

ROSS AND AVRILLE CAMPBELL

Over 50 Years of Faithful Service to Ghana



Independently Ross and Avrielle heard the call to missions. Avrielle was a teacher in Australia and Ross a chartered accountant in New Zealand. Unknown to each other they were called to serve with WEC International in Ghana out of a burden for the unreached peoples in the north. Avrielle arrived in Ghana in January 1969 and was assigned to Damongo to work amongst the Gonja. Ross arrived a few weeks later and assigned to student chaplaincy in Kumasi. In the course of leading university student teams to the Gonja area Ross got to know and appreciate Avrielle and they married in May 1971.

As they grappled with the challenge of reaching more than 40 unreached northern tribes, they realized that the key was to mobilize the churches of Southern Ghana. But at that time the older denominational churches were not preaching a compelling gospel message and lacked a vision for evangelism and missions.

In 1973 while on furlough the Lord spoke to Ross and Avrielle through the story of the dry bones coming to life to form a mighty conquering army (Ezekiel

chapter 37). On their return to Ghana in early 1974 their mission leaders accepted their vision to mobilize the older denominations.

In February 1974 the Ghana Evangelism Committee was constituted and Ross became its founding National Director. The mandate was to mobilize the churches of Ghana to fulfil the Great Commission under the New Life for All slogan, *Total Evangelization through Total Mobilization*.

What happened over the next 20 years can only be described as a sovereign move of God. The 'dry bones' prophecy of Ezekiel 37 became a reality. Later research documented a

net increase of close to 9,000 churches in the first ten years and over 6,000 churches in the next five years.

In 1985 Ross lead GEC to develop a *National Church Survey* to identify unchurched areas and the people groups still to be reached. More than five million people were identified as belonging to unreached tribes and 1,417 towns and villages were identified as having no church.

In 1993 a second National Church Survey was presented to National church leaders. The unity of vision and impact of the survey also caught the attention of visiting global missions leaders who requested that the Campbell's be released by Ghana to head an international network to facilitate Country-wide Initiatives for the fulfilment of the Great Commission.

From late 1994 till March 2001 the Campbell's worked and travelled Africa and the world facilitating National Initiatives for the fulfilment of Great Commission. A total of 44 African nations were visited and 38 Initiatives launched during this time.

In May 1997 the Campbells brought together over 1,100 African leaders from 46 countries at GCOWE 97, in Pretoria, to consider the challenge of National Initiatives. This catalytic event led to the proliferation of national movements and later in 1997 the Evangelism and Missions Commission of the Association of Evangelicals in Africa (AEA) adopted African National Initiatives as their basic strategy.

In 2001 the Campbells facilitated a meeting of delegations from 36 African nations in Jerusalem for the African Millennial Consultation. Recognizing that the AD 2000 & Beyond Movement was ending, and that much remained to be done, the delegates resolved to establish a continuing African movement to encourage the development and networking of National Initiatives across the continent. Thus the Movement for African National Initiatives (MANI) was born and the Campbells asked to serve as the Continental Coordinators.

In 2006 Ross handed over the continental coordination role to Rev Dr Reuben Ezemadu of Nigeria but still serves on the Continental Team as International Liaison.

Since transitioning leadership to Dr Ezemadu, the Campbells have given much time to pursuing the

challenge of mobilizing and mentoring leadership for the remaining unchurched areas and unreached peoples of Ghana and Africa.

I think our role has been so often to not only see challenges and needs but also think outside the box and come up with and initiate creative steps to address them” says Ross. “Many of these now have a life of their own e.g. National and Regional Pastors Conferences which evolved into the Challenge Book Conferences which have gone global, GEMA, Sowers open air ministry, National Church Survey – a global first, Country Assessment Process (CAP) developed out of initial work done with CRAF conferences in Francophone West and Central Africa, African National Initiatives – MANI etc. Yes the Lord has been bountiful in His blessings and to Him be all the glory”.

After more than 50 years of missionary engagement in Ghana the Campbells are conscious that that the Great Commission mandate must be fulfilled in each generation; that a new generation of leaders must be identified and equipped to complete the task in their generation.

In October 2019, GEMA honoured Ross & Arville Campbell with the Lifetime of Service Award.