

Commentary: Waiter impacts thousands of school children in Ghana

January 4, 2021

Samuel Quarcoo is a [waiter](#) at Woodmont Country Club in Rockville, Md., where he has worked since 1975. He is also a part-time teacher in the area. A native of Ghana, where he walked barefoot to school, he immigrated to the United States through the generosity of an aunt and earned a master's degree in teaching.

In 1999, after telling some of his students about the plight of students in Ghana, they decided to donate money to buy school supplies for them. Quarcoo then chose to continue sending supplies to three schools in his native land. For years, as the *Washington Post* reports, "he quietly bought backpacks, paper and crayons on his own and shipped them to school administrators."

Then his friends and neighbors found out. Though Quarcoo has been furloughed from waiting tables since March due to the pandemic, club members still donated \$19,000 to his efforts this year. The funds were used to buy supplies for nearly 2,000 students.

"The generosity is incredible—the club has been like a second home to me," Quarcoo said. "The members all have such big hearts. The difference they've made for the school children in Ghana is inspiring."

According to one donor, however, the difference is Quarcoo: "His heart is right in front of you—you can see his soul when you meet him."

A Sunday morning shooting at a Texas church

We heard repeatedly in 2020, it was a year unlike any in living memory. It seems 2021 is beginning in unprecedented ways as well.

A man [hiding](#) from police in a church bathroom shot and killed the pastor Sunday morning before being taken into custody. Two others were injured. The homes of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell were [vandalized](#) with graffiti over the New Year's holiday after a \$2,000 stimulus check bill failed to pass in Congress last Friday.

A key COVID-19 model [predicts](#) 150,000 more deaths in the United States over the next month, nearly doubling the December record of 77,500. Marking yesterday's anniversary of the death of Iran's Gen. Qasem Soleimani, an Iranian official [warned](#) those linked to the killing "will not be safe on Earth."

In response to these difficult and divisive days, Harvard professor Arthur C. Brooks has a terrific [article](#) in *The Atlantic* titled "New Year's Resolutions That Will Actually Lead to Happiness." After surveying literature regarding our typical difficulties in keeping resolutions for the new year, he determines "the key to success is positive motivation." Then he identifies the two motivations that most lead to happiness—forgiveness and gratitude.

Brooks advises us to make a list of five people to forgive in the new year, then use the REACH technique: Recall the hurt, empathize with the offender, choose the altruistic gift of forgiveness, commit, and hold on to forgiveness.

Then he encourages us to be more grateful, pointing to research showing those who keep a list of things for which they are grateful enjoy

significantly greater life satisfaction. His advice is to take 15 minutes to write down five things for which you are grateful. Each evening before retiring, review your list for five minutes. Each week, update it by adding two items.

The path to a life of meaning and joy

While Brooks is an evangelical Christian, he is writing in a secular publication for a secular audience. I am certain he would agree, therefore, with the following addition to his excellent advice.

Over the New Year holiday, I spent a good deal of time in reflection upon the previous year. One simple theme repeatedly echoed in my spirit: The key to the Christian life is Christ. The path to a life of meaning and joy is Jesus. Not just his teachings or his church. Not just our service to his kingdom. Jesus himself. The living, interceding, acting Lord Jesus.

He is our hope of eternal life in a pandemic that threatens humanity. He is our hope of peace in a nation and world filled with divisions. He is our hope of joy in a culture bereft of happiness. He is the key to forgiving those who hurt us and being grateful for all he has given us.

It's all about Jesus.

The lives of thousands of school children in Ghana are being changed because of Samuel Quarcoo. Without him, few would know about their needs or donate to meet them. This one person is changing their world.

Here's how Jesus changes the lives of those who experience him personally: "Your sins are forgiven for his name's sake" (1 John 2:12), "you know him who is from the beginning" (v. 13a), "you have overcome the evil one" (v. 13b), "you know the Father" (v. 13c), and "the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one" (v. 14).

Jesus called himself “the bread of life” and promised, “Whoever comes to *me* shall not hunger, and whoever believes in *me* shall never thirst” (John 6:35, my emphasis). Not the church or religious activities or good works, but Jesus.

A worship song that speaks to our souls

How can the church change the culture more powerfully? The truth is, we cannot. Only Jesus can.

Our culture will continue its downward slide into secularity and immorality unless we offer it something better. That something is a personal relationship with the One for whom all hearts are truly restless until they rest in him.

Such a transforming experience with Christ begins with Christians, of course. Let’s close by deciding we want to know Jesus this year more intimately and personally than ever before.

The worship video in [yesterday’s First15](#) spoke directly to this hunger in our souls. Audrey Assad sings:

All my devotion is like sinking sand / I’ve nothing to cling to but your sweet hand / I’ve no clear emotions keeping me safe at night / Only your presence, like a candlelight.

Then, in words that seem especially appropriate following such a tragic and difficult year, she sings:

After everything I’ve had / After everything I’ve lost / Lord, I know this much is true / I’m still drawn to you.

Will you pray her prayer today?

Jim Denison is the co-founder and chief vision officer of Denison Forum. He pastored churches in Texas and Georgia and now speaks and writes to empower believers to navigate cultural issues from a biblical perspective.

[Country club waiter impacts thousands of children in Ghana: “New Year’s resolutions that will actually lead to happiness”](#) was first published in The Daily Article by the [Denison Forum](#). Daily Articles are republished in the Baptist Standard under agreement with Denison Forum and are not intended to represent the Standard’s views.