



# GEMS

GLOBAL EVANGELISM MINISTRY SERVICES

December 2022 Update

## The “ALSO” God

The task ahead seemed like a cloud that covered the landscape as far as the eye could see. What was God asking of my family and I? - Two major fronts at the same time, and with big projects on both fronts? What? Take on the task of completely gutting and remodeling a 3500 sq. ft. house in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula and make it a place for servants of God to “Come apart and rest a while”? What? And You want us to walk through a wide-open door in Congo at the same time? How, Lord? How do we accomplish these tasks? Are we to continue to base in the U.S. and continue a ministry in Congo so far away? Not to mention, Lord, we still are overseeing the village churches in Ghana and traveling and counselling here in the states – How can we do it all? How can the Mission afford it all? How do we have time for it all? Lord?.....

God’s response came to me through His Word! ***Isa 49:6 KJV** And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will **also** give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.*

I saw it: “also”, there in His Word; He said He can accomplish multiple things at the same time, but I was struggling with the logistics. What did it mean for us? Where would we plant ourselves to best do what He wanted us to do? Again, God responded through His Word! ***Hag 1:4&8 KJV 1** Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house lie waste? **8** Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the LORD.* So I said, ok Lord, I don’t fully understand but we’ll start going forward and wait for You to show us the next step.

We used every spare moment we could and began knocking out walls and gutting the old building that would become Faith Haven Lodge. Almost simultaneously we received word from the DR Congo: “Pastor Mike, we have found a Pygmy village that has no church, no evidence of the gospel ever being preached to them!” This is what we had been waiting and praying for for nearly five years! This is what we saw God setting up on our first two visits to Congo. This is what we had taken special training with Beyond Borders for. This was no doubt the hand of God! But, yet, as I prayed that night

God made it very clear – No. I was so confused, but it was a definite “NO” - that much I knew. God made it clear He wanted me to continue on the Faith Haven Lodge project for the time being; it didn’t make sense to me and I wept!!

About a month or so later, I was at the Faith Haven property praying for God to do what only He could do. As I prayed, I heard ATV’s coming down the road. I smelled a funny smell and realized they had stopped out in front of the property. They were looking underneath one of the three ATV’s. I went out to see what was wrong and offer any assistance I could. After a quick look it was obvious from the oil pouring onto the ground that the ATV’s engine was blown. I offered my Suburban for them to go get their vehicle and trailer which was more than an hour away. When they responded with shock, I told them that this property was here to help people and since they broke down here it was clear God wanted me to help them. They asked what the property was for and I told them it was going to be a place for servants of God to come get rest. Two weeks later, I received a check in the mail for \$10,000.00 for the remodeling of Faith Haven Lodge. I was ecstatic! Brooke had been praying, ever since I had told her that I believed God wanted us to take on this new project, that when the time was right God would give us \$10,000.00 so everyone would know this was God at work not just a whim of ours. Now we could do more than just gut the place, now we could start to remodel from the roof down. It dawned on me that had I gone to Congo, I would not have been on site to help those people which is what God used to help us. That’s why He had told me, no concerning the Congo; now I understood. What an awesome, and patient, God we serve!

Winter began to close in and again I went to God- should I now plan to go to the Congo? His response was, **Acts 26:17 KJV** *Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee*. I was elated. We quickly put an itinerary together, and within weeks we were on our way to the Congo. It was on the journey to the Congo that God reiterated the scripture He had previously shown me, **Isa 49:6 KJV** *And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldst be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will **also** give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth*. I was humbled and thrilled to think God might use me to bring the Gospel to that unreached group of which I had heard many months before. We arrived in Congo and immediately began making plans to head into the interior. Nothing was going smoothly, but I was confident God wanted us to go. After other options failed, we decided to ride a bus that would hopefully get us within a five-hour dirt bike ride of our intended destination. Twenty-three very long hours later we arrived at our intended destination. We had a good nights sleep then headed out the next day, on bikes, for our next destination; we arrived about six hours later with a single flat tire being our only delay. That afternoon we headed to the Pygmy village. This group had been relocated about a decade earlier from deep in the jungle. They worshipped their ancestors and had no knowledge of the Gospel. God granted the opportunity and I began to preach the Gospel to them starting at Creation and explaining about the Creator God who had to punish man for sin. I taught on sin and how it had brought a separation between the Creator God and man, but how God made a plan to redeem man back to Himself by a sinless Sacrifice, Jesus Christ. The scorching sun beat down on me as I preached to the crowd who had gathered around and were listening intently, but God sustained me. I noticed one particular man whose eyes were glued to me; he hung on every word. It was so exciting to witness the Spirit of God moving so powerfully through the Gospel. Finally, I felt moved to give an invitation to accept the sacrifice of the perfect and holy Jesus Christ, the Saviour. The man who had been listening so intently was the first to raise his hand and publicly declare that he, Jon, would put His faith in the Creator God through His Son Jesus! About a dozen others followed suit. The translator overheard one mother saying to her child, “Don’t cry, I want to hear more of these words. Don’t Cry because I’m happy today, Jesus is in my heart!” Bro. Paul, our Congolese co-missionary, began to teach the new believers a song: “I have Jesus in my heart”, the song said, and those who did were excited to sing it! The day was fading and soon it would be dark, so I asked if I might pray around the village; the chief gave his consent and our team, along with the new believers, began to pray around the village claiming it for the Kingdom of Jesus Christ! I went to sleep that night weary and sunburnt but so excited to be a small part of bringing others to know my sweet Saviour.

While doing my devotions the next morning, God led me to this scripture **Act 18:9-10 KJV**<sup>9</sup> *Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: <sup>10</sup> For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city*. I thought I understood the message and told God I would speak

boldly during the Bible studies scheduled for later that day; little did I realize what lie ahead. As I got ready to start doing a bible study, a crowd began gather quickly and I began to lay the foundation described in Hebrews 6:1&2. As I began to teach, I was so thankful for the roadmap of God's Word. After finishing with Hebrews, we moved on to Acts 15:20 and taught them some simple observances for believers fresh out of paganism - the "meat" would come later, for now they just needed the "milk". After many hours of teaching, I felt very strongly that I needed to give the new believers an opportunity to follow the path of Jesus by getting baptized. We had thoroughly covered baptism, but my faith was barely enough to ask; yet when I did, Jon's hand shot up quickly and along with his rose thirteen others. As we walked to the river, Jon said to me through an interpreter, "When you were preaching yesterday, the words were like fire in my heart and I said, I have to take this message to other villages."

After the fourteen men were baptized, we sang, prayed and headed back to the village. Upon, arriving at the village I could sense something was wrong as there was a small commotion. Soon it was told to me, "There is another chief that is over the chief of this village and he is angry that you did not come to him for permission before you came here". I was concerned. I knew African culture, and new I had to ask the chief of the Pygmy village for permission to speak to his people; however, I didn't know there was a non-Pygmy chief that was over the Pygmy chief. This was not good, for there is often trouble resulting in violence between the Pygmy and non-Pygmy groups. Understanding this, we headed immediately to this superior chief. It was obvious from the beginning he wasn't happy with us and quite quickly talk of war from the past came up. He asked many questions in angry succession: What were we doing here? Where did we come from? Why did we go to the Pygmies first instead of coming to him? He said his people were saying we were UNESCO sent there to arm the Pygmies. He asked me again as if I had lied to him before, "Why have you come here!?" I responded firmly, "I am a preacher of the gospel of Jesus Christ." As soon as I said this, there was uproar amongst his people. They began screaming that I was a liar. I was shocked and began to get concerned when the Holy Spirit reminded me of the verses he had led me to earlier that morning: **Act 18:9-10 KJV**<sup>9</sup> ...*Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: <sup>10</sup> For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.* The fear that had been building inside me calmed, and I knew God had a plan. After some heated discussion going on around me, I was able to talk to the chief and God used the experiences of dealing with chiefs in the past to break through and God began to soften the heart of the chief. He agreed to go with us to the government official above him and talk about the matter. When we arrived at the government office, we were greeted kindly and quickly brought to discuss the matter. After a short reprimand to us for not following cultural procedures correctly, he commenced to tell the chief that we were not to be bothered; "with churches come peace", he said, and we were welcomed by him to start churches in his area. This totally changed the situation and quieted the haughty chief. Once again the Holy Spirit reminded me, *for I have much people in this city.* God is our refuge and strength; a very present Help is He!

Now it was time to start the long journey back to civilization. I was very sad. I had experienced first hand so many miracles. I had heard God speak so plainly. I had watched the grace of God envelope us and I had literally felt that grace surrounding me. I did not want to go, my heart felt heavy knowing I would have to leave these baby Christians and understanding well that demonic world wasn't going to just sit back and take without a fight this advancement of Light. I spoke to the Lord, "How can I leave these little children behind? How can I abandon them when they have just recently been born again?" I knew, from Scripture that the apostle Paul had had to leave new believers behind and either return later or send someone back to them, but I was having a very hard time accepting this approach for myself in this situation. Then God spoke oh so clearly, "Michael, if you find a child alone and you lead him by the hand to his father and you leave him with his father, have you abandoned that child?" I began to weep. I was not abandoning these young believers; their spiritual safety wasn't dependent upon me – it could never be for I am nothing - I simply had been given the privilege of leading them to the Father and He would care for them! We left the village with booklets of John and Romans in a language some could read as well as with audio Bibles so they could listen to the Word of God.

In the weeks that followed, I prayed much for these new believers now a part of the very first church which we had decided to call, Moyoni Baptist Church - "moyoni" means "in the heart". When Bro. Paul was able to return some weeks later, he found a thriving assembly of believers now reaching about seventy-five people. John, who had so quickly

turned to Christ, joined Bro. Paul as he travelled to another Pygmy village and I am told that John has been boldly sharing his new faith with others! Paul and John were granted permission by the chief of that village to start a church there in the future. Praise God!

After leaving the Pygmy area, we explored a part of Congo we had not been to previously; while there we met an elderly missionary family who invited us for Thanksgiving dinner since it was now the time of celebrating Thanksgiving in the U.S. Not only was it a wonderful time of fellowship and inspiration as we listened in rapt attention as they told us story after story of their many years in Congo, but it was also a huge blessing as I came down with malaria and they took care for me. After dinner one night, the elderly missionary man asked for his Bible so he could share something with us. He turned to **2 Kings 3:17&18** and read these verses to us, <sup>17</sup> *For thus saith the LORD, Ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see rain; yet that valley shall be filled with water, that ye may drink, both ye, and your cattle, and your beasts.* <sup>18</sup> *And this is but a light thing in the sight of the LORD: he will deliver the Moabites also into your hand.* After pointing out the “also”, he proceeded to tell us a story about when God had asked him to take on more than one thing at a time and then said to us, “God is an Also God, He can do more than one thing at a time”. My heart was overflowing. When we returned to our room, I showed Grant from my journal what God had said to me before and had reminded me of at the beginning of the trip. God was going to accomplish His will, we just needed to be available to Him and take each step as he told us to! Faith Haven Lodge and Congo, Ghana, traveling, counselling – He will do it, it is not dependent on our capabilities but our willingness to be used. He is abundantly able above all that we could ask or think! *Eph.3:20*

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Thank you**

As I stated above, while in Congo I came down with Malaria towards the end of the trip. I was treated there and was able to travel home to the States but ended up in the hospital for ten days just before Christmas with relapsing malaria and secondary sepsis. That is quite a story which we will save for another time but we want to say thank you as so many of you prayed for me and gave to us during that time. Thank you so much!!

### **Prayer Requests**

1. Please pray with us as we seek God’s wisdom to know when to return to the Congo and the logistics behind getting further into the interior. The Congo is experiencing unrest again and though we are not afraid, we want to make sure we are careful to proceed according to God’s timing and way, not ours.
2. Please pray for this baby church as they are already facing persecution.
3. Please pray for wisdom for us as we continue to move through the restoration process of the Faith Haven.

### **Help**

Please pray about and consider helping our Mission continue to provide the following for village churches and unreached peoples:

1. Audio Bibles (Proclaimers) – many people in remote regions of the world lack ability to read and write. If they cannot read the Word of God then we want to help them hear It so they may learn and grow.
2. Tracts/ John and Romans in the local dialects.

