

ghana rural integrated development GRID newsletter

April 1, 2004

Dear Friends,

Warmest greetings to each of you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It has been some time since I communicated with you personally to tell you of some of the goodthings that are happening in our work in Ghana and to thank you for being faithful partners in the very effective ministry to thousands of people. This week I made a journey to Janga to meet with the chief, visit members of the community and to spend time with the Janga Project staff. Now that this project is under the supervision of the capably-trained people of Janga, my visits are less frequent and, when I do go, it is more as a friend visiting long-time friends rather than being needed to help in the solving of life-and-death problems. Much more of my time is required at Carpenter (in the Deg area) and in Yaara, which is the base of our third project. One of the aspects I have been keenly involved in is environmental protection. A serious problem faced in this regard is the use of DDT in the rivers by fisherman which makes it easier to catch fish. We have been able to organize a large group of fishermen representing at least thirty villages along the Black Volta River and last month held a forum which included the fishermen, the Paramount Chief and his sub-chiefs, government directors of the Environmental Protection Council for the area, and the police chiefs of the Bole and Kintampo districts. These are all the "players" in enforcing the protection of the natural environment and this strategic meeting brought them together to look at the problems and plan a united program to combat them. Ten people were chosen from various villages as monitors who will organize training regarding the negative impact of various environmental practices. They will also report to the chiefs, the police and the Environmental Protection Council on anyone that is using banned chemicals in the rivers. We believe with this concerted effort on the part of each body, we will see improved health and, over time, a reversal of the damage done to the river and the fish population.

Quite recently, I was invited to be a member of the advisory team to the Regional Minister of Northern Region. Northern Region, where we work, is the largest and poorest of Ghana's ten regions. The Regional Minister is the Canadian equivalent of a

provincial Premier or the American equivalent of a state's Governor. I believe this is a wonderful opportunity for the NEA to have a greater impact on the lives of people in northern Ghana as we will be able to provide input on concerns such as

- ❖ women in development
- ❖ education
- ❖ health
- ❖ agriculture
- ❖ income-generating activities
- ❖ conflict prevention and resolution
- ❖ water
- ❖ sanitation
- ❖ environmental protection

I also believe that even this opportunity is a tribute to the support that you have faithfully given over the years which has helped us to do so much for so many and has gained us the recognition and respect of the Government of Ghana for the changes that are taking place in our project areas

On a personal note, in the last few months, we celebrated the funerals of two very important family members. For those of you who have read my book, you will remember reading about the Uncle Yaw Boateng whom I was sent to after the death of my father, and of my adopted father Srakpo, the witch doctor who eventually took me in. Both of these men lived their final ten years as fervent Christians and, although their wisdom and encouragement will be greatly missed, I am thankful for the good relationship we had and for their Christian testimony as village elders.

Currently in Ghana a lot of work is going on and these are some of the highlights... A six-classroom primary school is under construction in Bamboi to give learning opportunities to about 200 children. The emu/ostrich hatchery is complete and about 200 emu eggs are due to arrive in Ghana from the USA. Two hundred more women have been registered with our income generating Co-op program of peanut farms and rearing sheep and goats. The 35 lay pastors are coming together for training in April with our guest instructor Dr Douglas Webster. The foundation is about to be laid for the expansion of the Bamboi clinic to include a maternity and children's wing. A team from the Evangelical Community Church in Bloomington, Indiana will come in July to help with the construction. The last pieces of equipment are being installed in the fish-hatchery to get it operational. The catfish and tilapia breeder fish are ready to be taken to the fish tanks. The first fish pond is being lined and the fish-dam has been commenced. Eight wells are being drilled which will provide clean water and

better health. Three community toilets and 150 household soak-aways are under construction which will improve sanitation. Five health monitors have provided reproductive health education to over 6000 people in 15 communities over the last six months on HIV/AIDS and family planning. Five students have received scholarships to go to secondary school. In addition to keeping up with our ongoing activities, the following is a look at some of the new undertakings we hope to complete by the end of 2004. Two hundred more women registered in the Co-op program. The seed-producing farm increased to 100 acres. A clinic with nurses' quarters constructed in the South-Mo (third project area). A six-classroom primary school completed in South Mo. Three additional community toilets (KVIP's) and 150 more soak-aways constructed. 6000 more people educated in reproductive health issues. Training in several communities in various sectors. More scholarships for secondary school students. Life by life, we believe we are making headway. Although the above may seem like mere statistics, for us they represent the real faces of real people who struggle daily to just have the basics of food, water, healthcare, shelter and education. This three-year phase has been the most ambitious we have embarked upon and has required even greater effort and commitment from our NEA and GRID team than ever, but the results we are seeing, now in the thousands of lives, make us rejoice. We are glad to be the extension of your hands and compassionate hearts here in Ghana and ask that you continue to pray for us and support this work, as God leads you, so that we can accomplish even more.

I will be in Canada to have some time with Brenda and our girls and for board meetings in May/June and will be speaking at a few churches in Ontario while there. It would be good to see any of you who are in these areas.

- ❖ May 16 - Uxbridge Baptist Church, Uxbridge (8:45am & 11:00am)
- ❖ May 30 - Churchill Heights Baptist Church, Scarborough (9:00am & 11:00am)
- ❖ June 6 - Westney Heights Baptist Church, Ajax (10:00am)
- ❖ June 13 - Markham Fellowship Baptist Church, Markham (9:45am)

May God's hand of blessing rest on each of you.

Shalom,

David Mensah

THANK YOU

A special thank you to the many who have sent donations in memory of our son, Rev. David Porter, who went home to be with the Lord on Easter Sunday. Our family greatly appreciated your prayer support during David's illness.

Rev. Douglas & Ella Porter

"He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?" – Romans 8:32

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