

ghana rural integrated development GRID newsletter

November 27, 2003

Dear GRID Partners,

For Christians, Christmas reflection is often of the greatness of God and the depth of His love for every person in our world, shown by His sacrificial generosity when He gave His only Son Jesus to die for our sins. Thank You Lord. We are awed and humbled.

Reflections:

In a recent letter, Brenda Mensah wrote down a few of her reflections of the work we have been able to do together over the past 13 years in Northern Ghana. I would like to share these with you.

"I never drive down the road to Janga without remembering what it was like then: women dying in childbirth; the many people crippled by guinea worm due to infected drinking water; malnourished children with extended tummies and hair falling out; the statistics of snake bite victims (about 50 people per year); widows with no way of feeding themselves and their children; the flooded road which cut at least fifteen communities off from hospitals for part of the year; and most of all the hopelessness in people's faces. The needs were so many and all so critical it was hard to know where to begin. BUT, with God's guidance, your help and the communities willingness to try new things, the NEA team with the skill and commitment brought their education and their own experiences of hardship to the service of the desperately poor, struggling to survive people of the Janga area. And now, what a changed place Janga is. There is a midwife at the clinic to help mothers deliver their children and should surgery be required there is an ambulance to get them to the nearest hospital. There is adequate clean water for everyone to drink thus new infections of guinea worm are not seen; there is improved food security and healthier children; there are no deaths due to snake bite reported; there are over 1000 women (mostly widows) registered in the co-operative farming program who are able to meet their basic needs and those of their dependants; the road has been built up meaning that no longer are the communities cut off in the rainy season. There is a thriving market, many more schools, an improved natural environment, peace and as you will remember, a church established-at the express request of this Muslim community. In the faces of the people- men, women

and children – there is hope for a better future. Just a few short years ago, work began in the Deg area. A cluster of villages that faced most of the same problems as Janga had. And, as those of you who have been partners in Ghana work, know how much has already happened. Over 600 women are part of the farming cooperative there. Two schools have been built and, within the last two months, work began on a third primary school. Improved seed is being produced for the local farmers to use; improved breeding stock (cattle, sheep and goats) are being reared; no deaths by snakebite have been reported since anti-venom was supplied to the clinics of the area, an ambulance is in place for emergencies that need hospital attention; there is growing co-operation between chiefs of the area; there is an improved natural environment now that thousands of trees have been planted and the production of charcoal has been stopped. Wells have been dug and various sanitation projects embarked upon in several communities. Witchcraft is dying and churches are springing up and growing. What wonderful and encouraging reflections. We are so thankful for each one of you who has prayed, given financial aid, gone to the project site and worked, supplied necessary equipment at the time it was so needed – and thank you to those who have passed on the story to others. Thank you to each one who has worked on our GRID Board – to our African sisters and brothers in Christ who work on our NEA Board in a much more demanding situation. Thank you. Without the combined efforts of all, the dream of our Director, Dr. David Mensah, would not have become a reality. God has led us this far and there is so much more that can be done. I pray that God will renew our zeal in this labor of love for “others”. -Brenda Mensah

Updates:

What is new? In July, another container headed for Ghana with the purchased items available only in Canada or the United States: two incubators for our ostrich rearing hatchery; solar equipment for more power capacity in the Deg area; a seed drill; specialized equipment for the fish hatchery which, by the time you receive this letter, will be operational.

God is good !

Also inside was approximately \$70,000 worth of medicines donated by Health Partners International. This medicine will be used by two hospitals and three rural clinics. Other medical supplies included an ultra sound imaging machine, and there were school books/supplies, etc. David is kept busy directing the overall work of the projects (training lay leaders, meeting with the Chiefs, etc). We thank God for

Brenda's safe arrival in Ontario at the end of October to be with their three daughters for a time.

Work on the school, at Bamboi has begun. This school which is so badly needed, will accommodate approximately 200 students in Grades 1 to 6. Grasscutters are small animals which are a favorite food of the Ghanaians. The problem is that these little animals live in the bush and they are hunted by being smoked out into the open. Unfortunately, we have no fire department and whole villages can be burned down if the fires are not carefully put out. The answer to this problem seems to be to encourage the people to breed them. We have now purchased our first grasscutters for the breeding program. A number of associations will be set up to supply breeding grasscutters.

Prayer Requests:

In closing, please pray for these requests:

- Noah - our Deg Site Manager who was in a serious accident in June - hit by a bus while traveling on his motorcycle. It is a miracle he survived. He is still recuperating, but it will be some time before he can resume work.
- David Porter - son of Chairman Doug and Ella who has been hospitalized with an auto-immune syndrome.
- Director David and Brenda and family
- The NEA team and the many on-going projects
- The GRID Board - for wisdom in their decisions

May we extend to each one a prayer for a meaningful Christmas as we consider the cost at which our Saviour came. God gave His best. May our desire be to follow His example as we work, pray and give to help OTHERS. Others Lord, yes others
Let this my motto be: Help me to live for others, That I may live like Thee

God Bless you in 2004,

On behalf of Chairman Doug and our entire GRID Board,

Ella J. Porter - Public Relations

"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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