

Faithful Supporters, Family, and Friends.

I am sitting in my room at the Obeten house where we always stay during our time spent working in the villages of the Yakurr Local Government Area (County). Sunday and Regina Obeten brought me here last Tuesday. During my stay, I have been able to teach two groups of women (preachers' wives and deaconesses) about how we need to learn to teach the people who are a level or more behind us academically. I am teaching them to present their material at that lower level and not endeavor to secure answers or bring them up to our level of understanding.

This is extremely important because there is a host of people who are not interested in climbing the academic ladder. They simply want to learn enough to be able to use what they have learned in a way that will improve their lives, but allow them to remain at the level they currently live at.

This group must then teach those who are down another academic level, allowing them to understand at their level of life without the fear of having to move up the ladder. This group will be prepared to teach at the next level down until we actually are able to communicate with those who cannot read and write.

The women seemed to understand the need for this teaching style and I was able to assure them that all of them would be needed to teach about things which need to be changed to improve their lives in a way that will prevent so many problems and diseases. The women also saw the value of learning how to use the Moringa Tree in the way that God intended for it to be used. They know that they must fully understand the different ways to harvest, prepare, and cook Moringa for the best nutritional value. They know that someone among them will need to become an expert on each of the parts of the tree, green leaves, leaf powder, pods, flowers, seeds, and roots.

One of the reasons I am extremely confident in the work that the women will do, is that Regina Obeten and a few other educated ladies are able to glean from the technical notes that I brought them from ECHO (Eliminating Child Hunger Organization). They also understand the necessity and value of teaching down a level. They understand that it will be a year or two before we see a lot of results. They are committed to growing the tree, preparing foods from the various parts of the tree, and allowing women to come and sample the foods they recommend.

One thing that helped me know how much they want to learn is the two Moringa trees that stand less than 300 feet from the Obeten house. When I arrived one week ago they held a lot of leaves and several pods. Today as I leave I cannot find even one leaf or pod. As people talked about the teaching and prepared to leave, they all collected some leaves and pods. There remains only the trunk of the tree. You cannot kill this tree so it will sprout again.

Teaching the men out here is more difficult, because they are men. Just show me something and get out of my way. Moringa came here 2 years ago from Ghana and our men actually grew it, but no one used it except for an occasional cup of tea. Their attitude was that they already had trees, so they didn't have much more to learn. Their attitude was simply terrible and when about half of their preachers and leaders finally showed up 2 hours late for the scheduled meeting, I was in no mood to teach.

I did what a good father would do and explained that because they were not interested, that I simply would not teach. I told them that their women deserved better support than they were interested in giving. I also made them confess that even with Moringa around for 2 years that there was not even 1 baby that was cured of malnutrition by using Moringa in the proper way. I showed them that I had about 40 pages of material that they need to study and learn from.

The dismissed me and in 10 minutes they came and assured that they would have all the churches represented in a meeting Sunday afternoon at 4:00 PM. I assured them that I would be ready and that I would keep the same practice that I used for my sons and that I would extend the grace period by 15 minutes, but after 4:15 they would simply miss out on some of the basic things they needed to know.

They went away pleading for their own copy of the technical information, assuring me that they would indeed support the work their ladies were ready to start. Sunday Obeten is coming for me at noon today and is bring another 15 sets of the papers so every Church would be able to study.

Monday morning, I met with 10 Head Teachers (Principals) from 8 Primary School in Ekori to let them know of our plans to see Moringa growing at every school and that we wanted to educate their teachers and students about Moringa. Their interest was so great that a couple of our preachers left and came back with some samples of leaves and pods. They ate some of the leaves raw and even broke open a pod to sample the tender seeds. Without my having to say anything, they immediately taxed themselves the necessary amount to photo copy all of the papers. Of course, they all wanted to be on our list for a planting project, but I assured them that we will start with at least 4 schools this year, but that there was enough Moringa growing wild that they could find enough seeds to start without us, except for further teaching of all involved.

Except for Saturday evening, this has been a fantastic week. Actually, we needed the disciplinary challenge on Saturday to get us completely focused.

Pray for the teaching to the men in Calibar on Thursday evening and the teaching at Sango-Otta on Saturday before I head home Sunday night.