



## Shirk Family Update from Ghana March 2023

Dear friends and family,

Greetings once again from Ghana. We will give an update on some things going on around here, but the focus of this letter will be our trip to a secluded, primitive village called Chillinga.

We are nearing the end of the school year for our children. All in all the year has gone fairly well. It was a huge blessing to have Bro Sharku, a young native man who lives close by, help with teaching the children this year.

We are entering the rainy season, so we are busy getting ready for planting. We are also working on a drainage gutter. We are hoping to get that finished before it gets too wet. Work on the new barn is ongoing. We need to do some finishing touches on the addition to our house.

We are very excited because on April 1<sup>st</sup> a workgroup is coming from our home church, Peasant Valley Mennonite. We are preparing for the group to come. It is always extra busy having a work team come but we enjoy it. This one is extra special because it is from our home church. This will be a highlight for this year.

We are also preparing for a big transition. The Lonnie Weaver Family who has been here for 10 years and directing the school is moving back to the US. We will be taking over the operations of the school in addition to our current responsibilities.

### **Chillinga Trip**

On March 3-6 we travelled as a family and a few others from the compound to Chillinga. Chillinga is a secluded village on the eastern border of Ghana about half way North to South. It takes 10 hours to drive then a three hour walk through the mountains to reach the Chillinga. Chillinga has no electric and the only running water is the nearby stream. There is no cell phone service. The people know of God but are primarily idol worshippers. We are asking God to open the "door" for the Light to shine in the darkness. Is this why we got connected to Chillinga?

Why this village? How did we learn about this village? There is a connection. Wafa Yaw, a boy in the orphanage, is from this village. His family sent him to Kasoa, a large town 3 hours from us, to go to school. He ran away from his caretakers. Someone realized he was a lost boy and sent him to the police station. The police turned him over to the social welfare department, who brought him to us to care for. He was with us about seven years before his family found him. He couldn't speak English or the local language here so he couldn't tell anyone where he was from. When he learned English he didn't remember where he was from. His family searched high and low looking for him. The social welfare put pictures of missing children on tv. His family saw it and they finally found their lost child after all these years. What a joyous reunion!

This was our second trip to Chillinga but the first as a family. We left at 12:30 AM on Friday March 3<sup>rd</sup>. We arrived in Chillinga about exactly 12 hours later. We drove to a town called Nkwanta, where we met our guide. It was another 15-minute drive to Shaire, where we parked and started walking. Shaire is called the suspended village because it is built on the side of a hill.

We began the three hour walk. It is not easy. We climb over a mountain and the trail is a bit rough in some places. Some of the path is shaded but a large portion of the way we were walking under the hot African sun.

We had our clothing and things stuffed into back packs. Everyone did very well with the walk, and we only stopped a few times to rest especially if we had a longer climb.

When we arrived in the village, we learned that Wafa Yaw's family was not aware we were coming. We sent a message, but we got to the village before the message did.

We received a warm welcome. After putting our things in the room, we met with the family elders. This is tradition as part of welcoming us properly.

Friday was market day in Chillinga. We walked through the small market observing the wares for sale. Most of the merchants came from nearby Togo.

Saturday we spent time with the village folks. We walked around touring the village. The children enjoyed making friends and swimming in the cold stream.

Sunday morning we had a church service and invited anyone who wanted to join us. Quite a few children came and several youths. Some adults were hanging around as well. They told us they don't hate God. Some of them pray to God but they are very deeply rooted in their traditional idol worship. Earl preached in English and the pastor with us translated to Twi, then a girl from the village translated to their local language so all could understand.

On Sunday night after 9:00 pm someone came rushing to us begging us to come to the little medical clinic there in the village. A woman had given birth and it she was having some complications. Earl, Amanda, and the native pastor who was with us went and prayed for the woman. Usually when they have this problem while giving birth the mother won't survive. But praise God the woman survived the night and was doing well the next morning.

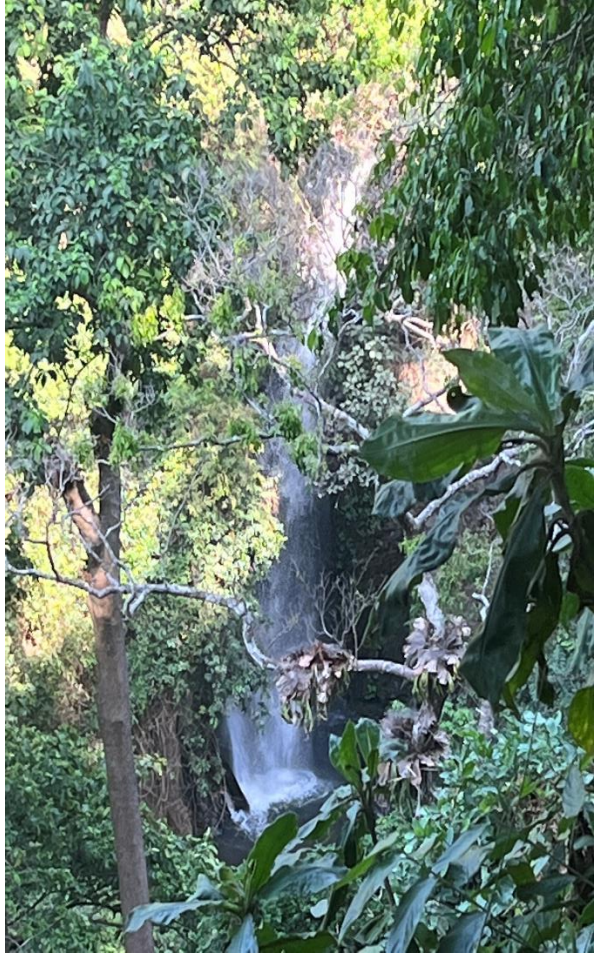
We were up early Monday morning. After a lite breakfast we began the hike back to the van. The hike out was easier than the hike in. We arrived back home around 8 PM Monday night. Join us in prayer as we seek God's leading in relating to the people of Chillinga.

A few prayers requests. The people of Chillinga, the transition with the Weaver Family Leaving, the Weaver Family as they wrap up here and transition back to the US, a safe and successful trip for the work team coming

We would love to hear from you all. email [parentsforjesus@yahoo.com](mailto:parentsforjesus@yahoo.com)



Wafa Yaw (left) with his siblings, family by the Chillinga road sign, Shaire the suspended village, valley we drove in to Shaire (can you spot the road?), Chillinga, cows on the road



Chillinga from the mountain as we approached, scenic picture, water fall, girls make some friends