
GHANA NEWS

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At last I got sorted, packed, I travelled, arrived and now settling into my new home in Ankaase. My journey from Accra to Kumasi was long however most of the roads are quite good. This was one of them with beautiful scenery, quite hilly and really green.



I know you are all probably wondering what I'm doing, what its like, where do I live and is my home ok? I live in an upstairs apartment block of eight, four at the front and four at the back with two up and two down. The hospital Matron lives below me, the hospital Chaplain opposite and the other downstairs has the ENT doctor at present but it will be used for the Medical Student in the near future. The back four are all doctors.



The area I live is very remote so I am grateful to have my own car. I am unable to drive just yet and not sure I ever will. The General Manager of the hospital feels it would be safer if I had a driver so he has sourced one for me and I will pay his salary.

There is quite a list to what I will be doing however settling into the area, acclimatising, and visiting as many of the village areas as possible is what I have been doing for the first month. I will be carrying out a community assessment in all nine of the hospital/clinics in this Ashanti region, be involved in restarting a nutrition programme at the hospital, carry out training with the nursing staff, do some research, help to update their website and assist the General Manager to prepare proposals. At the moment its just not easy being the 'newbie' in town and at times I do get a bit irritated so I am continually asking God for patience to endure all things.



My first few church visits where indeed an experience. The first was 4hours 10minutes on Easter Sunday at the Ebenezer Methodist in Accra and then the others 3+ hours in Freeman Methodist very near to my home in Ankasse and 4 1/2 hours on Synod Sunday.

I'm very disappointed that although English is the official language, its taught in all schools and almost all signs are in English most people when speaking to each other



don't use it. The language of this area is Twi and although I know I will not learn it fully hopefully I will try to pick up a few words and phrases. I know it will be 'den' (difficult in Twi), however I will try. The church service is also in Twi so I plan to attend an English speaking church occasionally in Kumasi.

On my first clinic visit to see what the nurses do there were three sets of twins all mixed sex and above right is one of them. The other top photo is Japa one of the Community Volunteers at Abrade village. Each village has a volunteer who helps to share about the hospital

services, provide information of a return date when the nurses will come to weigh the babies and give vaccinations and even provide space, a table and chairs to do so.

Every village within the hospital catchment area receives a monthly visit. Many of the people would be unable to afford transport to attend the hospital clinic and it's a long distance to walk so the hospital provides the service. Most days the nurses will have at least 40 babies/toddlers within 2-3 hours. I have enjoyed visiting and although I did get a few strange looks from some of the children most of them smiled, laughed and even allowed me to hold them. As you can see by the photos all of the Mothers/Grandmothers carry the babies on their back which apparently is very comfortable for them and the children all appear very contented.

Ankase Methodist Hospital is the only hospital in the area and serves a population of 155,000. Each day the Out Patients Department which would be very similar to a GP practice at home is open 6am-8pm. On average a total of 200 patients will attend daily an increase of over 100% in the past 2-3 years and often 300+. There is also an emergency department with a specialist ER consultant, male/female medical, male/female surgical with a surgeon attending 2-3 times per week, maternity with a gynae/obs. consultant, paediatrics, ENT OPD with audiology, eye clinic, theatre, public health, psychiatry, HIV screening, counselling and antiretroviral treatment, physiotherapy, x-ray, scanning, pharmacy, laboratory and all other financial and administrative departments necessary for a hospital to function as well as staff welfare and chaplaincy services.



The building is no longer adequate so there is a new hospital currently being built and phase one, the ground floor structure is almost complete, there will be three floors when completed. Eventually most of the wards, OPD, theatre and the emergency department

will move to the new building with most of the old building being used for maternity, public health and a few other departments.

There will be a link from the old to new and eventually even a cafeteria on the top floor something the staff have been requesting and will benefit them, the patients and also



raise some needed income for the day-to-day running of the hospital. Most people have health insurance which the hospital receives from the government and the main income for the hospital however they are not good at paying on time and at the moment there is a large amount owed to the Methodist Hospital.

I will try to make contact monthly although the internet access is not so good at times and often the wifi I pay a large amount for per month doesn't work in my home and I need to take my wifi dongle to the hospital conference room to receive and send e-mails. Hopefully it will improve though.

I have many things to be thankful for

- My safe arrival to Ankaase, having a car, my new driver and my freight arriving
- Being able to have the Irish Methodist team to visit the hospital and my home (I will share a bit more about that next month)
- Being given time to settle into my position, get to know the staff and surroundings
- A comfortable home and good health
- The opportunity to attend my first synod, take note my Methodist friends it lasted four full days!!

Prayers for

- Safety as I travel to other clinics, outreach areas, Kumasi and Accra the capital
- Being able to cope with the heat and lack of electricity often 9+ hours at a time and at times 18-20 hours daily with no backup yet and a heatwave also predicted!!
- For the larger creatures in my home to be cleared. I am well used to visitors such as ants, cockroaches and mosquitoes however struggling with others.
- I will be able to get properly started into all the work I plan to be involved in
- To be able to enjoy new friendships at work and church

Pat

