

EUGENE YAKOHENE

The Making of a Missionary- Starting Early

By Dianah Akpene Marfo

EARLY YEARS

Born and bred in Accra with four (4) brothers and two (2) sisters, Eugene was a shy child but ready to speak his mind when necessary. He was from a typical nominal Christian home. On Sundays, his mum would attend church leaving him, his Dad, and his siblings at home. This got Eugene to think and wonder about it a lot. He developed his hunger and thirst to know the Lord from this point and also from some Christian literature that loitered around the house from interactions with people from the Jehovah's witness group.

At age ten, when Eugene was in the 5th Grade at Primary School, something incredible happened in class that would change him for the rest of his life. Whenever the teacher went out of class, one of his classmates, whom the children popularly referred to as 'Pastor' would get up to preach the gospel. On this particular day, the teacher went out of the class again and the boy got up to share the gospel. At first, Eugene was engrossed in a book that he was reading but when he heard his classmates whisper to one another when the boy got up to share the gospel, he also lifted his head and decided to follow what was happening. At this juncture, Eugene felt extreme hunger and thirst for the Lord. He responded to the call to salvation. Those who believed came together to start a small class fellowship and Eugene quickly assumed leadership of the group.

SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Joining Scripture Union in senior high school and playing various leadership roles, Eugene received a lot of discipleship training from here. This would help him to disciple other younger Christians later. Growing up, his aspiration in life was to become a very rich man in the future.

Eugene had a quiet composure when growing up, preferring to stay in the background most of the

time, except when it had to do with his faith and Christian service, then he would come upfront as possible.

UNIVERSITY AND MISSIONS

His passion for God and his keen interest in football were the things that drove him passionately. At the University, it became a struggle to set his priorities aright. Taking the issue to God in prayer, his attention was drawn to the fact that acquiring a University degree would equip him for forty years but his walk with God would serve him the next forty years and also for eternity. This was the beginning of his call to ministry.

Eugene got engrossed in Christian activities and flunked his first semester exams. It affected his grades. He talked to God about it and subsequently, though he was still very active with 'Chrife' things, his grades began to flourish.

Another remarkable experience that pioneered Eugene's missionary life was the short-term outreaches they embarked upon during vacation. The experience birthed in him a passion to reach those with the least opportunity to hear the gospel. Sharing this yearning with a lecturer, he mentioned Pioneers Africa and their work in missions. The bulk of his ministry experience was with the Ghana Fellowship of Evangelical Students (GHAFES), volunteering as a training secretary before and during his National Service in the Northern part of Ghana. This gave him significant insight into the rudiments of ministry in an Islamic dominant environment as well as ministry among students.

With curiosity and eagerness, he visited the Pioneers team, explored what they were doing, and slowly got sucked in....

He spent the first year of his missionary journey in the Pioneers Office in Accra, learning what the missions environment entailed.

GUINEA CONAKRY

Later, he was sent to Guinea Conakry as a missionary where he met his wife Djenabou.

In Guinea, ministry involvement included church planting among the Balanta people group, student ministry, and church leadership development. The work with students involved short-term outreach work that served to introduce many of them to the work of missions, and groom them in the walk with the Lord. They also organized an annual Bible week on various campuses that provided Bibles and Christian literature at a subsidized cost to the students. It was a significant experience to work with the students. Many lives were affected positively by Christ.

After spending thirteen years in Guinea, Eugene and his family returned to Ghana, to continue serving at the Pioneers-Africa office where he has been serving as director since 2014.

PASSION

Mr. Eugene Yakohene is very passionate about advocating to mobilize human and material resources for frontline missions. He believes that people must hear the gospel in a way they can understand and make an informed response. Similarly, his passion is to see that the resources God has made available to His church would be made available to ensure that everyone gets the opportunity to hear the Gospel.

Uncle Eugene, as he is popularly known, says that growing up, he aspired to be a very rich man. Assessing his state now, he is not sure he is anywhere near that goal or might ever reach it. Yet, he has no regrets. None of his family's needs have gone unmet.

One profound statement that speaks to him is: *“God’s work, the pay is small but the end of service benefit is out of this world”*. This is what he wants to pass on to the younger generation. Stay the course, love the Lord and you will have no regrets.