

# Gowins' Ghana Updates

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## Perspectives

*"I will give thanks to You; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works; and my soul knows it very well." Psalms 139:14*

*"For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing as far as the division of the soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart." Hebrews 4:12*

*"So he (Zacchaeus) ran on ahead, and climbed up into a sycamore tree in order to see Him; for He was about to pass through that way." Luke 19:4*

Last evening, I sat waiting with three dear Africans in our church building in Qs. People were slowly arriving to our midweek service. Frances, who is completely blind, sat preparing the drum for use. Richard, the pastor who has glaucoma, was walking and praying. Deborah, an elderly lady whose eyes have dulled with age, sat gazing at the church lit by four light bulbs powered by our small generator.

A large African bat flew around the room, and it dawned upon me that each of us encountered and processed the animal in dramatically different ways. Frances could only detect its presence by sound, which none of the rest of us were capable of doing. Richard could catch mere glimpses of it when it flew directly in front of him since he has severe tunnel vision. Deborah's old eyes could only squint and see the creature with fuzzy features. I saw it plainly --- or did I? We each had different perspectives of it, and we can only imagine how the bat's radar imaging viewed us. A bat's perspective is quite amazing and in ways superior to ours.



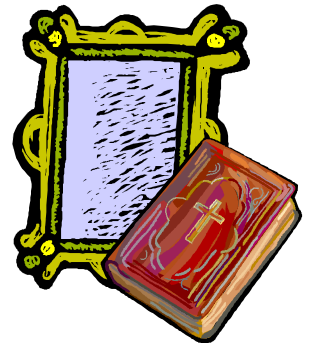
Each of us has the tendency to believe that our perspective is a good one and perhaps even the correct one, yet the images we each have are based primarily on inaccurate perceptions of reality. Our reality is flawed at best and can to our chagrin be very hazardous to us.

I am short. There, I said it. It is not easy for me to say, even though I have been this size for many years. I have always been short and always detested the fact. In Cuba and in Africa my height is "normal," I suppose. I am even tall in some villages here --- wow! ☺ Yet my stature has affected the way I view myself and everyone else my entire life. Shame on me! Here's one example. I fell madly in love with a cute little girl in the first grade. She ran faster than any girl in my class and every boy except me and my good buddy Lamar. How could I not love her? I was crazy about her all through school. I never expressed my feelings to her. Why? It's simple---how could she ever love a short guy? Some years later I was totally flabbergasted when I attended her wedding. To my amazement, she married a man my height. As I passed through the congratulatory line, I realized what a fool I had been. Poor me! Years later I learned she had cared for me, too. I did not appreciate God's creation -- me.

In my first pastorate in Joplin, Missouri, I came in contact with a fellow pastor's wife at a school function. Her husband was a bi-vocational pastor like me. As a former Miss America, she was a knock out. She communicated something that I will never forget. She said, "The competition was not dramatic on the stage. The real competition was to get the best makeup artists." She continued, "Each of the girls believed they had severe faults that desperately must be covered up. If only they could get the right makeup artist and the appropriate clothes to accent them, they might have a chance to cover up their flaws and win." Imagine that. The most beautiful gals in the country were not pleased with how they looked.

To compensate for the flawed view of ourselves and the world we live in, we foolish humans react in many ways. Some people even turn to drink or drugs or excessive work to attempt to help the affliction they feel is upon them. The list of coping activities is, in fact, quite long, and human creativity quite impressive. To compensate for my short stature, I decided I would become fast and strong so that I could compete with the taller boys. In sports I ran harder, I exercised more, lifted weights, and went above and beyond anyone else in training. It became such a part of my life, I carry it with me even to this present day. I run three miles a day and exercise faithfully. As a result, I am a 62-year-old man living in the heart of wild and rough Africa who has the strength and stamina of an active thirty year old. I ride a dirt bike over 200 miles each week on terrain so harsh and inhospitable you can only imagine it. God knew my future and made me short so I would stay in shape for the task He had appointed for me to do. (And, as awesome as that gal was I fell in love with in the first grade, God had a German beauty He wanted me to marry all along. She is such a dynamic in my life and ministry that I must praise Him with a loud voice for His marvelous plan.)

What is wrong with your self-image? How do you view the events and people around you? If you cannot assess your own self properly, what makes you think you can do a good job regarding other folks? If we cannot accurately ascertain events in our own life, what makes us think we can do a bang up job with the events occurring all around us? We can't with our distorted bent on everything. We NEED the incorruptible, always infallible, tremendously applicable Word of the living God to govern every aspect of our lives. READ IT, PLEASE!



You remember Zacchaeus, don't you? He was the rich guy who was frustrated with his life. He recognized he was short but didn't let that hinder him. You see, for the first time in his life his goal was the correct one. The only goal and the only perspective that makes any sense in life is to see Jesus and seek an intimate relationship with the Creator/Redeemer. Zacchaeus saw Him all right. Jesus went to the short man's house that very day. His life was changed, his perspectives changed, his purpose of life itself reborn.

I want to be like Zacchaeus – assessing properly and acting positively; instead of hiding his light, he let it shine. Jesus made old Zach and I short for a reason – a grand reason. Don't complain and/or blame God. Most certainly, do not let it keep you from reaching your full potential.

Use your desire to hear the living Word and obey that Word to climb the heights. You will not only see the Master, you will take Him home with you and be used by Him in a grand way.

For His glory and by His magnificent grace,

*Jere and Ruth Ann*