

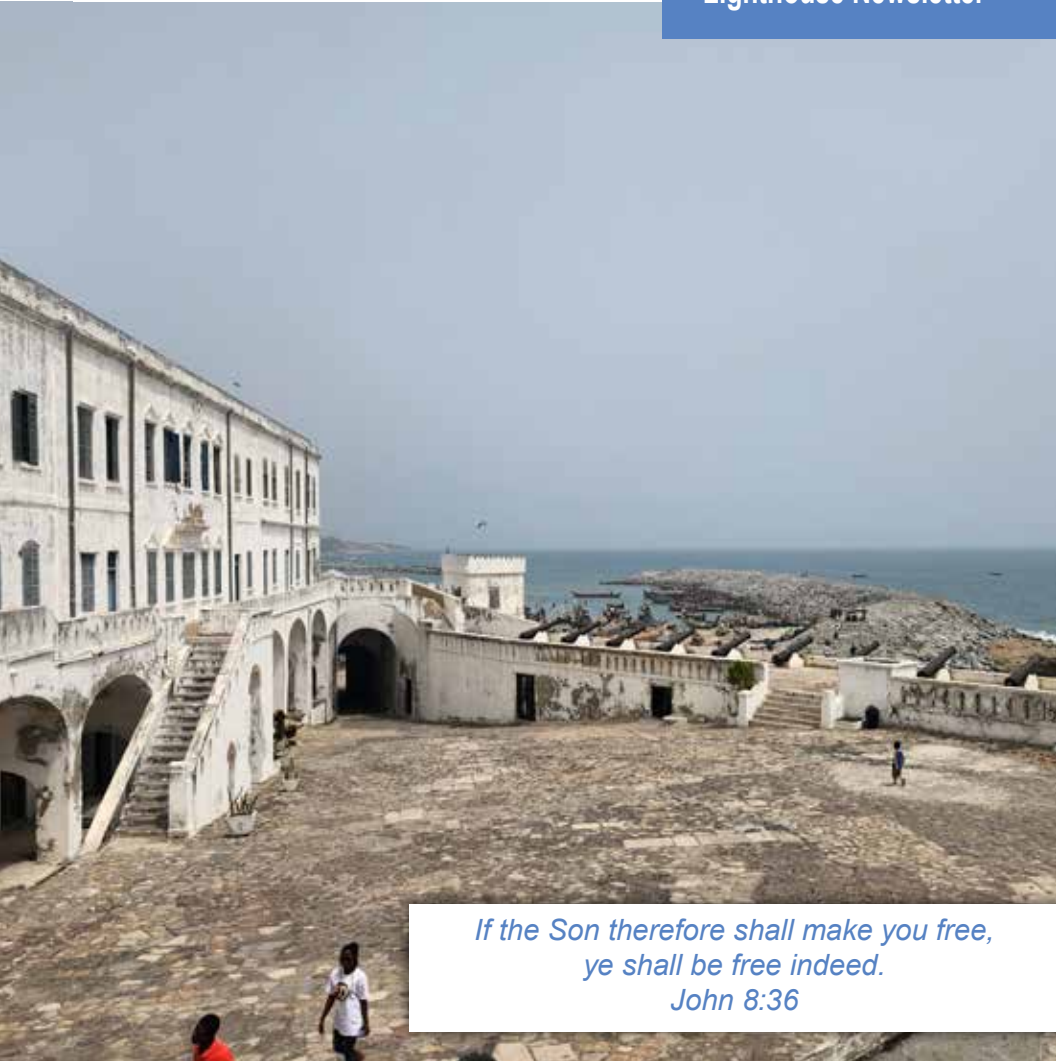


LIGHTHOUSE

MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

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Lighthouse Newsletter



*If the Son therefore shall make you free,
ye shall be free indeed.
John 8:36*

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Board Report

Where there is no vision the people perish. Proverbs 29:18a

At LMI we recognize the importance of vision for our organization as we prayerfully respond to the multitude of needs that come our way. We also recognize the need for vision to guide the decisions we make with the funds that you, our generous donor community, have entrusted to us. In order to renew and refresh the vision, mission, values, and goals for LMI, we as a board set a day aside this spring to take a long look at our various fields of work and define our guiding statements. Through this process we as a board are again awed at how God is moving around the world, and we are energized to partner with Christians from afar to further God's Kingdom on earth. At the core, this really is the "why-we-exist statement" or Vision Statement:

Enabling Christians to serve their communities.

It has long been a guiding principle at LMI to partner with local believers as much as possible in bringing aid and teaching. Throughout our years of operations it has become clear that local people always understand the true needs of their fellow citizens so much better than a foreigner does. As foreigners we are apt to see needs through the lenses of our own prosperous culture rather than

through the local culture. When we merely hand out resources or aid to people that we deem needy, we are at a serious risk of creating dependency, and when dependency has been created, our actions have been debilitating rather than fortifying. In the goal of partnering with locals if at all possible, we do not say that cross cultural assistance or volunteerism is never a good thing, but rather that it is always done in the context of having the locals in charge of the programs and usage of funds. We have so much to learn fiscally from our fellow Christians from around the world. Finally, as a way to operate out of the vision of enabling Christians to serve their communities, we have our "how-to statement" or Mission Statement:

We provide a conduit for resources to flow from our communities to needy recipients. With these resources we support local programs in education, health, and community building, with a primary focus on children and youth in Africa. We are passionate about sustaining local ownership of projects and programs and mitigating unnecessary dependencies. Our desire is that all activities facilitate the growth of God's Kingdom on earth.

As our work continues to expand,

we ask that you would keep praying for us as we partner with local Christians around the world. Pray that we would be wise in the partnerships we establish, that the funds you have entrusted to us would be used wisely, that the children impacted by our school programs could flourish, that the people touched by our health assistance could see the love of Jesus, that our community apprenticeship programs could enable young people to someday support their own families, and that our community building endeavours could be the seeds for more churches bringing the gospel to their villages. In

this particular newsletter, you will be introduced to one individual, Maxwell, who has been touched through the community building efforts of one of our partners. Your support is what makes it possible to bring hope and redemption to people like Maxwell.

A big thank you for your part in enabling Christians to serve their communities.

On behalf of the board,
Matt Frey

Maxwell shares his story as he assists with house to house evangelism. His experience has touched a lot of lives and blessed many wayward youth.



Freedom for Maxwell

The African slave castle pictured on the cover of this newsletter reminds us of a particular era in history of unjust and inhumane treatment of vulnerable people. However, Maxwell's story as told here reminds us that evil is still present in the world and we all need the redemptive power of God in our lives today.

Maxwell was arrested and charged with mistreating an 11 year old student in one of the junior high schools near greater Accra. Out of



the 20 year sentence handed to him, he spent 6 years in prison before he was found innocent.

He was called into the school office for an unrelated situation when he was arrested. He asked, "What have I done?" To which their reply was, "You know what you have done."

He was taken to the police station and met the schoolgirl and her father. Martin expressed his innocence; that he had no idea what they were talking about and did not even know the girl's name although he did recognize her face as a student. Nonetheless, he was detained in a cell at the station and charged with the offense. The case dragged through the courts for seven months and the day after his 42nd birthday, he was handed a 20 year prison sentence.

He stated that all he did in prison from sunup to sundown was to sit with his forehead against the wall praying for God's intervention.

In April 2021, after Maxwell had spent 6 years in Nsawam Prison, the family of the alleged victim came forward with apologies on behalf of their daughter; declaring that the accusation was a conspiracy by the management of the school he was teaching at the time. After filing an appeal with a lawyer, he was acquitted and released from prison.

Legally Maxwell was entitled to compensation for the wrongful conviction. But due to political reasons owing to the fact that his lawyer was an elite member of the opposition political party in governance, his compensation was denied. He has tried to appeal for reconsideration for compensation but the judge continuously denies his claim.

Maxwell had lost everything including his certificates by the time of his release. The landlady had disposed of all his belongings seeing that he would be 62 years old by the time he would be out of prison. Maxwell was left devastated; sleeping on the streets or couch surfing with friends who eventually kicked him out.

In May of 2024, he reached out to a local Christian organization for assistance, requesting help to get a small used car for taxi driving or an amount of money to start a business. After investigation, it was identified that his most immediate need was housing, followed by emotional support and a job. A small house was rented for a year, and he was given a mattress, paint to freshen up the house, cash to repair the entrance door and a small weekly allowance. An anonymous donor donated food items.



Fortunately he still has a driver's license and is able to take on driving responsibilities as he volunteers for the organization. The fact that the news of his wrongful conviction has not reached the larger population and created a high degree of stigmatization in the social, academic, and working community will help the organization in advocating for him in his search for a job.

Maxwell is currently undergoing counselling sessions for rehab and visiting a psychologist. Part of the forgiveness therapy included making a list of all the people who wronged him: family members, former colleagues, old friends, people at the courts, and beside each name, writing "I forgive you". This gave Maxwell release from the bitterness that also held him hostage. The people around him rejoice to witness how God has wiped away all the pain and given him joy. This is evident when he shares his story and teaches Bible stories and action songs at youth Bible clubs in local villages. His experience and testimony is touching the lives of wayward youth.

Water For Everyone

With a cheerful whistle thirty-two-year-old Priscilla strolled down the dusty dirt road. Birds twittered in the morning twilight as the time for the sun to rise drew nearer. The dusky predawn was filled with the chirp of frogs, the barking of dogs and the rumbling of taxis and trucks heading to their jobs. Not like the night was ever quiet, Priscilla reflected. She enjoyed the peaceful walk to the noisy factory where she worked.

It was a typical morning in Ghana. The days were warm and the water sales were brisk. The eight ladies on Priscilla's shift worked diligently to put the water into bags. Priscilla was able to keep up with the machine as she had been working there for a long time. It chugged in a steady rhythm. Sometimes she had to turn the water tap to keep each bag equally filled. Each plastic package was heat sealed to keep the water clean until whoever was going to drink it bit off the corner.

Priscilla would roll the big bag down three times. Then she would grab three little packages of water and three more for the first layer. Somehow they always fell into place. The she would do the second, third, fourth and fifth layer until there were thirty bags in the package. Last she tied it shut and laid it on the floor for the boys to pick up and load on the trolleys that came for their loads. Over and over and over, Priscilla did the same movements, but her thoughts were far away.

Priscilla's village did not have a pharmacy. There was no place to buy medicines for the people who were sick. There wasn't a doctor close by either. What would you do about a problem like that?

There are a few different things you could do about it, one of them is to do nothing. If you do nothing, though, then things won't ever change. Priscilla knew that something should happen so she started to go to evening school. Every day she would work at the factory for eight hours. Sometimes she would work from four in the morning until noon. Other times she would work from noon until eight. Every day she would study the notes she had copied from the evening class to prepare for the next class. It was hard work for her head, but each day as she bent over the tub to put the little bags of water into bigger bags





she could think about everything she had learned.

Sometimes the ladies worked so fast the water purifying tanks could not keep up. This was fun because then it was okay to stand up and stretch. They could hardly hear each other over the clunking of the machine so this was a good time for them to have conversations with the other people that worked there.

The men didn't mind the break either. Picking up all those bags of water was hard work. They needed the money to feed their families, and many people didn't have work. Every month they could have about \$40 to take home to their families. Working fast and working together helped them to have some time to relax themselves.

The days Priscilla was done at noon she would visit her sister. Her sister was a hair dresser, plaiting the curly hair of her clients into many tiny braids. Priscilla kept her hair short so it would be easier to tuck under her hat at the factory. The little bags of purified water they were packaging were not allowed to have any hair inside them. Priscilla would buy a big bowl of rice. She would take it to her sister and her son for lunch. Even though it was just plain rice it was something for them to eat.

Priscilla had a nephew who was two. Sometimes he would come with his mother to watch her dress hair. Each lady took almost an hour so he had to find something to do.

Priscilla loved her nephew. Her other sister was not married. Her mom was too old to work and all the girls worked together to support their mom. Priscilla was paid enough to have a little bit of money for her education as well as her family. With time she was going to be able to pursue her dream of being a pharmacist. Until that happened she would have to keep working hard

By Lois Bowman

*In the photo above, Priscilla is adjusting the water level. She has given consent to use her real name in this story. Pray for Priscilla and others like her, as they dedicate themselves to making a difference in their communities and families..

Fall Fundraiser



SAVE THE DATE!!

The annual fall fundraiser for Lighthouse Ministries International is scheduled for October 10, 2024. Save the date on your calendar for an evening of good food, fellowship, and updates on how your donations impacted the lives of Africans and Haitians. Watch your mailboxes in the next month for the official announcement with additional details and how to register for the event.

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