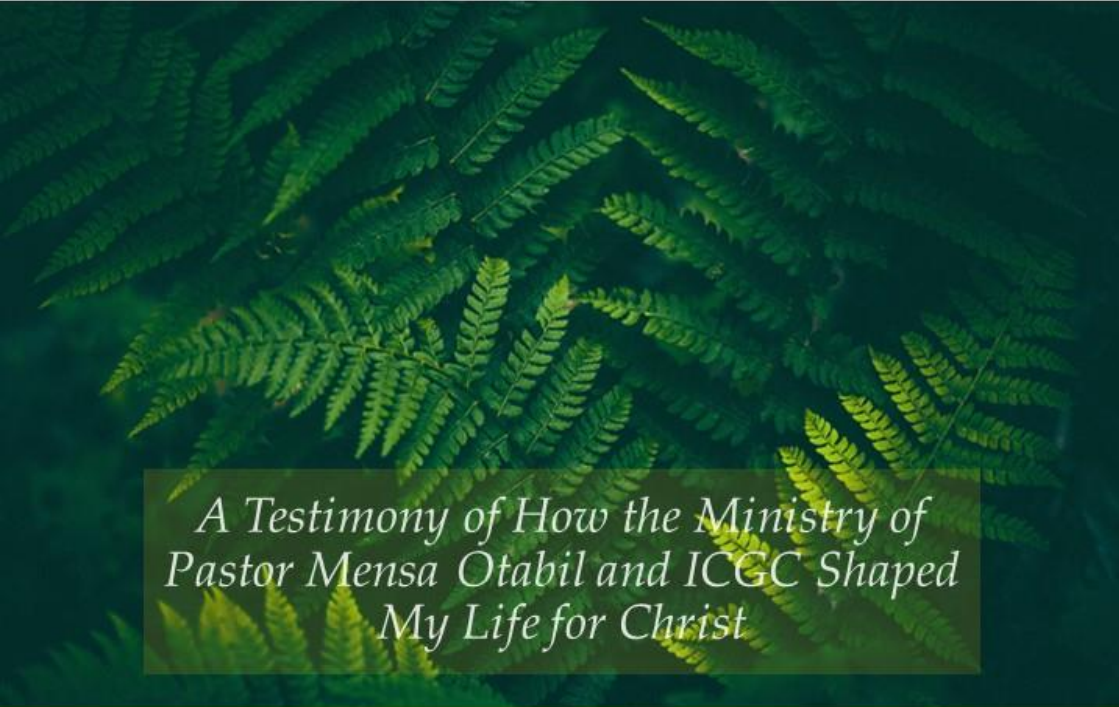


Living the Gospel Books

INFLUENCED FOR CHRIST



*A Testimony of How the Ministry of
Pastor Mensa Otobil and ICGC Shaped
My Life for Christ*

ERIC OTCHERE

Influenced For Christ:

*A Testimony of How the Ministry of Pastor Mensa
Otabil and ICGC Shaped My Life for Christ*

Eric Otchere (March, 2024)



Living the Gospel blog

Visit www.erikotthere.wordpress.com for daily writing through the whole Bible chapter by chapter and weekly biblical perspectives on cultural issues.

*My little children, for whom I labour in
birth again until Christ is formed in you.*

Galatians 4:19 (NKJV)

Dedication

I dedicate this book to ICGC Christ Temple and
The Royal Temple members. In every way, you
have helped me mature as a saint and a servant of
God.

Acknowledgements

This book would not have seen the light of day without the immense support of the following people:

- I am grateful to my heavenly Father for the precious gift of His Son Jesus Christ to save me and grant me abundant life.
- My deepest appreciation goes to Pastor Mensa Otabil for his teachings, which have impacted my life and given me the opportunity to serve in ICGC.
- Rev. Albert and Comfort Ocran have been exemplary models of how to take Christ to the marketplace with integrity.
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*He also brought me up out of a horrible
pit,
Out of the miry clay,
And set my feet upon a rock,
And established my steps.
Psalm 40:2 (NKJV)*

INTRODUCTION

Why I Wrote this Book

It's been 14 years since I first entered the gates of ICGC Christ Temple, Abossey Okai, and began my journey in the Lord. I started with many odds against me because I never went to Sunday School as a child, and I was only going to church by default. The effect was that I could not even quote a Bible verse. I was spiritually dead in my sins.

The *vision of ICGC* is: "Establishing the house of God through the development of model New Testament Christians and Churches." The *mission*, likewise, is "Raising leaders, shaping vision and influencing society through Christ." I can testify of this duo - vision and mission - being realised in my own life, having gone through the ranks of the church by the grace of God.

In the 40 years of the existence of this ministry, it is important that we bring to bear the great testimonies of the transformative work of the Word of God in the lives of diverse people in ICGC temples.

I seized the opportunity to write about the impact of this ministry on my own life. I know many more people have their own stories to tell.

In the life of Israel in the wilderness, God always instructed them to memorialise what they experienced so that when their children ask about it later, they could confidently testify of what the Lord did for them (Exodus 12:26-28). *If we fail to share what God has done for us, we cannot be grateful enough to appreciate His profound goodness to us. Ungrateful hearts cannot receive from the Lord.*

*We have heard with our ears, O God,
Our fathers have told us,
The deeds You did in their days,*

In days of old.

Psalm 44:1 (NKJV)

In the following pages, I share 10 verifiable impacts of Pastor Mensa Otabil's ministry and the ministry of ICGC on my life. As you read this, I will encourage you to take time and scribble what God has done for you through your pastor and local church to the glory of God.

For the Lord is good;

His mercy is everlasting,

And His truth endures to all generations.

Psalm 100:5 (NKJV)

Enjoy reading.

*"Outside of Christ, I am only a sinner,
but in Christ, I am saved. Outside of
Christ, I am empty; in Christ, I am full.
Outside of Christ, I am weak; in Christ, I
am strong. Outside of Christ, I cannot; in
Christ, I am more than able. Outside of
Christ, I have been defeated; in Christ, I
am already victorious. How meaningful
are the words, "in Christ."".*

Watchman Nee, Chinese church
leader and Christian teacher

CHAPTER #1

Outside of Christ

*How Pastor Otabil's Preaching Shaped
My Life Before I Became a Christian*

I have met many people who can attest to the great influence of Pastor Mensa Otabil, General Overseer of ICGC. There are Muslims, atheists and people of other faiths who have said that even though they are not Christians, they listen to *Living Word* broadcast by Pastor Otabil on radio, TV and via the internet.

The lifestyle of people outside of Christ Jesus is described by Paul in the following terms in Ephesians 2:1-3 (NKJV),

¹And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, ²in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power

of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, ³among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

My own story started around 2002 when I moved from my little town of Ajumako in the Central Region of Ghana to the city of Accra for my Senior High School education. I was not saved. I only went to church by default. Before I became a born again and tongue speaking believer of Jesus Christ, I used to listen to *Living Word* broadcast religiously at home on local TV and radio networks – TV3 and Radio Gold. There was something I could connect with, and that was the practical nature of the Word of God being preached. It helped me to settle in my heart that there was a God who ruled in the affairs of men in all areas of life including my own unclear life (Daniel 4:17). Right in school, my friends told me

stories of how Pastor Otabil did not go to university, yet through his godly leadership, he established Central University (CU) for training ethical leaders for the many facets of society.

What if there was no Pastor Mensa Otabil who was obedient to God to faithfully broadcast His unfailing Word? What if he had not started ICGC? God can use anyone under the sun to connect us to Himself from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of His marvelous light (Colossians 1:13).

The story of my Christian journey started by God using the *Living Word* broadcast to draw me to Himself. His means of grace are varied for His own purposes.



Key Lesson #1

“God has many ways of reaching out to the unsaved to draw them out of the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light.”

*Salvation is an act of God. It is initiated
by God, wrought by God, and sustained
by God.*

Billy Graham, Christian evangelist,
and author

CHAPTER #2

Saved into Christ

*How Pastor Otabil's Sermon Brought Me
to Christ*

It was a Sunday in June 2010.

Throughout my 20-plus years on earth, I had not been a true Christian who was confident of eternal life in Christ Jesus. I used to oscillate between churches on Sundays, hopping from one Orthodox Church to the other because of my parents and the family members I stayed with. If I had died then, I would have gone straight to hell and not heaven. I was not saved.

In June 2010, after the final exams for my first degree in University of Ghana, Legon, I joined a junior colleague to attend church service at ICGC Christ Temple, Abossey Okai, Accra. I had never been there

before. Upon experiencing the church service (prayers, praise and worship, song ministration, sermon, and hosting after church), I decided to be regular at the church for all the services. What stuck with me was the sermon on “The Dominion Mandate” (Part 6), Pastor Otabil was preaching to conclude his landmark work about the purpose of God for human beings He created in His own image and likeness. I wanted to come back and hear more of his pulpit ministry. I felt as if I had found my lost home.

Since June 2010, it has been forever following Jesus Christ, no turning back at all. I can count on my fingers how many times I have missed church. My desires and affections were totally shifted to that of the kingdom of God. Sundays and Tuesdays were never missed.

Colossians 3:1-3 (NKJV) says,

¹If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. ²Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. ³For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

God used the ministry of Pastor Mensa Otabil to bring me to His kingdom. Today, I can die any day with full assurance that for me, absence in the body will mean present with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:8).



Key Lesson #2

*“It is by the work
of the Holy Spirit
that our hearts
are opened to
receive the gospel
which changes us
from sinners to
saints.”*

*As you obey God's Word and rely on His
strengthening power, you can count on
biblical change to occur in every area of
your life.*

John C. Broger, Christian missionary,
and author

CHAPTER #3

Growing in Christ

*How the Teaching Ministry of Pastor
Otobil Helped Me to Grow in Christ*

Apostle Peter in his epistle to the saints in dispersion stated that they must lay aside all sins as newborn babies and rather desire the sincere milk of the Word to grow (2 Peter 2:1-3). Apostle Paul also prayed in Ephesians 1:15-22 that God will give us revelational knowledge in Christ to know the riches of His inheritance in the saints. Simply put, being saved is not enough. I needed to grow up spiritually. I had to grow to maturity in Christ.

From the scriptures above, two things were very important for me when I came to saving faith. First, I needed to *overcome the old man*. I had to mortify sin in me and put on Christ. Second, I had to *allow the*

word of God to richly dwell in me to be like Christ Jesus on earth. I had to walk in the Spirit to overcome the deeds of the flesh.

¹³For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

¹⁴For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

Romans 8:13-14

After my new birth in 2010, I needed to grow and develop in the faith. God has given us the agency of His word and His shepherds who teach and preach to help mature the saints in Christ (Ephesians 4:11-16). I owe much of this to Pastor Otabil's meticulous pulpit ministry teaching. I always wonder how he could extract great insights from the same Bible I had been reading. I never came to church without my Bible, notebook, and pen. I took copious notes and literally put down every word from the lips of

my pastor in the early days. I didn't want to miss any point. I still have my notebooks kept well and safe.

Pastor Otabil's deep understanding of Scriptures and his simple approach to teaching it for the understanding of his hearers won my heart forever. It made me gravitate to my Bible to read it, study it, apply it and teach it (Ezra 7:10). He made me fall in love with my manual of life, the Bible.

When Jesus was resurrected from the dead and reunited with His disciples, He met Peter – who had denied Him three times – and charged him to feed His lambs three times (John 21:15-17). Peter agreed and we later saw the work he did with the early church. I have also been a beneficiary of the spiritual food served by Pastor Mensa Otabil to help me to grow in grace.

Ephesians 5:8-11 (NKJV) says,

⁸For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light ⁹(for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), ¹⁰finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. ¹¹And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.



Key Lesson #3

*“When we let go
the old man in
Adam and we
embrace the new
man in Christ Jesus,
we grow steadily
towards maturity.”*

*The church changes the world not by
making converts but by making disciples.*

Rev. John Wesley, Revivalist, and
Founder of the Methodist Church

CHAPTER #4

Discipled in Christ

How Pastor Otabil's Local Assembly

Helped Disciple Me in Christ

Discipleship is more than listening and enjoying sermons. In the words of Jesus Christ before He ascended to heaven, He charged the church to make disciples of the nations. He went further to note that disciples must be taught all that He taught the apostles; baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:18-20). We can only come to true discipleship in Christ when the church's machinery is all aimed at that purpose. The church's business is to make disciples of people in every culture.

In the previous chapter, I shared how Pastor Otabil's teaching ministry increased my appetite for the Word of God and eventually helped me to grow in

grace. In this chapter, I want to share how the discipleship system of ICGC Christ Temple helped me to be established in the faith and prepared me to serve God and other saints and share the love of Christ with sinners.

When you enter ICGC from any believing or unbelieving background, you are introduced to what is called the Adult Bible Class (ABC) to properly orient you in Christ and to be abreast with *ICGC distinctives*. I used to be confused, and compared my church with others, but enrolling and participating in the ABC helped me understand why we do what we do. It further grounded me in basic *Christian doctrines* like sin, man, salvation, and many other important *spiritual practices* like prayer, fasting, giving, Bible reading and studying and importantly, how to serve other believers and share the gospel.

You must understand that I didn't even have one Bible verse in my arsenal I could quote from

memory. I never attended Sunday School in my formative years. All the good Christian training some children had, were foreign to me when I was growing up.

Today, I look back with appreciation to the local church which Pastor Otabil heads. The church helped me to always be ready to give a reason for my faith.

*But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts,
and always be ready to give a defense to
everyone who asks you a reason for the
hope that is in you, with meekness and
fear.*

1 Peter 3:15 (NKJV)

If the church was not committed to raising New Testament believers through discipleship, I would not be writing this at this time. Or probably I would have been telling another story about another church.



Key Lesson #4

*“A strong
discipleship-
making church
will raise
steadfast saints in
Christ.”*

*It is not enough to know about Christ, it
is knowing Christ Himself that alone
saves the soul.*

Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *The
Prince of Preachers*

CHAPTER #5

Knowing Christ

*How ICGC Helped Me to Know Christ
Through Practicing Spiritual Disciplines*

In his book, *Celebration of Discipline*, Richard Foster, identified two broad areas of spiritual disciplines, namely; inward and outward spiritual practices. Regarding my journey in the Lord, I will concern myself with the inward practices of Bible reading and studying, praying, fasting, meditation, and others.

I was still young in the Lord and had barely experienced any meaningful growth. When I considered the works of my Adult Bible Class colleagues, in the areas of quoting Scriptures and sharing what they had learnt from the Bible, I marveled how someone can bring out a Bible verse from memory. This challenged me to take the Bible

seriously. I am always challenged by people who do exploits in life.

With that in mind, my friends' ability to do what I could not do challenged me to learn the Bible, study it and pray to God to walk like Christ. Coupled with the fact of the profound teachings from the pulpit, I hungered and thirsted after righteousness. I wanted to know Christ for myself through my new daily devotions in the morning which I have consistently maintained at 4am everyday till now. I have never stopped since.

Later, I realised from the book of 1 John that there is clear evidence of one who claims to be united with Christ and walks in Him. The apostle said that if we claim we know Him, we must walk in His commandments.

1 John 2:3-6 (NKJV) says,

Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.

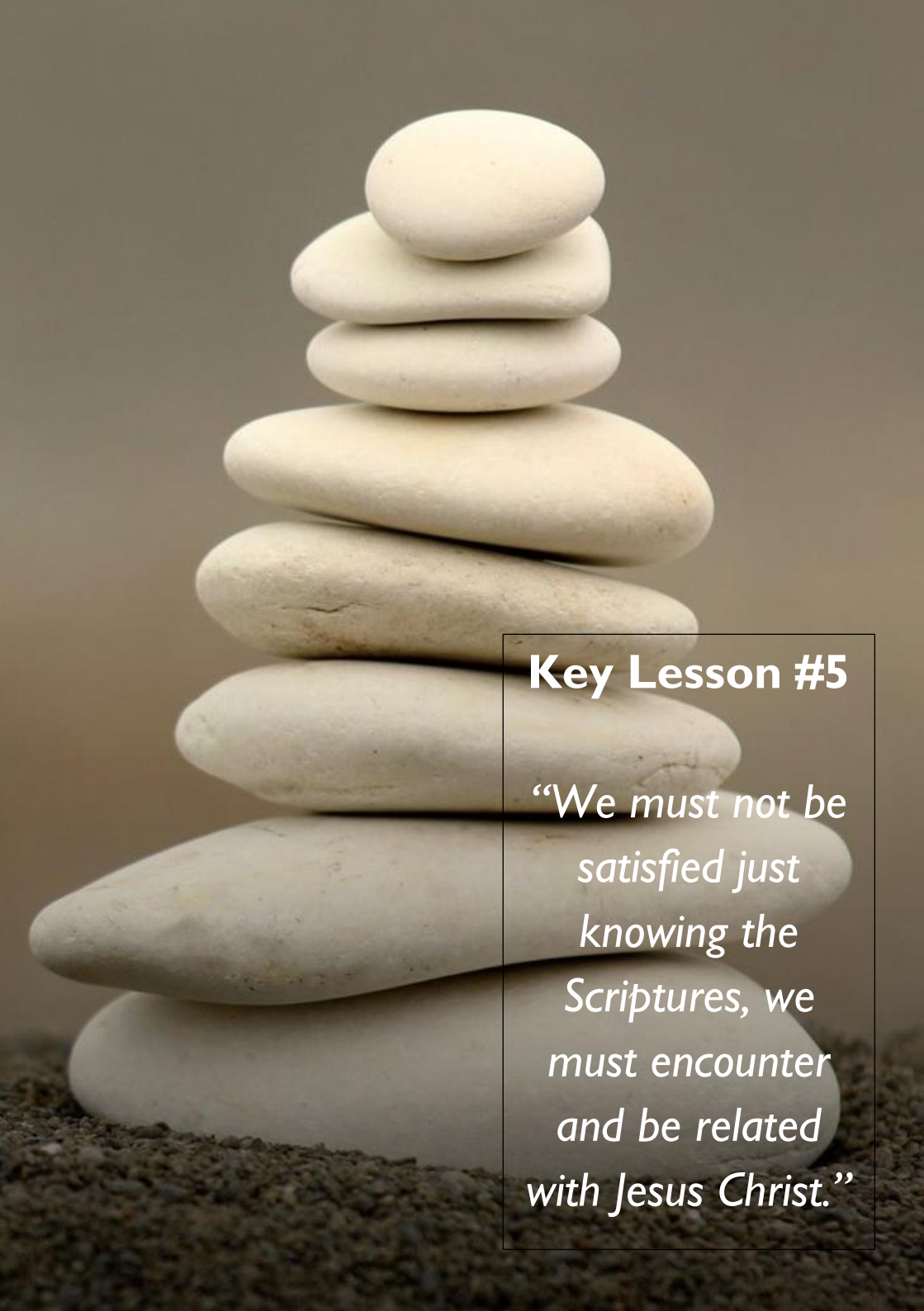
Two important lessons can be taken from the text above. First, *know and keep the word of God*. Second, *walk like Christ*. By doing these two things, we will be well on our way to becoming like Christ.

Being a Christian is to know Christ and walk in all His ways and that's exactly what the pulpit ministry of Pastor Otabil and the godly friends I made in my ABC classes helped me to achieve. They helped me

to have a personal relationship with my Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Let's conclude this chapter with the words of Jesus when He said in John 15:4 that:

Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.



Key Lesson #5

“We must not be satisfied just knowing the Scriptures, we must encounter and be related with Jesus Christ.”

*It is not only about receiving, but also
about giving and making a contribution.*

*Finding a small group enables you to
contribute by using your talents, abilities,
and ministry gifts to do something
meaningful in the house of the Lord.*

Dr. Mensa Otabil, pastor, Christian
teacher, and author

CHAPTER #6

Serving in Christ

*How ICGC Gave Me the Opportunities to
Serve God and His People*

In the last ABC class at the Ministry level, we were taught that we serve in three ways: First, we serve God Himself. Second, we serve fellow believers in Christ. And third, we serve unbelievers by sharing the gospel. My church trained me to do all three.

The Bible teaches that every believer in Christ has been given spiritual gift(s) to serve in the body of Christ. In 1 Corinthians 12, the Apostle Paul taught the church at Corinth that the Holy Spirit endows the believer with spiritual gifts to serve. Apostle Peter also affirms this and teaches in his epistle that God has blessed each one of us with gifts to serve (1 Peter 4:10-11). Every believer has at least one gift to

serve with. In the words of the late German evangelist to Africa, Reinhard Bonnke, “Spiritual gifts are tools to get the job done.” We use them as we go on with the Master’s work.

Service in the House of the Lord

In ICGC Christ Temple, I first joined the Missions and Outreach Department to go on the field to win the lost. Each Sunday after the first service, we jumped into cars and went to Korle Gonno, a nearby area, to share the love of Christ with the dwellers there. Part of the work was also to join newly planted churches to help them win the lost to get them to the church. I remember the story of one guy I met. I shared the gospel with him and then he decided to come to church. Big problem was that he didn't have a Bible. I gave him the first Bible I ever bought and then managed myself thereafter. The joy was in knowing that I had a covert I was discipling.

The next department I joined and served the Lord was the Intercessory Ministry. I understood that if I am a prayer warrior, it will improve my prayer life and my commitment to the church. It was required of us to report as early as 6am to pray for 1 hour before Sunday service started at 7.30am. Considering the fact that I stayed at Kasoa, which takes about 1 and half hours to get to church without traffic with a commercial vehicle, I set off around 4.30am to church. I was committed to this routine. In fact, when I joined the intercessors, I was still serving in the Missions and Outreach Department. I would come early for prayers at 6am and then move to the field after the first service. What blessed training I received from that routine.

Moving to The Royal Temple

In 2014, I had a deep conviction in me that I had heard enough of the Word and been prepared for the benefit of another local assembly of ICGC. It was occasioned by the fact that I was reading the parable

of the unfruitful tree in Luke 13:6-9. After 3 years, the Master said that it should be cut down and burned because it was not bearing fruit. The servant asked for another year of grace. I saw myself as the tree in this parable and decided to move to ICGC The Royal Temple, Awoshie, Accra to serve more there. I was not unfruitful, but I wanted to do more for the Lord who gave His all for me.

When I landed in my new church (ICGC The Royal Temple), I served as a facilitator of the Adult Bible Class (ABC). In Christ Temple, I desired to teach but I never did that. Following that, I had the opportunity to serve with the Children and Youth Church as a Class 6 facilitator. With all seriousness, I used to prepare my teaching notes as if I was going to preach to adults. To me, the children needed nothing but the best teaching of the Bible. I could not sleep, wake up, and stand before them to tell stories. The best way they can know the Lord was by teaching them the Word of God.

*And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to
the Lord and not to men.*

Colossians 3:23 (NKJV)



Key Lesson #6

"Whatever you go through serving the Lord is to prepare you for more tasks ahead to serve Him. Serve the Lord with all your might."

*“Christian education begins where
evangelism ends, helping believers grow
in their faith.”*

— Perry G. Downs, Christian
theologian, and author

CHAPTER #7

Training in Christ

*How I Utilised the Training Avenues of
the Church*

There are numerous avenues in Christ that anyone can utilise to be well groomed for the purpose for which he or she was born into the body of Christ. The Bible shows us a snapshot of the training life of Jesus Christ in the Gospel of Luke 2. We learn that at the age of 12 years, He was in the temple with the teachers of the law, both answering and asking them questions. Even though Scripture indicates that Jesus was fully God, it also prompts us that He was trained by way of learning from others as a full human being. No one is beyond training in this kingdom.

A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher.

Luke 6:40 (NKJV)

Noticing my heightened interest in the things of the Word and ministry, I felt I should enroll in a Bible School to learn more about the Word and how to handle it faithfully. Hence, whilst I was at Christ Temple, I enrolled in ICGC's *Living Word School of Ministry*, then located on Christ Temple premises at Abossey Okai, Accra.

I was in class with other believers who were way ahead of me in the knowledge of the Bible. I particularly liked the survey of the Old and the New Testament classes. It helped me to further do research about the Christian faith. Regarding the Church History course, it also connected with me to appreciate how our faith has travelled over time in the face of hostility from Satan and his cohorts. God

has faithfully preserved the gospel from one age to the other. It is the biggest surviving idea in the world today. Nothing can destroy the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is building His church, and no one can destroy it (Matthew 16:13-20).

Unfortunately, I did only two semesters, when the pursuit of money sent me to another part of Ghana called Tarkwa to work as a Business Development Manager of a Ghanaian-owned security firm. Whilst there, I kept the fire burning. I attended ICGC Judah Temple and met Augustine who became my prayer and Bible studies partner. Even though I could not complete the training course, I seized the opportunities prevailing in Tarkwa to keep me going in my walk with the Lord.

Another sad event was that I yearned to attend Daniel Institute, the theological seminary of ICGC, but never made that journey. I applied and was called to come for an interview, but I never showed

up because I got a new job in Accra. In two instances, I left the training field like Jonah. I later made it to Akrofi-Christaller Institute of Theology, Mission and Culture for my Master's Degree in Theology and Missions. I took the bull by the horn and completed the course with *Distinction* on December 2, 2017.

Training in Christ helps us to stand on the shoulders of those who are ahead of us to walk in the faith of Jesus Christ.



Key Lesson #7

*"Embrace all
avenues in Christ
to be trained and
equipped for His
work and
effectively
discharge it."*

*Every human has the instinct and
capacity for leadership, but most do not
have the courage or will to cultivate it.*

Dr. Myles Munroe, pastor, and
author

CHAPTER #8

Leading in Christ

*How ICGC Brought Out the Leader in
Me*

American Christian leadership author and trainer Dr. John C. Maxwell authored a bestselling book called *Developing the Leader Within You* to help people identify and cultivate the leadership abilities in them. Another pastor and leadership expert, Dr. Myles Munroe of blessed memory, wrote a book, titled, *In Charge: Finding the Leader Within You* in which he noted that God has wired everyone to be a leader in their area of gifting or talent. Hence, if He has called you to be a children's facilitator, you can lead in that sphere. If you are called to lead as an usher, grace abounds for you. Like Bezalel (Exodus 31:1-6), God calls and empowers us to make a difference in our area of expertise.

Leadership is a journey and I have gone through the mill of becoming one in the church. From Christ Temple to The Royal Temple, I have served in many capacities to be refined to serve God's people better.

Whilst in Christ Temple, I was made an Assistant Covenant Family leader for an area at Awoshie, Accra. It was always a delight to journey back from East Legon (where my office was) to be present at Covenant Family meetings on Thursdays for Bible studies, to pray, fellowship, and then periodically break bread. I loved the discussions more than even listening to sermons. Indeed, Covenant Family was a major platform that helped me to grow in the Word and nurture my leadership ability. I had to be disciplined to attend leaders' meetings on Mondays and then follow up on members to ensure they attend the weekly meetings.

When I moved to The Royal Temple in 2014, I helped in supervisory roles to prepare the study outlines

and facilitate leaders' meetings and help plant more Covenant Families. By this time of my theological training at Akrofi-Christaller Institute, I was equipped to assist in preparing the lessons. These were divine opportunities thrown my way to aid me to climb the leadership ladder. Even by this time, I never had any ambition of becoming a pastor of the church. *God has a way of preparing us for something big when we don't even know where we are going.*

In 2018, I came into full-time work with ICGC The Royal Temple from my former workplace as National Coordinator of Springboard Road Show Foundation. The Foundation is focused on raising a new generation of African leaders and entrepreneurs. I was employed as Church Administrator of The Royal Temple with a congregation of over 700 people. With a staff of more than 10 people, my duty was to work closely with my Senior Pastor to help run the church. In this role, I always have the working philosophy of serving the

tables for my pastor to concentrate on *the word and prayer*. I extracted this idea from the book of Acts 6 where, because of the increase in church membership and associated conflicts, the apostles employed the work of people who could serve the tables so that they would be concerned with the word and prayer. The result was that the word grew and prevailed.

In 2019, there was a vacuum for me to be the District Administrator of ICGC Accra West 1 District with over 50 churches, 60 pastors and their leaders. I worked with my pastor, who was the District Supervising Minister (DSM) to administer his work in the district. Based on the work I did in the church and the District, when my pastor was made the Regional Overseer of ICGC Central Region, he asked me to work with him as the Regional Administrator. I acted for 3 years before I was confirmed substantively. It was an honour to serve 85 churches, 94 pastors and their administrative staff and leaders.

I thank God for the great opportunities for me to be raised as a leader of the church I entered when I could not even quote a Bible verse. To God alone be the glory. He can pick anyone up and set his feet in high places.

*I returned and saw under the sun that –
The race is not to the swift, Nor the battle
to the strong, Nor bread to the wise, Nor
riches to men of understanding, Nor
favour to men of skill; But time and chance
happen to them all.*

Ecclesiastes 9:11 (NKJV)



Key Lesson #8

*"Seize every
opportunity to
grow as a leader
in your church
and maximise it."*

*The world sets the agenda of the
professional man; God sets the agenda of
the spiritual man.*

-- Pastor John Piper in *Brothers, We
Are Not Professionals*

CHAPTER #9

Pastoring in Christ

How I Became a Pastor in ICGC

Pastors are not humanly made, but they are divinely raised by God. Of course, God knows who will become a man of God and who else will serve in other roles to advance the kingdom of God. He told Jeremiah that before he was formed, He knew him and made him a prophet to the nations (Jeremiah 1:5). We are all being used by God for His big agenda to advance the kingdom of God. Moses was minding his own business at the age of 80 years when God appeared to him, empowered him, and commissioned him to be the liberator of His people (Exodus 3). He calls us and equips us for His work. Jesus said in John 15 that we have not chosen Him, but He chose us and sent us to go and bear fruit and that our fruit will remain.

When I announced to my senior brother that I was going into ministry, he wondered if I was cut out for it. Because I am the reserved type, he felt I should find something else to do that would be fruitful. But he didn't know there was fire burning in my heart.

The calling became clear when I was not happy with any other thing, I was engaged in. When I was working at Tarkwa for 7 months, I always felt I was at the wrong place. When I moved to Springboard, with time, I wanted to do more for God. I used to have all night prayers alone at Legon park, visit the campus to share Christ during lecture hours before the lecturer came in. I admired preachers, preaching, and ministry.

I took my work with the children as if I was doing my own ministry. Though I wasn't the head, I could mobilise the youth to clean our place of worship, prepare our programme outline and do my work as a facilitator. Even as a facilitator, I did it differently.

Every time I had a new set of members entering my class, I would collect their details as well as their parents' contacts, and officially call to inform them I was the new teacher and that I would need their support to raise their children spiritually. Today, some of them are in the university, steadfast in the Lord.

Considering all the above indicators, I did not fight it when my Senior Pastor, Rev. Samuel Awuku-Gyekye, asked me to join Daniel Institute to be trained as a Church Planter. I embraced it with both hands. I attended and was later commissioned as a Probationer Minister of ICGC in 2018. I served faithfully at The Royal Temple and then in 2023 June, I joined 11 others to become a Licensed Minister of ICGC.

The work of a pastor is not easy but Paul's words in Corinthians keep me going when he said that he is what he is because of the grace of God but

nevertheless he laboured more than they all. My philosophy is that it takes *grace* and *hard work* to succeed as a pastor. Having to combine my role as an administrator and associate pastor takes grace and hard work. God said through the Prophet Zachariah that it's not by might nor by power but by His Spirit. There are heavyweights of work I have done that people wonder how I did it, of which I can confidently say, that it is the finger of God, as is in the song by Nigerian Gospel music revivalist, Dusi Oyekan. None of us is self-made. It is the concept of the world. God has blessed me on this journey, by using people to be of immense help.



Key Lesson #9

"Never abandon the call of God for anything you consider financially lucrative. The Lord will provide if you put your trust in Him."

*Faith is taking the first step even when
you cannot see the whole staircase.*

Martin Luther King Jr., pastor, and
Civil Rights activist

CHAPTER #10

Thriving in Christ

How I Learnt to Walk with God and Live

by Faith

My favourite model for faith in Church History apart from the biblical characters is George Muller. I was introduced to Muller for the first time in Pastor Otabil's sermon titled "Open Your Mouth Wide" which was preached in 2010. Rev. Muller started life as a wayward child who always caused trouble for his parents. He was deviant in many respects. When grace located him, Muller grew gradually to trust in God for virtually everything in his life. He founded an orphanage that took care of thousands of homeless children, preached the gospel around the world, and operated the Scriptural Knowledge Institute for promoting Bible literacy. In everything, Muller operated like the verse in Philippians 4:6-7,

to not be anxious but through prayer, trust in the capable hand of God. God always came through for him.

From 2010 when I became born again to March 2023, I had lived my Christian life being faithful with my spiritual disciplines of serving and relating with God. Along the line, one of Pastor Otabil's messages on faith that made a deep impression on me was "Faith to Receive" preached during *Destiny Summit*. It taught me that we can do big things with God if we trust Him. Something profound happened in 2023 around my birthday on 31st March that shifted my focus on trusting in God for everything. *We can live our Christian life on a casual basis, or we can also live it actively putting all our cares on the Lord.*

On Saturday 31st March 2023, I was taking my bath to attend a funeral when the understanding entered my heart that I could do better as a child of God and man of God if I walk with God by faith. It led me to

go back to read George Muller's autobiography again and how he trusted God for everything. I visited other biblical characters, especially those in Hebrews 11, on how they walked by faith and not by sight. My life was changing before my own eyes. I listened to and read revivalist Leonard Ravenhill on prayer that shifted my prayer life and intimacy with God. It brought fire in my bones when ministering by the grace of God. All these put the Holy Ghost fire in me by stirring the gift of God in me like Paul told Timothy (2 Timothy 1:6).

I can confidently say that I am a better version of myself because I have learned to trust God for virtually everything. When my washing machine developed a fault, I trusted God that He could answer my prayers and let it work again. I prayed for it, and it worked. When I had a strange fever around our *40 Days of Power* in 2023, I was reminded by a great Nigerian preacher Pastor E. A. Adeboye about what Jesus said in Mark 16 of laying hands on

the sick to cast out sickness. I prayed and the fever instantly left. There are many testimonies of the goodness of the Lord. It is all by faith and reliance on the Holy Ghost that produces testimonies of God's goodness.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.

Proverbs 3:5-6 (NKJV)

For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."

Romans 1:17 (NKJV)



Key Lesson #10

*"It is better to
activate your faith
and live trusting
God for everything
than to live
casually."*

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

Galatians 2:20 (NKJV)

CONCLUSION

Paul the Apostle, writing to the church in Rome stated that to the believer in Christ, all things work together for our good for those who love God and are called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28). God's general calling and special calling are not by chance and mistake. He deliberately, before we are born, chooses each one of us for a specific task in His kingdom to give glory to His Holy name.

My story demonstrates how God can pick anybody and make him somebody. *My story inspires hope that God will not jettison our past experiences when we come to Christ.* It will be meaningfully used to win the lost to Christ.

My story reminds me of what the Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 1:26-31 (NKJV) that:

²⁶For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. ²⁷But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; ²⁸and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, ²⁹that no flesh should glory in His presence. ³⁰But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God – and righteousness and sanctification and redemption – ³¹that, as it is written, “He who glories, let him glory in the Lord.”

We can simply deduce from the above text that God's line-up of men are behind in life in the physical realm so that when they are promoted to

the frontline, all the glory will be ascribed to His name alone.

It all started when the grace of God that brings salvation to all men reached me. I was lost in my own world but God who is rich in mercy, found me and put me on a path to serve Him and His people until Christ appears.

If you want God to take your life and use it for His glory, you must turn to Him and cry for mercy like the tax collector who prayed in the temple (Luke 18:9-14). Sincerely go down on your knees and pray to Him to save your soul from eternal damnation. The Bible says that Jesus will not cast away those who come to Him for salvation (John 6:37-39). What follows is a continuous walk of sanctification in the power of the Holy Spirit.

May the Lord have mercy on you.






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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Eric Otchere is committed to declaring the whole counsel of God through systematic writing and preaching of God's word. He is a Licensed Minister of the International Central Gospel Church (ICGC) headquartered in Accra, Ghana. He actively works in the church as an Associate Pastor at ICGC The Royal Temple, Accra, and doubles as Regional Administrator of ICGC Central Region.

Eric is a product of the University of Ghana where he studied Archaeology and Psychology and the Akrofi Christaller Institute of Theology, Missions and Culture where he did his Master's Degree in Theology and Missions with *Distinction*.

His articles have been featured on leading online media portals such as myjoyonline.com, citinewsroom.com, ghanaweb.com, modernghana.com and dailyaccra.com. He runs a thriving blog; Living the Gospel, where he shares daily writing through the whole Bible chapter by chapter and weekly biblical perspectives on cultural issues. He is married to Mrs. Anita Agyei Otchere and together they have three children. He can be contacted via otchereeric@gmail.com.

*Thank
you for
reading*

