



What is That in Your Hand?

Exodus 4:1-2: (NASB) ¹*Then Moses said, What if they will not believe me or listen to what I say? For they may say, The LORD has not appeared to you.*
²*The LORD said to him, What is that in your hand? And he said, A staff.*



Homer and his wife Beverly

Special Guest: Homer Montague

We all at one time or another have visions of grandeur - thoughts and dreams about what we can do to be a positive and abiding influence on others for the sake of Christ. In many cases, these ideas percolate a bit and then quietly fade away. Today, we have with us a special guest who had an idea for the furtherance of the Gospel, pursued it, developed it, lived it and today is going to tell us about what has become a 15-year journey of praise and honor to our God. Do NOT go away! You need to hear this!

What has been your mission over the last 15 years and how did it get started?

Homer Montague is our special guest from New York. He is a retired school teacher and principal. He and his wife have traveled to Ghana (Africa) 24 times since 1999.

He had heard from some of his Christian friends that went to Nigeria about an 89-year old man who traveled from Ghana to hear them talk about the Gospel at a Bible conference. This man went to be baptized and traveled with a former Islamic man. Homer wanted to go to Ghana to meet and support these men. We will show Homer's summary comments in **PURPLE** throughout this Rewind.

2 Timothy 3:16-17: (NASB) ¹⁶*All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;* ¹⁷*so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.*

People have various religious beliefs but we met with Bible-believing individuals. Sometimes they aren't sure what the Bible really teaches. You should prove it for yourself so that you understand it. What does the Bible say about this and that?

The gentleman that traveled with the 89-year old into Nigeria was a former follower of Islam. I asked how he got involved in Christianity. He told me the Koran said something that intrigued him: "The followers of Jesus would be superior to the followers of Mohammad." A friend of his then wrote to Homer and asked him to return to Ghana to tell him about the Bible.

So looking at our theme text, what is in *our* hands that we can use in service to the Lord? This may sound odd, but in our hands we have our ears. When you listen, you can get instruction. Homer heard the call for help with spiritual guidance and he listened.



The theme of this text will run through the entire program:

1 Timothy 2:3-7: (Rotherham) ³This, is comely and acceptable before our Saviour God, ⁴Who willetth, all men, to be saved, and, unto a personal knowledge of truth, to come; ⁵For there is, one, God, one, mediator also, between God and men,--a man--Christ Jesus: ⁶Who gave himself a ransom in behalf of all,--the testimony, in its own fit times: ⁷Unto which, I, have been appointed proclaimer and apostle--Truth I speak, I utter no falsehood--a teacher of nations, in faith and truth.



What cultural differences exist between us and were there challenges communicating as a result?

Ghana was a former British colony and officially spoke English. However, as with other cultures, the older people usually speak in their native dialect. The young people speak English.

Ghana generally has a poor infrastructure. Farming and fishing are prevalent. One of the striking things found in Ghana is an appreciation for God. You'll see on their vehicles "John 3:16," and Scriptures on the sides of their buildings, especially in the southern end, which is largely Christian.

It is about 70% Christian, 15% Muslim and some indigenous local religions.

Ghana is a very peaceful place where one can walk the streets at night.

One big difference between Ghana and the United States is with funerals. When someone dies, they are buried a month later and there is a big parade.

They have a Chieftain system. When the Chief rings the bell, everyone runs to the center of town to hear what he has to say. One more difference is they have much respect for elders.



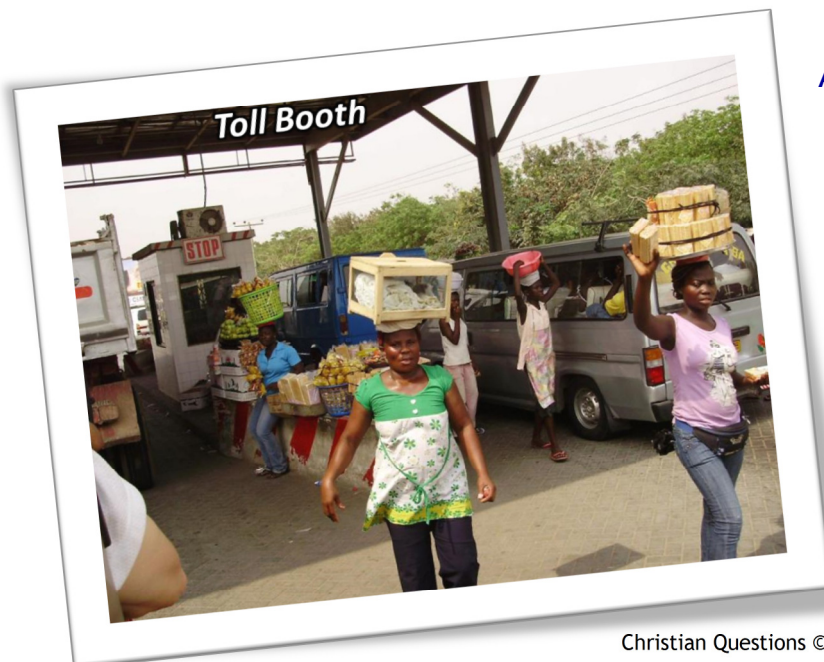


Everybody eats because the cost of food is very cheap. You don't see starving people there. There are many people buying and selling goods. Traffic in the major cities is crowded.

People are acclimated to taking care of themselves.

They are a gentle people and Ghana is a very pleasant place to be.

The Market



Are family units intact?

Very much so. There are no orphaned children. There is a strong sense of community - they use a village to raise a child.

In terms of infrastructure, they have outages of electricity every other day. That is part of the economy there - there is a second economy so that you buy flashlights and lanterns!





Let's discuss an overview of the basic belief system that Homer delivered to Ghana and how it might be different from some of the other missionary messages.

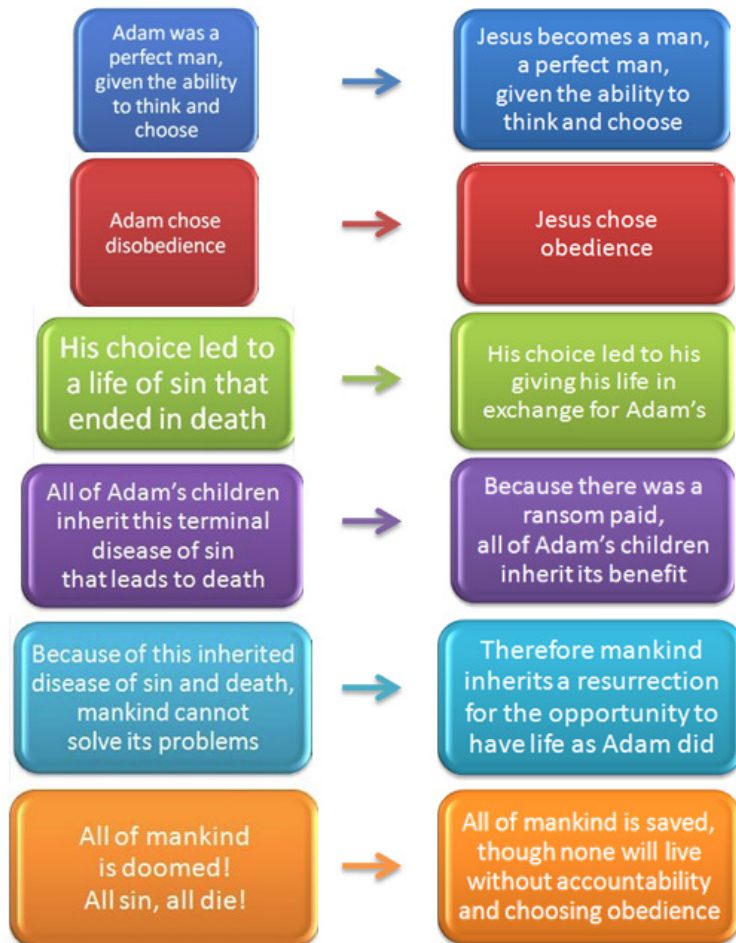
Mankind created perfect:

Genesis 1:27,31:(NASB) ²⁷God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.... ³¹God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Disobedience was the cause of sin and death:

Genesis 3:17-19: (NASB) ¹⁷Then to Adam He said, Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, You shall not eat from it; Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. ¹⁸Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you will eat the plants of the field; ¹⁹By the sweat of your face you will eat bread, till you return to the ground, because from it you were taken; For you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

The family structure in Ghana is one that loves children, but sometimes they are told if they are bad, they will be burned in fire. I asked a parent if they really believe that God would take his child and burn him up if that child is bad? So we started looking at the Scriptures to see what it actually says. The penalty of disobedience is death. If Jesus died for all mankind, ultimately there has to be some blessing at a future time.





There are earthly and heavenly salvations:

1 Timothy 4:10: (NASB) *For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers.*

God's plan is to cover ALL, no matter where you were born or what you (currently) believe.

What were some of the most notable challenges in creating a “Gospel delivery system?”

The Ghanaians are very hospitable. If they know that you are coming from the United States, they will allow you to speak in their churches. Sometimes we leave Bible study aids like tracts and videos and they use them. They are willing to listen.

It sounds similar to the Apostle Paul going into the synagogues! Our culture seems more closed.



A caller suggests an African proverb in keeping with today's theme: *If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go with company.*

Homer and his wife have gone to Ghana 24 times without asking for one penny to even cover their own travel expenses. That shows a sincerity for the Gospel that is frankly missing in most of the Christian world today. That is what we at Christian Questions are looking for - understanding how to make the Gospel come from the inside out with only sincerity.

The system Homer is setting up in Ghana has a different structure than most churches.

Our only head is Christ:

Matthew 23:6-11: (NASB) *⁶They love the place of honor at banquets and the chief seats in the synagogues, ⁷and respectful greetings in the market places, and being called Rabbi by men. ⁸But do not be called Rabbi; for One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers. ⁹Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. ¹⁰Do not be called leaders; for One is your Leader, that is, Christ. ¹¹But the greatest among you shall be your servant.*

We teach them how to personally use the Bible to answer questions. When you begin to look into the Bible yourself, you are responsible for making what you believe your own.

The kind of Gospel you are bringing is one that demands contribution and investing yourself into it. It is not merely listening but proving.

It is interesting that when someone raises their hand in a Bible study, they say, “I have a contribution.” It isn't centered from one person to everyone else; it is organized for participation by the group.

Our congregations elect servants:

Titus 1:5-9: (NASB) *⁵For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you, ⁶namely, if any man is above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. ⁷For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, ⁸but*



hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, ⁹holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.

Who appoints the leaders? Did you?

No. As they began to understand the scriptural principles, they began to select those from their group. The greatest servant was Jesus, and we remember at his Last Supper he washed the disciples' feet as an example. There are qualifications of service and then they vote to elect their local congregation's servants.

We believe this is a scriptural principle. The fact that you take the power out of the hands of the individual and put it in the hand of all, with God's spirit, is the greatest course of maintaining that "old fashioned" Gospel. Taking your time and effort and then "turning it over" to the local individuals is a wonderful testimony to the way the Gospel *should* be.

Perhaps we need to question our own church set up...? If we aren't operating how the Scriptures tell us, why is there a potential contradiction and what should I be doing about it?

So, Homer, there is no personal gain in this for you?

Not at all. It is just the satisfaction of seeing that they are adopting scriptural principles and doing what they believe the word of God says.

It is the satisfaction of having something in your hand - OPPORTUNITY - and using that opportunity for the praise and honor of our Heavenly Father.

How is technology a part of this particular ministry?

We used to take booklets and tracts, but we can now supply tablets and other improvements so they can research and grow.

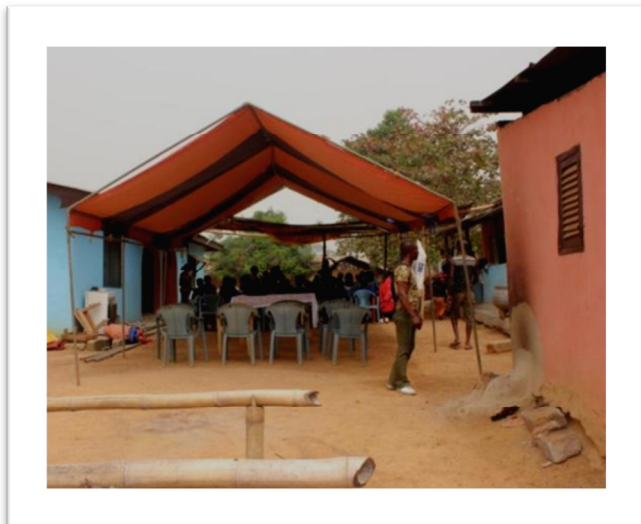
Congregations meet in homes and rented facilities:

Philemon 1:1-2: (NASB) ¹Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, To Philemon our beloved brother and fellow worker, ²and to Apphia our sister, and to Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church in your house:

Acts 28:30-31: (NASB) ³⁰And he stayed two full years in his own rented quarters and was welcoming all who came to him, ³¹preaching the kingdom of God and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all openness, unhindered.

When they have a larger gathering, they rent huge canopies. Individuals bring their own contributions of food and water.

They are able to meet outside because of the weather.





Voluntary donations are made by congregation members:

Acts 20:33-35: (NASB) ³³I have coveted no one's silver or gold or clothes. ³⁴You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my own needs and to the men who were with me. ³⁵In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that he himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

No financial contribution is required of anyone.

They are taught to be self-sufficient. Some of the core values we focus on are as follows.

Emphasize humility:

1 Peter 5:5-7: (NASB) ⁵You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble. ⁶Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, ⁷casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.

The Gospel is not simply a collection of facts. It is a way of changing your lifestyle. Being humble and submissive to the will of God is an important quality to have in order to be acceptable to God.

Is there more of a sense of internal humility there than here?

Personality-wise, they are a gentler people. But there is a commonality with us that individuals need to learn, “I’m not the boss.”

Manifest a strong prayer life:

Ephesians 6:18: (NASB) *With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints...*

It is important for them to realize that God requires us to pray to Him for guidance. Sometimes prayers are not answered in the way we think would be best. Many times God will supply your particular needs as He sees fit.

Prepare for meetings and studies:

2 Timothy 2:15: (NASB) *Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.*

You aren't simply a recipient of knowledge. You need to study and make contributions so that you can add to everyone's growth and understanding. Not everyone understands at the same level or rate. We give them concordances and other Bible helps so they can prove what they are teaching.



What is the average education level there?

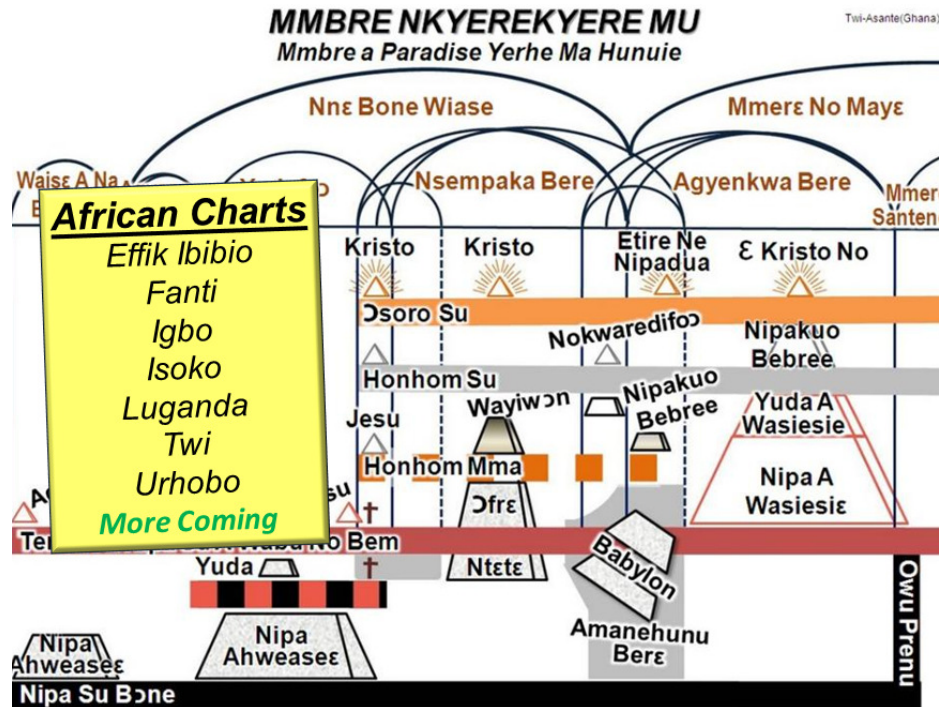
Mandatory education is equivalent to 9th grade. Some are college graduates and some are not. But one of the things about the Bible is that it is a great leveler if you understand biblical principles.

Publish Bible study helps:

Psalms 68:11: (NASB) *The Lord gives the command; The women who proclaim the good tidings are a great host:*



We provide booklets for them in English and they translate into various native tongues, especially for the older people.



A caller suggests: [Colossians 4:3](#): *Pray for us as well that God will open to us a door for the word that we may declare the mystery of Christ.* The Christian at home makes prayers for the missionary a daily part of his life. When we feel busy, overwhelmed or our feet are tired, that reminds us to pray for those who walk far for Christ. [Isaiah 52:7](#): *The feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation.*

Jesus is our head and the redeemer of all mankind:

[Hebrews 2:9](#): (NASB) *But we do see him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.*

[John 1:9](#): (NASB) *There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man.*

[1 Timothy 2:5-6](#): (KJV) ⁵*For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;* ⁶*Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.*



One of the things we recognize and appreciate is that not everyone is going to receive the message when it is delivered. The great joy we have is that there will be a *due time* when they are under more favorable conditions and they will



be able to receive the message once Satan is bound. People now say “the devil made me do it.” There will be a time when the devil will be restrained. The Bible tells us that whosoever will, will be able *to drink of the water of life freely and learn righteousness*. That is an encouragement that it is NOT “salvation now or never.” **DO NOT BECOME DISCOURAGED IF SOMEONE DOES NOT RECEIVE THE MESSAGE AT THIS TIME.** There is a special call now and those who are willing to engage, the Lord will direct as He sees fit.

We believe the Scriptures teach clearly that Jesus died as a ransom for those who are called out to follow him - *those called according to His purpose* - but also Jesus died for the “Everyone Else.” That is the core of the message and hope for a world gone completely mad.



Homer uses technology in his missionary work, including providing Christian literature and biblical resources on tablets. This reminds Rick of the Scripture in Habakkuk 2:2!

We trust in one another:

1 Corinthians 12:16-20: (NASB) ¹⁶And if the ear says, Because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body, it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. ¹⁷If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? ¹⁸But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired. ¹⁹If they were all one member, where would the body be? ²⁰But now there are many members, but one body.

Over a period of 15 years, Homer went from going to Ghana for one very old man to now having 14 different African countries represented at an upcoming Christian leadership seminar in April. That is inspiring!

You may not be able to leave the country, but think about how *you* can be a part of the work of spreading the Gospel!



Homer will be returning to Ghana in April 2014 for a Bible study conference with others from the United States.

We will have Bible studies, devotional studies, fellowship and the opportunity to get to meet other Christians from all over the world.

Refer to: www.AfricanBibleStudents.com

What would you say to those listening who want to get their hands and hearts into the work?



What can happen if we just have an active faith in what the Lord has given us?

Exodus 4:1-5: (NASB) ¹Then Moses said, What if they will not believe me or listen to what I say? For they may say, The LORD has not appeared to you. ²The LORD said to him, What is that in your hand? And he said, A staff. ³Then He said, Throw it on the ground. So he threw it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from it. ⁴But the LORD said to Moses, Stretch out your hand and grasp it by its tail—so he stretched out his hand and caught it, and it became a staff in his hand— ⁵that they may believe that the LORD, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you.

Moses was not sure what he was called to do. The message to Moses was that God would take what is already in his hand and make it special. We aren't expecting such

a miracle, but how do we take that lesson to help others understand what might “be in their hand?”

God accomplishes His purposes. We can say, “Lord, what would You have me to do?” Go out in faith and He multiplies the opportunities in ways you could never conceive. When you do that, sometimes you make mistakes and self-correction is needed. But overall, it is His plan, and I am so glad to participate in the work. We always give God the glory. He will give us help. God gave Moses Aaron as a helper. It is a blessing to know that so many want to participate in this venture.



Many of us think, “If only....” If only I was retired. If only I had the money. If only I was braver. If only I knew the Scriptures better.

Pray that the Lord will show you what He wants you to do. The Lord does answer prayers and that is a key thing. God has a plan, and if we don't do it, somebody else will.

Step out in courage! What can happen if we just have faith in the promises and prophecies of God?

Acts 3:18-21: (NASB) ¹⁸But the things which God announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled. ¹⁹Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from



the presence of the Lord; ²⁰and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you, ²¹whom heaven must receive until the period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time.

It is a very difficult world today. People are saying, "Where is God?" What can we do? The Scriptures say there is hope! The return of Christ will bring blessings for all the families of the earth.

There is *a time of restoration of all things*. This is a massively comprehensive statement! To restore something means something originally was broken. Perfect humanity was broken through sin.

Through the ransom sacrifice of Jesus, there are the "called out" ones and their end result if faithful will be "kings and priests" to help administer blessings to all the families of the earth. It is why we pray, *Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven*. They will be with Christ in heaven, but those blessings will turn earth into a paradise. Paradise lost - paradise restored.

This gives us a sense of the magnitude of the Gospel and the hope that you bring when you go to Ghana.

Isaiah 2:2-4: (NASB) ²Now it will come about that in the last days the mountain of the house of the LORD will be established as the chief of the mountains, and will be raised above the hills; And all the nations will stream to it. ³And many peoples will come and say, Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; That He may teach us concerning His ways and that we may walk in His paths. For the law will go forth from Zion and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. ⁴And He will judge between the nations, and will render decisions for many peoples; and they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they learn war.

We know this Scripture talks about the last days and the ultimate glorious outcome. Isn't everyone looking for peace? This is a promise of God and it is going to come true. It gives me great hope and I delight to share that hope with others.

What is it there in your hand? All of us can appreciate this. I say in the vernacular: Go for it! God will bless you if your heart is sincere. He will find work for you to do, and your joy will be unspeakable.

We always want to learn from those who can really teach us. Homer has the physical experience of stepping out in courage and faith and doing things that others just think about. We hope that you have found inspiration in the experiences of Homer and his family and many others in bringing the Gospel forth. Take what you have heard and JUST GO FOR IT to serve God for His glory.

***So, what is that in your hand?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!***

