ministry and I am grateful. Ron arrived at the landsite shortly and produced a couple of cokes which we were more than happy to receive. After walking around the landsite Phil and I headed back to the house where Audrey very graciously fixed us a nice lunch after which we ended up back at the guesthouse. The electricity was still off, but they do have a generator so we could at least run the ceiling fans. We spent the rest of the afternoon studying and tonight headed back to Ron's for Supper. Audrey had fixed a nice meal of fried rice, salad and plantains topped off with a dessert of white pineapple and cake. One thing for sure we don't go hungry around here. ☺ Tomorrow is the big day! We begin our first day of the Pastor's seminar at 8:30 am. Please pray that God will speak His truth tomorrow and that we will be able to have a sweet time of fellowship with the pastors. We believe that God has ordained this time and we are praying that it will be a time of enrichment and encouragement. Please pray for the pastors of the CFC churches. My heart goes out to them when I see the difficult job they have in pastoring with very few resources and facing many desperate situations in their congregations. I don't know what it would be like to pastor a congregation where the majority of the people had only one or two meals a day, not by choice but because they're not sure where the next one will come from. And this is probably one of their smaller troubles. I know that they are doing a good job with the resources they have and I pray that these next two weeks would be a time of refreshing for them. Pray also for Phil and I that God would strengthen our stomachs. The catering for this event will be done by a local chop bar just around the corner and we think the menu will be fufu. ☺ We love you all,

Have a good night!!  
John Yoder

**(Wed) Mar 3, 2010**

Good Evening again Friends,

Greetings one and all in the precious name of Jesus! Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God. And what manner of love that we should be able to enjoy worship with a bunch of men from a culture that is foreign to us. The first day of the seminar went well. There were around 20 men there today and God moved among us. As with many events like this there was the usual starting a bit behind because of last minute details that needed attending to. Pastor Felix and Ron opened the seminar and Pastor Ben led in a time of worship through singing and prayer. Phil taught the first session explaining why it is important to follow Jesus today. We had a short break and then John spoke on Jesus and the Law. We then broke for a lunch of Banku. The pastors loved it and put it down the hatch in short order. Phil, Ron and I on the other hand approached the meal with a little more caution and found ourselves gingerly testing our hand at pinching off the hunks of fermented maize paste in a spicy stew with fish. Phil was a real trooper and bravely kept at the meal. I managed to keep down the 10 or more balls of paste that entered my mouth but decided that I really wasn't that hungry all of a sudden. We decided that the stew was rather good but we could do without the banku. I believe tomorrow the menu is kinky (sp). After lunch we got started again at 1:00 pm. Pastor Felix moderated as Ron had an appointment with some block masons at the land. John then spoke on the portrait of Christ as a Shepherd and Phil spoke on Christ as the Lamb of God. We ended the first session with some open questions and answers. Then the men broke into small groups to discuss among themselves the topics of the day. I actually believe that this was a highlight for them. It was very hard for Pastor Felix to close that session of the day. ☺ After the seminar we headed back to Ron's to drop off the van. We had a real load of Ghanaians with us. Phil wondered if I felt I was driving a tro-tro? It was all good. After dropping the van off at Ron's, Phil and I headed to the guesthouse. I thought I might do some studying but the heat had taken its toll. I napped instead. Phil on the other hand spent the time in study. Around 5:00 we headed to Ron's where we found Ron washing the back seat of the pickup. Evidently when they had picked up lunch some had spilled on the seat so Ron was washing it. Tonight we had a supper of mashed potatoes with chicken gravy with a Ramen noodle salad and bread topped off with Mango cobbler and ice cream for dessert. Bless Audrey for all the wonderful cooking and for being such a welcoming hostess. Tonight we were so pleased to walk out of the house to the porch and feel a breeze at 86 degrees. It really felt cool. It has been so hot. Please be in prayer about the next two days of seminar this week. Especially pray for Phil as he will be preaching twice tomorrow on the subjects of God's Design for living with our fellowmen and the Biblical Foundation for Peace. Please continue to pray for me (John) as I prepare for Friday's session on God's design for marriage. Continue to pray that everyone meets God at this seminar. Pray that more men would come. Pray that our health would hold up in this heat. Pray that we can be an encouragement and a blessing to the pastors here. Most of all pray that God is glorified.

In Christ,  
John

**(Thur) Mar 4, 2010**

Dear Friends,

Greetings in the precious name of Jesus! He is doing a real work here in Ghana. It is a blessing to see what God continues to do through people who are committed to serving Him.

Our day today was much like yesterday, we started for the seminar venue around 8:00 this morning. We had a good load of people and needed to stop for "pure wata" before continuing on to the school. We arrived late due to the unpredictable nature of Ghana traffic☹. But we still got in on the rousing time of worship lead by Pastor Joseph. I am not certain what happened to the distribution of rhythm in the various people groups, but it is obvious that I am in a league of my own over here; although Phil may think we are in a league together. Let's just say that I could wiggle and clap all I want and I would never look as intentional and graceful as these brothers in Ghana. (Don't worry; I won't try to demonstrate on my first Sunday back.)

Pastor Felix moderated for the day as Pastor Ron needed to be at the land site. Pastor Phil preached the two morning sessions teaching a wonderful lesson on "God's Design for Living With Our Fellowman" in the first session and "Biblical Foundations for Peace" in the second. Lunch today was kinky. Not that it was anything risqué, the name of the particular dish today is "Kinky". It is much better than Banku in my estimation, Phil and I disagree on this point. He likes the Banku better. I think that I prefer the sour silage taste of "kinky" to the sour stomach taste of "banku". Tomorrow by popular vote we will again have kinky. Boy wouldn't a Big Mac taste good about now. ☺ The afternoon session began again with worship in singing lead by Pastor Joseph (by the way his wife is doing much better). John then shared on the portrait of Christ as the True Vine and Phil followed with a portrait of Christ as King. The last session of the day, the men again split into groups for discussion. We then met back together for a bit as the leaders of each group gave a brief synopsis of their discussion time. The pastors really seem to like the interaction with each other in those settings. Pastor Ron came at the end of the last session and after we had dismissed the group, we met with the CFC pastors for their monthly meeting. Friends, I have to tell you, I am so humbled to see the determination with which these pastors minister to their villages. I keep trying to put myself in their shoes and I am seeing that I would never make a good village pastor. I am convinced God lead CFC in the right direction when He led to the formation of a Bible institute. These men are far more effective by the training they have received and as Ghanaians; they are far more effective in the rigors of village ministry than most of us would ever be. I believe that this ministry will continue to impact the nation of Ghana as we continue to train the men and women that God brings to the Bible Institute. Continue to pray for the pastors here. They have a very difficult job and yet they do it cheerfully enduring the discomfort and hardship so that the Kingdom of God is expanded.

Phil rode with Ron from the school today and they arrived at the house shortly after I finished the daily tro-tro run. Since many of the pastors live out beyond Ron and Audrey, they will catch a ride out of town with us and then take public transportation from here to wherever they are going. We had a fun meal tonight out on the porch at the Bontrager's. It was much cooler and I hate to admit it but 89-90 degrees really does begin to feel cool at the end of these scorching days. The meal was hot dogs, baked beans, and potato salad and just when I thought it couldn't get any better, Audrey whipped up delicious and attractive pineapple milkshakes. I honestly

don't know where she comes up with all of these good things to eat. I have to tell you that as much as we tremble over the lunch menu, we are positively like Pavlov's dog when we hear the word supper. Audrey has come through every time☺. By the way, please pray for Savannah. She has been battling a bit of a bug. Pray that she would be able to rest and that things would clear up for her soon. What a little trooper. We have been having fun with Carter, Arielle, and Callie as well. They are such excellent entertainers and when you hear the "incoming" you had better guard your lap. ☺

God bless each one of you, we love and miss you all.

In Christ,  
John Yoder

### **(Fri Morn.) Mar 5, 2010**

Hello Friends,

Weary greetings in the name of Jesus! ☺ I am so thankful for the promise that when the outward man is perishing day by day, the inward man is being renewed. What a wonderful day, praise the LORD! This is Friday evening and the first three days of the seminar are over. God has moved in a mighty way this week. I see the pastors loosening up a bit and talking with each other about the seminar and a variety of questions that have been raised by the seminar. It is good to see the eagerness with which they discuss the topics among themselves. Today was Phil's first attempt at Driving in Ghana. He did well and we made it to the seminar in good time. John preached this morning on "God's Design in Marriage." The next two sessions of the day were the "Sabbath" and "Persecution. Phil and John shared the responsibility for these two sessions. We had "kinky" for lunch again today. As we have done before, Phil and I shared a portion. I ate a little more today, but I am not certain I could handle this diet on a regular basis. In addition to the kinky, they added two fish to our bowl. I am generally fond of fish, but seeing the entire fish, eyeballs and all has a way of making even kinky seem a little more desirable. Phil stated that if he had caught the fish, he would have thrown them back. They were a bit undersized so that our eating included small pieces of meat picked from a variety of fins and bones. I was a little taken back when I got toward the center of the fish and noticed a significant amount of tubing still in place. Evidently this was very much the whole fish. Phil noticed that many of the men went for the fish head first of all. As I recall when we got up from the table the fish heads on our plates were still intact. The electricity also went off during the seminar and we had a generator for the morning, but in the afternoon even the generator malfunctioned and we had an hour of preaching with no fans and no sound system. I was wishing for a bath towel by the time the generator came back on. Those little white hankies certainly leave a lot to be desired when you are preaching in 100 degree weather with very little air movement and high humidity. I am thankful to God for answering our prayers for this seminar. We have been praying that God would encourage these pastors in their work of ministry and I believe we are seeing great evidence of that. My heart goes out to these men who (some of them live in mud huts no larger than our living room) need to study and prepare

for a sermon in the heat and humidity with very few resources to draw from. I have a full time job just trying to get comfortable in this heat let alone doing serious study. They also have serious obstacles in transportation. That inhibits them from gathering together very often. I have been blessed to see the fellowship that is happening at the gathering times within the seminar. God is doing a good work. Keep us in your prayers. Phil is leaving to visit a first cousin serving in Liberia. He will be returning to Ghana on Monday evening. Pray for his safety on the flight and that he will be able to bring encouragement and refreshing to the saints in Liberia. We are also continuing to prepare for the seminar sessions next week as well as the village ministry on Sunday and on Tuesday. Keep Ron, Audrey, Carter, Arielle, Callie, and Savannah in your prayers as well. Savannah seems to be on the mend after her bout with the “bug”.

In Christ,  
John

**(Sat) March 6, 2010**

Good Evening all,

I just wanted to give you a brief glimpse of our Saturday in Ghana. Audrey made a hearty breakfast of biscuits and gravy this morning with fresh pineapple and mango. We then took Phil to the airport and got him on his way to Liberia where he is visiting a first cousin for the weekend. The rest of us then went to a trade center. It kind of reminded me of a cross between the flea market in Shiphewana and the Commercial exhibits at the Elkhart Co. 4-H fair. We left there and headed over to the Accra Mall. The AC in the place was wonderful. ☺ Inside we browsed a little and Audrey picked up some food items and then we headed to the food court where we had delicious lunch of chicken sandwiches and “chips” French fries. We topped the meal off with some delicious ice cream. After the mall experience, we headed back to Ron’s and after unloading the van, Ron, Carter, Arielle and I headed into the local village to make copies of the plans for the new school for prospective builders. Unfortunately the copy place was closed so we stopped for fuel and headed back to the house. When we got back, Carter and I set up some empty water bottles on a bench and then we practiced our marksmanship with Carter’s slingshot. We then played some wiffleball. After a while Carter, Arielle, and I ended up on the couch in front of a fan reading stories. Supper tonight was spaghetti and bread sticks with a very tasty salad. For dessert, Audrey whipped up another one of her pineapple milkshakes. Tomorrow we are headed to Kwinyako - sometimes I spell like the word sounds ☺. This is where Pastor Joseph is and Lord willing we are planning to worship with his church tomorrow morning.

**(Sun) Mar 7, 2010**

Dear Friends,

Greetings in Jesus' name after another 98 degree (in the shade) day! I believe that I may be getting adjusted to the heat somewhat, but it still feels like I am pickled in my own brine by the end of the day. We traveled to Kwanyako today for the morning service at the church where Pastor Joseph ministers. It is a small church but for being only several months old, I was blessed by the 15 to 20 people present. We arrived again in the middle of Sunday school and the lesson today was on listening and obeying the instructions of God. Naaman was the principle illustration and we were instructed to obey the Word of God even if it seems ridiculous or simple. Naaman was hoping for the prophet to pray over him, but instead, he simply received instruction on getting rid of his leprosy from a servant. If you want the blessing of the Lord, obey His Word. A good lesson for all of us. Following Sunday School we had a time of worship in singing. It is always interesting to me that no matter the size of the group or the quality of the voices, everybody joins in some way. Singing is the time to rhythm ☺ your way around the sanctuary through clapping, swaying, dancing, etc. It is really neat to see the little children joining in. Nobody seems to be inhibited and they sing out and nobody seems to mind if you sing the wrong note. There are a number of souls that sort of freestyle their way through the song intersecting the melody line at various intervals (enough that you are pretty sure they are singing the same song.) It is a joyful noise all the same and there can be no doubting the depth of feeling or passion for the song. I shared a message from Zech. 13 about the Fountain opened for cleansing. Following the service, we then headed back to Nsawam with Pastor Joseph and his wife Lydia. They were headed to a funeral this afternoon. (I mentioned last week that Lydia had been very sick and Pastor Joseph was concerned, so much so that he wanted to take her to the doctor. Today we found out that after several months of marriage, she is expecting a baby and that explains some of the issues she was dealing with last week. ☺ ) Audrey had packed a picnic lunch that we were planning to eat on the way home, but because we had some unexpected guests for the drive to Nsawam, we waited to eat until reaching Ron's place. We then sat down to egg salad sandwiches, popcorn, and fresh veggies, with mini candy bars for dessert. I fear I will not arrive home any lighter than when I came. We do eat well around here. Ron and I did the dishes (most of them anyway) and then we stood around in the kitchen and chatted the afternoon away. A little later in the evening I headed back up to the guesthouse for a bit and then back to Ron's where we looked at the plans for the land development and chatted about the possibilities. I am excited about the potential. It will be beautiful to see what all God will bring about once this building is up and the school is in session again. There is a real hunger to learn. Continue to pray that God will move hearts to be involved in this worthwhile ministry. There are a lot of churches in Ghana, but here is also a lot of need. Many villages are very illiterate when it comes to Scripture. They are aware of God, but many need guidance to what it means to obey Him. They want the blessing but they don't want any responsibility. (Wait, that sounds like I am describing us.) Well maybe we are a little like that when you think about it. God bless you all for praying. Please pray for Phil. He is to be flying back from Liberia tomorrow. Pray that all goes well with the Flight.

In Christ,  
John Yoder

**(Tue) Mar 9, 2010**

Greetings Friends,

I didn't get the journal written last night so here it is on Tuesday morning. Yesterday (Monday) I spent the morning at the guesthouse working on emails and studying and reading. I had a profitable morning getting ready for the rest of the week although I still have a good bit of work to do. We have another 3 days of teaching and God is doing such a work in me as well. I am seeing a side of Ghana that I have not seen before. Or perhaps, this is simply building on previous experience and enabling me to see a bigger picture. Whatever the case, I certainly feel as if I have been impacted more deeply by the realities that face the Ghanaians on a daily basis. My heart is heavy in many ways because of the enormity of the work. But I am cheered when I remember that "Faithful is He who calls, who also will do it." How do you teach Biblical truth in a culture that readily accepts it as working in America, but somehow cannot see it applying in Ghana? There is a significant barrier in teaching because so many Biblical teachings seem out of place in this culture. As I have run up against this I am constantly asking myself the question, "How much that is really Biblical fits into American culture?" To live truly as Christ, taught in the Sermon on the Mount and really throughout His entire earthly ministry, does not fit into any earthly culture. It all seems so clear here, where I believe that the churches need to grasp these truths and apply them. But when it really comes down to it, how well do we live the culture of Christ as taught in the Word? Enough of philosophy. I had lunch with Ron's yesterday and then Ron and I headed to the land site where the masons are laying out the area in preparation for digging the footer for the school building. On the way to the landsite Ron needed to stop and purchase a few more shovels. Here is an interesting item. The mason brings his crew and contracts to dig and pour the footer, but the landowner or contractor is to supply the equipment. In this case that is a relatively small investment, but it is interesting nonetheless. I must say that if they are willing to run the shovel, I would be happy to buy it for them. Needing to purchase several more shovels (Ron already had a number of new shovels in the back of the truck) we stopped at a local shop. Ron has purchased items here before and so the proprietor obviously knew Ron. I opted to stay in the AC while Ron hopped out and went to negotiate for the shovels. I was a little perplexed when I saw Ron grab the first shovel off the wall and lean on it very hard. That wasn't as amazing though as the fact the shovel simply bent quite flexibly. I observed as Ron said something to the proprietor and then saw him laugh at the response. They continued to negotiate and Ron tested each shovel finally picking several that did not bend under his weight. When Ron got back into the pickup he wondered if I had seen the difference in the strength of the shovels. They all looked the same on the wall and they are the same price but not all shovels in Ghana are created equal. I replied that I had observed the shovel test and he related the conversation that had prompted his laughter. When the first shovel had bent so freely, Ron told that man that the shovel was a poor quality. The man responded, "As for these shovels the quality is good, but you must use them softly." Ha, Ha. That is why Ron had laughed. Digging in Ghanaian soil is not the job of a soft shovel. We made it to the landsite and observed the crew hard at work. We saw two of the workers though, who were making a career out of untangling a new coil of string. It seems that they had just started unraveling the loose coils and had a wonderfully tangled mess in short order. I don't know how long they would have worked at it but Ron and his workers untangled it as well as preparing the rest of the string that he had purchased. As we were working there, someone

startled a rabbit and immediately several men gave chase shouting and bounding through the tall grass. I don't really think the rabbit was in any real danger; the men soon gave up and went back to work. Entertainment is fairly cheap here. After spending a bit more time at the land we got ready to leave and then Isaac, one of the students from the school and also a worker at the land had a small generator that was malfunctioning and so Ron, bless his heart, put on his hat as a small engine mechanic and for the next half hour or so he fiddled with the machine and the end result was that the generator was still malfunctioning when we decided to call it quits and head home for supper. Supper was a wonderful affair with beef enchiladas and with lettuce and topped off with a desert of carrot cake. Sometimes you just have to grin and say thank you Lord for your provision. That was just plain good. We headed into the city because Phil was flying in from Liberia. Since we had a little extra time we stopped at Snedda (sp) a store that is a little like a K-mart or what it really reminded me of was the old G.C. Murphy stores. It offers a lot of things from cookware to appliances to electronics to groceries and furniture. We had a nice time browsing through the store and then we headed over to the airport and picked up Phil. We bounced through the road construction and back home where (to be polite, Ha) Phil and I each downed a piece of carrot cake. (Did I mention that it was really good?) Then we headed to the guesthouse and Phil and I sat up quite a while comparing Liberia, Ghana, and the US and the necessity of Christianity in each culture. Well by God's grace, today will be another profitable day for the Kingdom.

In Christ,  
John Yoder

**(Wed) Mar 10, 2010**

Greetings Friends,

I am writing this on Wednesday morning reflecting on Tuesday. Yesterday, was a very warm day (they all are), but it seemed to be a little hotter because the electricity was off most of the day. Phil and I were in the guesthouse most of the day preparing for the seminar this week. For some reason even the use of the generator was somewhat spotty so there were frequent intervals of sweating it out without fans, not mention AC. They don't want you to run the AC on generator power. Anyway, we have been very warm and are getting accustomed to wiping our brow often. Last night after a supper of cooked yam dipped in tomato stew (Audrey's teenage Ghanaian friend Mercy, cooked) with salad topped off with fresh pineapple and carrot cake, we headed to a nearby village to the church that Pastor Isaac is leading. The work in this village started primarily with children and youth and has grown to include a fair number of adults as well. I noticed that this church has far more teenage young people in it than any other church we have visited here so far. The church meets under a tent that is set in an open area in the village. Last night we got there after dark so we needed to set up a generator and lights. Pastor Isaac wasn't there when we arrived but he came by the time we were getting the sound system set up. The service was supposed to start by 7:00 PM but I believe it was closer to 7:30 till we got the bugs worked out of the sound system and had the

lighting arranged satisfactorily. Pastor Isaac has been working with the youth to prepare dramas to share the Gospel. Last night the young people presented a very powerful drama entitled the "The Unrepentant Repenter." It was a story about a family who goes through the motions of praying for salvation to get the preacher off their backs but they mock at the message. In the course of time two children in the family get deathly ill and the drama records the efforts of the family to find healing. After trying the hospital, spiritism, and false prophets, in the meantime losing all their money, they finally turn to Christ for physical healing and the resulting miracle brings the family to their knees in true repentance before God. It was a good drama and the young people did a very good job. As the drama was ending a rainstorm came up causing a very rapid (and somewhat confusing) reshuffling of chairs. Many of the people had been arranged outside of the tent and were trying to get in but with everyone attempting to get out of the rain, we weren't quite sure how the tent should be arranged or which way the service was to face. At these times it is best for us Americans to simply hang tight and let them work it out. It eventually does. Well the first cloudburst passed and they finished the drama outside the tent. But as we were preparing to preach the rain came in earnest and it was a down pour. It was coming through in various places inside the tent, but everyone eventually packed in and found a relatively dry place to sit. Because of our late start and the interruptions and reorganizations, it was getting late by the time Phil and I were to preach, so we had a good portion of the congregation of children and youth falling asleep through the messages. Praise the Lord we were on the ground and so there was no danger of anyone falling out of a window like happened in the book of Acts. After the service we got back to Ron's at about 10:45 and he kindly dropped us off at the guest house. Coming inside, I was looking forward to the AC and a good night's rest when almost immediately the power went out again. Such is life. In a few minutes we had lights and fans again but it has been a rather long sweaty night. Today, we start the last three days of the seminar. Please pray that we will speak the word that God has for these Pastors and leaders. Pray that God will anoint these times together for the encouragement of the brotherhood and strengthening of relationships among the churches. Also, I am not sure what the menu is for today. You can pray about that as well.

In Christ,  
John Yoder

### **(Thur.) Mar. 11**

Dear Friends,

Sorry, I missed the journal yesterday. It was just a very busy day. Wednesday started off with a breakfast of toast and coke in the guesthouse. They offer toast and tea, but I am not real fond of tea, and it is almost too hot for coffee (did I say that?) so I just opted for an ice cold coke. Phil and I headed for Ron's at around 7:45 am. When we arrived, there were a number of Ghanaian brothers waiting on Ron's front porch; they have been catching a ride into the city to the seminar. After making some copies of handouts for the session, we all piled into the van and headed for the seminar. These roads are so rough; I declare if one of us had drunk cream for breakfast, we would have been digesting butter before

lunch. Phil taught the first session on Matt. Chapter 6 with the theme “Living with God.” I taught in the second session on the God’s Call to Leadership. Then it was lunch time. (Sigh) Maybe it is a little like Phil commented. He said that at Conferences, lunchtime is often a highlight for him. I guess for those who are attending this is a highlight. Their eyes seem to light up at the prospect of these various pastry dough balls of fermented maize or pounded cassava. I have been meditating on a lot of things over here and some of them are not that spiritual. One of those things I have been contemplating is whether kinky, banku, or fufu wouldn’t be improved drastically if you could eat it with a fork or spoon. I have a very difficult time with eating with my fingers. Also, there don’t seem to be any napkins around so what do you do if you need to scratch your nose or ear or something? I have been trying to figure out how the Ghanaians keep this pasty stuff from sticking to their fingers. This has become a real problem for me, because by the time I am done (which is generally before I feel it is polite to stop) my fingers are increasing in size. It is a little like walking in gumbo mud. It continues to build up on the bottom of your boots until you have platform shoes. Well I have platform fingers every day. Phil taught the afternoon session on “Entering and Living in the Kingdom of God.” We then piled into the van and headed for home. We have a full van every evening. I am seeing that the Ghanaians seem to have a good sense of humor because there always seems to be a significant amount of good natured banter back and forth. (Of course for all I know they may be poking fun at the seminar speakers.) We had a brief respite at the guesthouse in the AC and then back to Ron’s for a supper of scalloped yam and ham with peas and carrots and brownies with Fan Ice for dessert. We have been planning on giving each of the Pastors a gift bag at the end of the conference, but we have been deliberating on what we should put in it. It is not as easy as going to the local Staples, Wal-Mart or Family Christian stores. Even if we could, there are significant barriers to running or storing things in a village with little or no electricity. During supper it occurred to us that we were within two days of the seminar and we still had not purchased the items for the bags. So after supper, Ron, Arielle, Carter, Phil and myself jumped into the pickup (the van had a low tire) and headed back into town. We were heading to a store that Ron thought closed by 8:00 pm. We got stuck in traffic and it was getting closer to 8:00. Ron is a real driver, He whipped around there in the traffic and managed to get through a concrete barrier onto a parallel stretch of road and then we headed back in the direction of home until another break in the barrier and then we committed a u-turn and headed back into town and made it to the store at 8:00 pm and discovered that they are actually open until 9:30 pm. Whew and all that worry for nothing. We found most of the items that we were looking for at that one store. (I guess you can believe the store has a big inventory or that we weren’t looking for much, I’ll let you decide). Back at Ron’s, Phil and I took our leave and headed for the guesthouse. I was so happy when the AC in my room finally decided to produce something cold. I am not sure what happened, but I was almost able to get it cold in my room.

**(Fri.) Mar. 12, 2010**

Today I woke at 4:00 am to finish preparations for the sessions today. I was too tired last night and kept falling asleep on my work. The call for breakfast came a little later this morning at the guesthouse. Usually they call around 6:30 am to ask if we will take the standard breakfast of toast. This morning the call came at 7:15 am. I declined breakfast because I was leaving in 15

min. I popped in at Phil's room and he told me his stomach wasn't feeling too well. My thoughts went rather quickly to the banku we had for lunch yesterday. I hope it wasn't that. Phil thought he was feeling somewhat better than he had when he first got up and was hopeful the trend would continue. We headed to Ron's and met the crew, made copies of handouts and then headed for the city. Along the ride, somewhere amid the camel hump roads, one of the tires on the van developed a wobble. I guess that is par for the course. Over here the wheels and suspension take a severe beating on every trip. I taught the first session this morning on "Worship in Spirit and Truth. " After the session, during the break, I asked Phil how he was doing and he thought the trend had reversed and he wasn't feeling so good. He bravely got up and taught a very good session on "The Work of the Holy Spirit." But for some reason He declined the lunch of kinky. I had my usual battle with platform fingers and dough balls. After Lunch, Ron took Phil back to the guesthouse and I taught the 3<sup>rd</sup> session on "Hearing God and Trying the Spirits." The discussion groups were very animated again today for the last session. On other days we have decided on a question for all the groups to consider and then each group reports back. Today we did a little change up and had the groups pick their own topic and report back. It is always very interesting to hear their perspective and observe the wisdom that God speaks through each group. I am back at the guesthouse now and typing the journal. I haven't seen Phil this afternoon so I am not certain how he is doing. Please continue to pray for us for our health and that God would give us strength to finish the task He has given us here. Tomorrow, the morning sessions will be regarding the second coming of Christ, and our preparation for His return. In the afternoon we will have a communion service with the pastors and then have one last time of sharing before the seminar will be finished. We are planning to give the gift bags to the pastors tomorrow. May God bless each one of you and please don't stop praying for the good work that God is doing here. I am so blessed that God has given us the opportunity to be involved in affecting the lives of people half a world away. It is blessed trust from God and one that we need to take seriously. Pray for Ron and Audrey and their family. The more I observe of them here in Ghana, the more my respect and admiration grows for the work they are doing. There is no doubt in my mind that God has called them here and is using them greatly. Lift them to God's Throne of Grace early and often.

In Christ,  
John

**(Fri) Mar 12, 2010**

Greetings Friends,

What a mighty God we serve! He is truly amazing. I have been blessed to see His wonderful love and grace in these last two weeks. I can't believe that the seminar, which was the main purpose for our trip over here, is over and done. Yesterday was our last day of teaching and what a day it was! We began the morning with early study before heading to Ron's to make copies and then head for the school. The drive was fairly uneventful or else I am getting used to bumps and lack of order. To drive in Ghana you must always keep moving if you stop it will be a while before you will have room to start again. After teaching for the last two

weeks on the theme of "Following Jesus Today," the last day was looking at the return of Christ. I began by speaking on the topic "Behold the Bridegroom Cometh" in the first session. When I was finished preaching there was still a little time for questions so one of the pastors asked the question, "If the bride is to be prepared for the Bridegroom, is she (the church) getting better or worse?" We had enough time that we broke into smaller groups and the men discussed this question among themselves. Phil taught the next session on "Preparing for the Return of Christ." Using the 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> chapters of Matthew, Phil laid out the teaching of Christ on what we can expect and how to prepare for His sure return. Lunch was fufu, with ground nut stew and fish or light soup and goat. Hold on; Hold on, we'll try to serve each of you in turn, no need to crowd the line. Fufu is cassava root pounded and pulverized until it becomes a very sticky (and LARGE in this case) dough ball that is served with a stew or soup poured over it. I have come to the realization that if I were to live here and eat Ghanaian, I would eat to live. Fellowship meals would never be the same. The last session of the seminar was a communion service and what a touching time it was. Pastor Ron shared a short message on the importance of being prepared to take a part in the communion of our Lord. And then Pastor Phil shared a short message comparing and contrasting Communion with the Passover and demonstrated how Christ is our Passover. Pastor Felix then led through serving the bread and the cup and I shared prior to the feet washing. This is not typically observed by the Ghanaian Churches but the pastors entered into it readily and I was blessed to see the unity of Spirit and beautiful brotherhood that was evident in the humility of washing each other's feet. What a beautiful way to end the two weeks of sharing and interaction with these brothers who have such a challenging ministry. Most of these pastors are a part of a recent church plant and their perspective is indeed a different one. They are trying to grow a church. It is a contrast from the pastors who are trying to maintain a church. It is an interesting contrast and one that bears more meditation. Last evening, after dropping the pastors off at their bus stop, Phil was driving and wanted to pursue his search of a Ghanaian license plate to add to his growing collection of domestic and foreign license plates. We stopped by several places that looked like junk yards but they turned out to be open air mechanic shops. The first place we stopped, Phil got out and began to make his request. I wasn't long before the hangers on at the lot were laughing uproariously. The idea that someone would want to collect license plates struck them funny. They wondered if he wanted to take a plate back to America to put it on his car. I should mention that in Ghana, the license plates are riveted to the vehicle and generally stay with the vehicle for the duration of its existence. If they didn't rivet them to the vehicle they would probably have a difficult time keeping the plates. Also, any removable part of the vehicle (windows, mirrors, emblems, etc.) is engraved with the license number. That way if the part is stolen from the vehicle it cannot be easily sold and is much easier to track. There is the added benefit that it is rather difficult to steal the plates because they will probably not match the equipment they will be placed on. All this to say, there are not an abundance of used and discarded license plates in Ghana. Well, Phil managed to get one very battered and dirty license plate that they wanted 200 Ghana cedi's for, but Phil told them they could take his five or keep the license plate and they decided the five would be more valuable so Phil got the license plate. He still wasn't satisfied so he stopped at several other places. One of the locations had several cars sitting there that and it seemed obvious that they were not going to be driven ever again. Phil asked if the one car was condemned and if he could have the license plate from it. He was

told that it was not condemned so he could not have the plate. There was another car there and Phil asked if it was condemned. Yes it was condemned. Could he have the plate off of it? The response is good to this. The Ghanaian said, "It's not that condemned!" No good on that plate either. Ha, Ha. So the search continues. Supper last evening was haystacks (great job Audrey) followed by some Mr. Misty drinks that were so refreshing and Lemon Jell-O cake for dessert. Following supper we got into a discussion of people groups and their origins and then the conversation moved to music and contrasting music and composition styles. Out came the song books and we browsed through attempting a few numbers and discussing content and likes and dislikes. A very thought provoking discussion.

**(Sat) Mar 13, 2010**

This morning I was up at 6 am to do some reading and then headed to Ron's for breakfast. Phil opted out of breakfast this morning. Audrey had a wonderful caramel baked French toast, eggs and fruit for breakfast. I had a wonderful cup of coffee to go with it. It is a little warm but it sure went down smooth. After breakfast, Ron, Carter, Arielle, Kalli, and myself headed to the landsite where the work of digging the footers for the new school is processing nicely. The digging is all by hand it appears that it is not easy digging (good thing we have strong shovels). The workers are using picks and digging bars on a good portion of it. I was able to get a number of pictures there this morning. Have I told you how warm it is over here? This morning as I headed to Ron's I was thinking what pleasant day it was shaping up to be but it doesn't take long for the heat to rise into the mid to upper 90's and then the humidity plays a little game of its own. Well, I am a little long for now. Tomorrow we will be preaching at two more CFC Churches here in Ghana. We will be at the church where Pastor Ben is in the Morning, and at the Church where Pastor Foster is in the evening. Please pray for these churches that they will be encouraged to continue in the faith and that God will pour out His power and anointing on these dear brothers as they lead these churches.

In Christ,  
John

**(Mon) March 15, 2010**

Greetings Friends,

I am journaling on Monday, March 15, 2010 but I want to go back and start at Saturday afternoon. Saturday afternoon Ron's took Phil and I to do a little souvenir shopping at a little marketplace in Accra. I am not much of one for bartering for items but that is the custom of the place. I much prefer to see a fair market price and pay it. I don't like trying to find a fair price when I know that many of these people struggle to make a living. Well we stepped out of the van and then came the cries of, "Welcome my friend, come see my shop." I discovered that you are better off not shaking hands with the merchants because they do not wish to let go and will pull you toward (and into if possible) their shop to show you what they have for sale. I kind of

got a kick out the fact that the merchants kept trying to get Phil's attention by calling him Papa. Ha. I commented to Phil that I am sure they don't realize that they are not endearing themselves to him by using that term and they certainly weren't. Be that as it may, "Papa" did make the purchase of a cane. We went from the market to the Accra Mall to pick up some supplies for Ron's and then we head to Marwakos (a restaurant) for a wonderful meal of fried and roasted chicken and "chips" French fries. What a blessing to eat tubers in form that is both practical and tasty. I wonder if cassava wouldn't be a bit more palatable deep fried in sticks, rather than pounded in the form of fufu and surrounded by stew. Sunday 14 Mar 2010, we were at the church where Pastor Ben is this morning. The church meets under a kind of tent canopy in the middle of the village. I think this would be a great way to do community outreach. Simply hold all of your worship services in the view of the town. It certainly takes some of the hypocrisy out of faith. Anyone in the village can observe the fact that you are gathered in church for Sunday. The concept has some interesting considerations that we should ponder a little more deeply. I shared in the Sunday School time and taught on worship. (I know, what does a white man know about worship in an African Culture). My topic was not how to dance or wave a hanky, or the proper use of bongos for the service, but rather on preparing our hearts. I shared that worship must be done Monday through Saturday, if we are going to worship in spirit and in truth on Sunday. Phil preached the main message today on four stories from Jesus' ministry. They were stories that demonstrated Jesus' power over several major areas of fear for humans. He spoke peace to the storm. He cast a legion of devils out a man. He healed the woman with the incurable issue of blood, and he raised the daughter of Jairus. Thus Jesus demonstrated His power over physical storms, over all spirits, over sickness, disease, and infirmity, and over death itself. It was a powerful message. Throughout the service goats and chickens wondered by in close proximity. I couldn't resist the irreverent urge to take a few photos during the service as Phil was preaching and a chicken was wandering around only inches behind him. Had he taken a step backwards, he could have secured lunch. While a service in the village square may have its merits in accountability and witness, it also has much to add with distractions. After the service, we discovered that it is customary for the church to serve cold "minerals" sodas to their guests. So we were treated to some wonderful drinks that were so refreshing on such warm day. Also, Pastor Ben had asked Ron to bring along some glasses as there was man in the church that needed some. Well, since he didn't know what strength the glasses should be Ron brought along several boxes of reading glasses. As he brought them out and was trying to determine what strength the man needed, we were suddenly swamped by many people. It seems like this village has a real problem with bad eyes. Although, I am pretty sure that most were only made aware of their poor eyesight by the appearance of free eye wear. We had lunch at Ron's and then Phil and I retreated to the AC to do a little reading and study preparing for the evening service in Bojawase with Pastor Foster and his wife Fostina. We left Ron's at about 6:15 pm and drove for nearly an hour to get to the church. The service was to start at 7:30 PM and it was dark when we got there. For some reason, the power to the building was shut off and so there were no lights and no sound system. We had our entire service in the light of three candles. It is amazing how much light three candles can put out although, it did pose a little problem for reading scripture. I have enjoyed visiting these churches. Although they are all under the CFC umbrella they are not cookie cutter. They are all very different. Pastor Foster and his wife love music and the church

does a lot of singing and dancing. I would say the singing and accompanying motions was probably more robust here than in any of the churches we have visited. They also have a lady's choir of sorts and they did a couple of special numbers. It was very good. Pastor Phil spoke first tonight on being children of light and I followed with short message on waiting on the Lord. After a rousing time of sharing an offering the service came to a close shortly after 9:00 and we got back to Ron's well after 10:00. It was a full, but rewarding day. Praise the Lord for His wonderful works to the children of man. Today we are heading to Cape Coast for a bit of a tourists view of Ghana. Tomorrow we head home. Keep the ministry here in your prayers.

In Christ,  
John Yoder

**(Tue) March 16, 2010**

Greetings Friends,

Praise The Lord! Our God is great and greatly to be praised. He is exalted, the King is exalted on High and I will praise Him. It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord and to sing praises to His name. Yesterday we headed for Cape Coast to visit the slave castle. We had a nice trip down with Ron and Audrey and the children. It is little bit of drive (around 3 hours give or take a few snarls in the traffic) but the roads for the most part were smoother than what we have driven on the whole time we have been here. It was a beautiful day and the sun was hot, but I believe we are getting somewhat accustomed to it. Like they say, "It's not the heat, but the humidity that gets to you." We toured the slave castle and I was struck again at the depravity of humanity in the way we can treat other human beings. It is a reminder that throughout history mankind has proven again and again that "The heart in man is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." I was reminded of the blood of Christ, which cleanses us from all unrighteousness. He has redeemed us from the curse of sin and death. Slavery is a part of the history of Africa as it is in many parts of the world. I was amazed that a large amount of Africans that were sold as slaves in other parts of the world, were captured and sold by other Africans. Tribal warfare resulted in conquered tribes being sold into slavery. It was a part of conquest. It was more profitable than simply killing your captives. There were also those tribes who used slavery as a punishment for criminals and instead of death or banishment, they would sell them into slavery. The horrific conditions of the slave castle are almost painful to talk about . Often up to 200 people would be held in a 16 by 24 dungeon for up to 3 months while they awaited transport out of Africa. In those 3 months they would eat, drink, sleep and expel waste all in the that room with only a few narrow channels carved into the floor to drain the room. No water was given them to wash the room expect what would come in from the rain through three small windows high overhead. Our guide informed us that there was much sickness in the dungeons with the most common maladies being diarrhea and vomiting. You can imagine the squalor of such a place and the difficulty to get any rest. I can only imagine the despair and hopelessness. That anyone actually survived with strength to board a ship and leave is amazing. Directly above the dungeon for the men was the church for the castle. And the irony of such an arrangement the guide said was sort of like Heaven and Hell on earth. May

we as Christians never succumb to the temptation to enslave our fellow men, but to cry out as God told Pharaoh through Moses, "Let my people go." We had a nice ride home from the castle and when we were about 30 minutes from home, Ron got a call from their friends from the Charity mission here in Ghana, inviting us for a supper of pizza. What a blessing! So we stopped briefly at Ron's before heading over to Matt and Janelle Wolman's place. They have quite a large compound with a lot of grass to mow and a good number of trees. It is a really nice compound established on nearly an acre of ground. Our evening hosts were quite congenial and were easy to converse with. They have such a welcoming way about them and the food was excellent. Being a missionary here is a lonely job and it is good to see how the missionaries from various organizations interact and help each other. It is good to see those in the cause of Christ, working together regardless of their sending organizations. The work of the Kingdom is Christ's work and I appreciate the way these missionaries are able to see beyond denomination. I and territorial lines to bring fellowship and accountability to each other.

We made it back to Ron's between 9:30 and 10:00 pm and then Phil and I headed for the guesthouse and bed. This morning we are packing and getting ready to leave Ghana. We will be checking out the guesthouse about noon and heading to Ron's for lunch before heading up to the landsite for one last look at the progress being made on the new school. On the way we are planning on stopping at the plant where they bag the drinking water to see just where our "pure wata" comes from. (maybe that is not such a good idea.) Phil is out on a walk to gain one last shot of culture and I am wrapping things up in my office here. We are planning on leaving Ron's this evening around 5:00 pm and heading to the Mall for pizza and then to the airport to check in for our flight to Germany. Our flight is scheduled to leave around 11:30 pm tonight. This will be my last journal in Ghana Lord willing. I will try to send one last update when we are back on American soil. Continue to pray for us as we prepare for travel and that God would give us traveling mercies. Pray that we will be ambassadors for Christ at every turn. Pray for Ron's as we leave that they will be able to rest and be refreshed after having guests for nearly three weeks. They have been such troopers and have been the very picture of grace as they have hosted us these last days. What a blessing!

In Christ,  
John Yoder

**(Wed) March 17, 2010**

Greetings Friends,

Praise the Lord for His excellent work! This final addition to the Africa Journal is written with a mixture of feelings. I am thankful for what God has done through this trip to Ghana. I am at peace that we have accomplished what we could and God will do the rest. But I am also very torn by the great amount of work to be done and the need for individuals and resources to continue the work. I am overjoyed to be heading home to my home and family, but I also feel keenly the melancholy of leaving the pastors whom we have recently learned to know better. My heart goes out to them and the lonely vigil of caring for souls in the villages with very few resources and needs that make us look like millionaires by comparison. There is a nagging

suspicion in the back of my mind that perhaps, we haven't used God's resources as wisely as we should here in America. I wonder if we would really be able to worship on a regular basis where these men and women gather to praise the Lord and feed on His Word. In our culture of climate controlled buildings and good lighting and tailor made facilities specialized for elderly, youth, middle aged and everything in between, the single room rented in a rather primitive school building stands out in stark contrast. The question could be asked, "Do we really need these elaborate facilities to accomplish the work of the kingdom?" Certainly they are nice and there is much to be said for the comfort and peace of our conveniences, but contrasting our sheltered, customized, territorial worship, makes me wonder if perhaps, we will have much to answer to Almighty God. Will he approve of the way we have spent His resources or will He ask us why we have used so much for ourselves. Don't get me wrong, I am eager to get home to climate control and tailor made, but I do have mixed feelings. When I think of Christ, who said the Son of Man has no place to lay his head, it makes me wonder if the "Brothers and Sisters of the Son" have haven't gone overboard in creating space for ourselves. Well our last day in Ghana was a wonderful one. Phil and I were able to wrap up things in the morning and as I had mentioned in the previous journal Phil went for walk to get on last dose of culture. On his walk he met Pastor Felix who returned with him to the guesthouse. While Phil went to shower and finish packing, Pastor Felix and I shared a time of conversation and prayer together. What a blessing. I headed to Ron's place to get the van and returned to the guest house to load our luggage. Phil and I then headed back to Ron's for lunch. After lunch we headed up to the landsite for one last look around. It was a scorcher out there under the blazing Ghana sun. The digging is going well and should be finished soon. Well it was back to Ron's place until time to head to the airport. So Phil and I grabbed short naps and I worked on transferring some pictures. At 5:00 pm we left with Ron's to go to the Accra Mall for Supper. Tuesdays is 2 for the price of 1 at the pizza joint there and so we enjoyed a delicious meal of pizza before finally arriving at the airport. After some melancholy goodbyes, (goodbyes are always difficult) Phil and I left the Bontragers and headed into the wild world of the Ghana airport. We actually breezed through the check in process. Phil was a little surprised because the weekend before it had taken him nearly 2 hours to complete the whole process. We were through in less than 30 minutes. Then was the long wait until boarding time. We left at Midnight Ghana time and headed for Frankfurt. The flight was smooth and we were able to get several hours of sleep (though not nearly enough). After a couple of hours in Frankfurt we boarded the plane for the 8+ hour flight to Chicago. I got very little sleep on this flight and Phil was feeling rather miserable, having caught a cold. Both of us experienced plugged ears on our decent into Chicago, but mine reopened on the flight to South Bend. In South Bend, we were greeted by my lovely wife, Karen and after collecting our luggage we headed for home (what a sweet word.) It has been a good trip. I am grateful to God who ordained and performed the details of this trip. I believe that God was glorified and that the CFC churches and pastors were encouraged in their faith. I want to thank all of you for praying for us and for the Ghanaian Pastors and for Ron and Audrey and their family. I know that God has heard and answered your sincere prayers for His glory.

May God bless you!

In Christ,

John Yoder