

God's Vessel and a Dream

Havilah Children's Village

It doesn't take Frazier Mathis long to make a decision. At age 21, while working his way up the ladder with the Shell Oil Company, his college roommate told him about a church he'd been attending – a Seventh-day Adventist church – in New Orleans. As a faithful Baptist, Mathis was skeptical, but when he attended, he became a faithful Seventh-day Adventist.

“When I went, I just knew it was the truth. It was exactly what my roommate had said,” said Frazier. “They started giving me Bible studies. After two weeks, I said, ‘Baptize me.’ They said I wasn't ready, so after six weeks of my asking, they finally baptized me. That was 1971.”

He didn't have long to sit and warm a pew, though. The day he was baptized, the personal ministry secretary grabbed his arm and took him to downtown New

Orleans where they were preaching on street corners. “I'm watching this guy preach – he's preaching up a storm,” recalls Frazier. “When he's almost finished, he introduces me as the next speaker.”

“Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish” Matthew 18:14

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That was just the beginning for Frazier, who has continued to make ministry a big part of his church life. What changed drastically was his career path. Working seven days on, seven days off couldn't continue. “When I told Shell I couldn't work on Sabbath, I went from making \$17 an hour to making \$6,” he says. “But it all worked out, and it's still working out.”

Although no longer with Shell, Frazier has continued to have a successful work life, but in true Frazier style, his life was changed again in 1990 when he was asked to go on a mission trip with students from Takoma Academy in Takoma Park, Maryland. His wife, Virginia, was a teacher there, and they accompanied a group of students to Santo Domingo. Frazier headed up the building project under the direction of Maranatha. He was hooked.

“A year passed, and Columbia Union College asked me to go with them,” recalls Frazier. “After that, I called Maranatha and told them I wanted to go to Africa and build something.”

At the time, Maranatha's efforts were concentrated in Russia. Undaunted, Frazier asked for a blueprint of a

church. With some guidance from General Conference Secretary Matthew Bediako, he settled on Ghana, West Africa.

“I went back to my church in Ashton, Maryland, Emanuel Brinklow, and talked to the folk and explained that I wanted to build a church in Ghana,” says Frazier. “It ended up that we had almost 30 people who wanted to go. We raised the money, sent some ahead to get started, and then flew to Ghana.” In a week, the group built a church. The congregation was amazed. “They'd never seen a church go up that fast,” he says. “They named the church after our church. We now have a Brinklow in Ghana.”

Year after year, the Lord kept opening up the doors for Frazier and his wife to continue building. Since 1998,

Global Vessels has been able to build two churches, a library and a girl's dormitory in Ghana. They've also been instrumental in supplying books and computers to a small community in the Bekwai area of Ghana and in building an extension to a clinic in Tanzania. “We decided on the name Global Vessels because our work is global and we are willing to be vessels of God,” says Frazier.

Reading about Frazier may make you think he does everything quickly; well, not everything. In fact, he'd heard about ASI for years, but didn't join until two years ago. Even then, he and Virginia didn't attend a convention that first year.

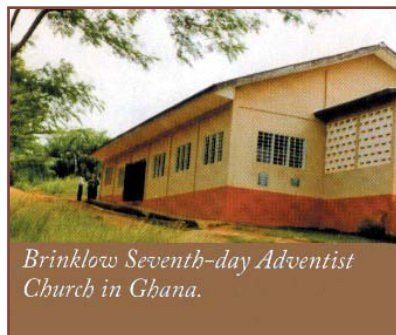
“Every year my friends would come back and tell us that we should go because ASI could help us. When we finally decided to go last year, it was fantastic,” he says. “It's filled with like-minded people. That's what I like about it. They're not sitting around talking about getting something done, but are actually doing it.”

During the convention in Grapevine,

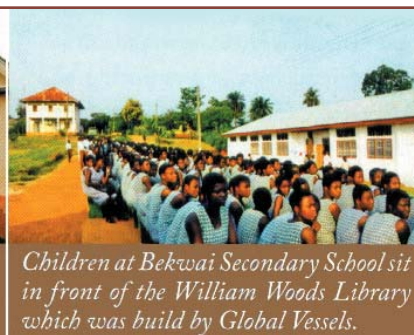
Texas, Frazier had an opportunity to tell his story. Global Vessels had been chosen as one of the recipients of a grant from the convention offering. “They gave us \$20,000.00,” says Frazier. “They told us, ‘This is what ASI does.’”

Frazier and Virginia knew exactly what they could do with that money. While working on building a clinic in Tanzania in 2004, they had learned there were many abandoned children in need of homes and families in Tanzania. Members of the group had visited a small orphanage – a two-bedroom house that was serving as an orphanage for 22 children. They went into action, built shelves, provided clothing, food, toys and love for the children. While the country does have some orphanages, many of them are in poor condition, and there are not enough for the current population of displaced children due to AIDS. That visit to the orphanage had stayed in the minds of Frazier and Virginia and, with a dream in mind, they decided to help.

Global Vessels is realizing that dream and planning a grand opening for an orphanage in Arusha, Tanzania. The 60-plus delegation includes five physicians. The plan is to build 10 houses on property donated by the local Seventh-day Adventist Union. Eventually, the homes will house 100



Brinklow Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ghana.



Children at Bekwai Secondary School sit in front of the William Woods Library which was built by Global Vessels.

children with house parents and other caretakers. There will also be a training center for economic development and a multipurpose center.

With the project offering grant from ASI, three houses are now in the building process. Frazier hopes to raise the \$70,000 needed to complete the homes at Havilah Orphanage Village when the delegation is there in July.

For more information about Global Vessels, visit www.globalvessels.org.