

Akpe na mawu. Thank You God.

By Marjorie Hayes

Since I first became involved with CPFI over 10 years ago, I've always wanted to serve on a Global Health Outreach (GHO) medical mission trip. I was also very apprehensive about traveling with a team of people I don't know to serve in some far-off land. In October 2023, I went with a small team from my church to serve at an ABWE mission hospital in Togo, West Africa. That had been my most challenging mission trip to date, as the Lord pressed me to evaluate the completeness of my surrender to His will. Because of that, even before returning from Togo, I began praying about what and when my next mission trip would be, with concern that I'd never have the courage and strength to do another. I had the opportunity to speak to CPFI Executive Director Ron Herman, who is also a recruiter for GHO. Upon my inquiry, Ron told me about some of his experiences serving on GHO teams, and also about the upcoming GHO trips that did not yet have a pharmacist on their team. As the Holy Spirit worked in my heart, the Ghana, West Africa trip in August 2024 seemed to me the only trip that existed. In spite of that supernatural sense of the Lord's guidance, I still felt unsure about joining Team Ghana. I decided I would pray and take one step of faithful obedience at a time, asking the Lord to continue to open the doors of His choosing. Before I knew it, I had purchased my plane ticket, was raising support, and applied for my Ghana VISA.

There were 18 of us to make up Team Ghana, of which I knew none. We met the first time in JFK airport in New York to fly together into Accra, Ghana. I was struck within those first few hours by how quickly the Lord brought a miraculous sense of connection and unity between us. This was especially important and significant to me, as it was one of the main prayer requests for our trip, remembering Jesus' words that *"all will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another"* (John 13:35, NKJV). We were from all over the country and of varying professions and ages, from 14 years old up into the 70's. This was the first mission trip for several members of our team, including three teenagers who are the children of our team leaders; and this was the 62nd mission trip for one special lady on our team who is a nurse. But the Lord was not done forming and unifying His team!

We, along with our many bags of ministry supplies, all arrived safely in Accra on Saturday morning, July 27, 2024. We met up with the members of our team who flew in at different times and spent the afternoon in the mall having lunch and exchanging our US dollars to Ghanaian cedis. The currency exchange rate is 1 US dollar to 15 cedis... in other words, \$1.00 goes a long way in Ghana.

On Sunday morning, we drove to Dzetorkoe, which is in the south Tongu district and is the village where we held our medical outreach for the entire week. GHO's ministry

partner in Ghana is Ghana Christian Mission (GCM). These partners and villagers put together a JOYFUL festival to celebrate the kickoff to our ministry week. As we danced and sang and worshipped the Lord together, He continued to make us less like strangers and more like family, further uniting us with our Ghana partners, and taking His rightful place at the center of all our activities.

We began our week of ministry (and each day that followed) by coming together in a big circle in the center of the village, praying, and singing a praise song that the worship leaders taught to us. While the national language in Ghana is English, there are over 80 distinct other languages spoken throughout the country. The most common tribal language spoken in the area where we were serving seemed to be Ewe, and the song of praise they taught us is in Ewe. That first day, the worship leader (who stood in the center of our circle) told us that he will give us a special song to take back to the United States with us. The lyrics of "our song" are "Akpe na mawu. Yehowa me kafu wo daa. Halleluyah, O si yana." In English, that is "Thank You God. Jehovah, I will praise You always. Hallelujah, Hosanna." This song of thanksgiving and praise to our wonderful God has filled my heart ever since, and it is a pure joy and privilege for me to share it with you, as our Ghanaian worship leader instructed.

Each day at breakfast, one of our team members shared a short devotion. I gleaned some priceless pearls during those times. I sensed at the beginning of my trip to Ghana that the Lord was going to continue teaching me something that He began teaching me in Togo last year. The lesson He taught me during my time in Togo is that He desires all of me and will not be satisfied with less. This spiritual principle is taught to us by Jesus as the first and greatest commandment: *"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind."* (Matthew 22:37, NKJV) We coined it in Ghana as "being ALL IN"! As someone shared on our first morning devotion: idolatry is the sin of putting anything (even the good things in our lives) in the place of God. As I took his message in, the Lord impressed upon my heart that while He will not be satisfied with my giving Him less than all I am, I also will never be satisfied with giving Him less than all I am. He made us, His creation, with a God-shaped hole inside our soul that can only be filled by Himself; and the more we strive to fill that hole with anything other than the One for Whom it was made, the more lost and empty we will find ourselves. *"For He satisfies the longing soul, and fills the hungry soul with goodness"* (Psalm 107:9, NKJV).

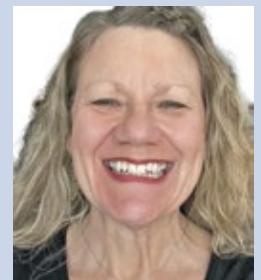
The last pearl I'd like to share from this incredible experience was given by a dear sister in Christ who is taking over as the new GHO team leader for Ghana. She

said God’s will is for us to know Him and to make Him known! With that in mind, I believe God’s hand was powerfully at work unifying us into such a tight team so that we could work together harmoniously and make Him known to those we came to serve. We saw close to 2000 patients in the course of our week of ministry. Of those, there were 32 commitments made for Christ. One component of our end-of-the-day worship was to share

what we call our “God sightings” of the day. The God sighting I will share with you is when I peeked out the window of the pharmacy to see one of the 14-year old daughters of our team leaders with her Evangecube (which tells the Gospel with pictures), surrounded by children as she told them about Jesus! Priceless! Akpe na mawu. Thank You God. *“I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.”* (1 Corinthians 3:6, NKJV).



Marjorie Hayes is a second-generation pharmacist and a native of Florida who received her PharmD degree from Nova Southeastern University in Ft. Lauderdale, FL in 2001. Marjorie was inspired to pursue pharmacy by her beloved late Mom who fought her way through pharmacy school in the early eighties at the University of Florida with four kids! Marjorie has been an employee of Walgreens Pharmacy since she was a teenager. She started with Walgreens as a pharmacy technician and has since worked as a pharmacy intern, graduate intern, floater pharmacist, staff pharmacist, and pharmacy manager. Shortly after graduating pharmacy school, Marjorie had a personal crisis that led her into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. She has been a member of Starkey Road Baptist Church in Seminole, FL since 2014 and has served in the AWANA ministry for the duration of that time.



Marjorie got her first opportunity to serve the Lord on a medical mission trip in 2008. She went to the Dominican Republic with SCORE international and was forever changed by her experiences there. Several short-term medical mission trips followed, with her most recent trip being with a GHO team to Ghana, West Africa. Marjorie knows firsthand how the Lord can use times of dire need to draw hearts to Himself for salvation, and she believes that is the heartbeat of medical missions.