

Peki/Blengo, Ghana
25 May 2020

In mid-March, Debbie and I spent three days in Accra, Ghana's largest city and capital. Primarily we went to renew our residency and work permits for another year. We took the time to purchase books at our favorite bookstore and do our regular shopping which we do every four to six weeks. While there, we saw the signs of change looming. The taxi drivers wore masks. Restaurants offered hand sanitizer. The mall required the washing of hands before entering and a large sign giving information about Covid-19 was present. Even our hotel required a temperature check upon registration. During our three hour trek back to Peki, President Nana Akufo-Addo spoke to the nation.

Upon returning home, we learned that life, as in many places around the world, had changed. Those changes included the closing of all schools and places of worship. It now meant that I would not be teaching or preaching. (I have been able to keep in contact with the administration and a few students via internet.) Now I found myself at home.

My life, for the present, consists of reading the books we bought in March. (How fortunate was that?) One day Debbie asked, "When was the last time you did so much reading for pleasure and not reading to prepare to preach or teach?" In reality I cannot remember but I now find many hours filled with reading a blessing. Watching re-runs of re-runs offered by our limited number of television channels, news on BBC, and playing cards and table games with Debbie have also become part of changed life. I have set up a course in the house where sixteen laps is equal to one mile and encourage myself to make 48 laps during the day. I enjoy the quietness that has settled upon Peki since gatherings of more than ten are not permitted. While missing the chatter and singing of the children going to and from school, it is pleasant to hear the chickens, goats, and the gentle rains.

Debbie and I have had to make several other changes since we are unable to shop in Accra. Toilet paper is in plentiful supply, additional items are not. In Peki, we are unable to purchase dairy products or fresh meat. Coffee, tea, and other provisions are available but often not the brands we prefer or at much higher cost. We are limited to purchasing only locally grown fruits and vegetables.

may never again want to see tomatoes, eggplants, okra, or green peppers. On the other hand, we are discovering several varieties of rice, legumes, and grains. Debbie has become excellent at creating “new” dishes. (We have switched roles. In the US, I did most of the cooking. I admit to being a kitchen snob and our kitchen is not up to my standards.)

Some days, the heat, limited interaction and activity take their toll. I want to be with my students. I want to travel beyond Peki. I want a pork chop with a baked potato. These are only wants in a time of flux.

Life in Ghana, as around the world, has changed. Some of our wants and joys may return others, may not. We know life, as always, continues and changes. Our trust continues in the God of life, to bring life anew and refreshed.

Larry Colvin
Mission Co-worker
Evangelical Presbyterian Church Ghana