GRID & NEA

sustainable development in Ghana

Dear Friends,

As we close 2009, the Deg phrase comes readily to mind: *A nii de cha cha*, which simply means 'Thank you for yesterday".

Looking back over all that transpired in the year, our hearts overflow with thanksgiving.

We are thankful to God for His protection over the GRID/NEA team. Particularly in Ghana, we are grateful for protection over all our staff as they travel on dangerous roads in the course of their work. We are thankful for the CIDA evaluation that was so positive and encouraging.

We are thankful that each sector of the work continues to progress: more women have been helped to start peanut farming; more men have been helped to increase their cassava production; more fish are being produced in communities and in NEA's recently completed fish tanks; more students are able to continue their education; more believers have been added to the 34 churches that have been established; more people have received much needed medical attention; more chiefs and leaders are getting involved in conflict prevention and resolution in the area; more communities and volunteers have gotten involved in protecting the Black and White Volta rivers.

And we are thankful for your continued support of the work we have been called to do: thankful for those of you who keep us lifted up in prayer; thankful for those of you who have come as volunteers; thankful for those of you who invest financially; thankful for those who do so many things behind the scenes to keep us moving ahead. We are in your debt and can only pray that God will richly repay you on our behalf.

As we begin 2010, another Deg phrase comes to mind: *Korowii teya kiri*, or 'May God give us tomorrow'. The Lord being our helper, we look forward to having an impact on even more lives in the year ahead.

We are committed to and excited about serving the Lord and caring for the poor of Northern Ghana and trust that you will continue to partner with us in 2010.

Shalom,

David and Brenda

David and Brenda Mensah direct GRID / NEA programs in Ghana. They split their time between NEA's headquarters in Tamale and the main project site in Carpenter.

GRID (Ghana Rural Integrated Development) and NEA (Northern Empowerment Association) are partner organizations working to alleviate poverty in Northern Ghana. Motivated by Christ's love, our mission is to assist poor communities to meet their basic needs in a sustainable manner. You can learn more at grid-nea.org.

December 27, 2009

Buswema Mini-Conference

Congregations within a ten-mile radius of Buswema joined together for a Christmas service on December 27th.

Some of the members started walking very early in the morning in order to be there for the service and time of fellowship with other churches.

It was good to see the new members of the Kandige church who had risen very early in the morning to walk the 10+ miles to be there.

It was particularly moving to see a blind man come in who had been led all the way by his grandson, as well as another man who had recently suffered a stroke and had limited mobility.

It spoke to how important they felt it was to come together with the church family. Rather than use their illnesses as excuses to stay at home, they put forth the effort to overcome their personal challenges to be part of this time of worship.

One of the special parts of the church service is when men and women are given the opportunity to tell 'the rest of the family' something that God has done in their lives. There were so many people that had something to share that the MC had to limit the number to 5 women and 5 men.

Before making the long journey back to their villages, attendees shared a meal together.

Five new believers were added to the church that day.

Blessings in 2009

- 400 more women were assisted with seeds, a goat, and training and support through co-ops.
- 11 fish ponds have been created and stocked, harvesting an average of 1500 lb of fish per pond.
- 30 students were given scholarships to pursue secondary or post-secondary education.
- Carpenter Junior High School and the Baniantwe Primary School were commissioned.
- Over 30,000 people received health education.

- Over 5,000 people received care from our visiting health team, and 186 hernia operations were performed.

- 600 volunteers worked to eliminate the use of chemicals and illegal nets on the Black Volta River, and fish stocks along the river are beginning to be restored.
- Over 60 chiefs and 120 opinion leaders met regularly to discuss issues and to peacefully resolve conflicts. Two formerly warring tribes were peacefully reunited.
- 1 full-time pastor was sent for 1 year of formal Bible School training.
- 2 new church buildings were constructed for growing congregations.
- Several new congregations were established in villages without a church presence.

Medical Teams

Baby Joshua

In our last newsletter, we reported the near death of baby Joshua and the intervention from our 2009 medical team that saved his life.

Joshua

From the picture, it is obvious to see that Joshua has recovered well from his bout with pneumonia and is thriving, much to the whole family's delight.

Blessings

With the help of the 2008 medical team that visited Yaara, God has blessed this one young family with the birth of a little girl named Jennifer, in honour of the medical doctor who attended to them.

2010 Medical Team

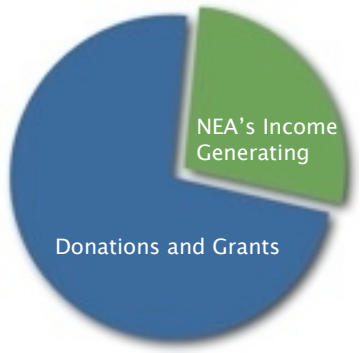
If you would like to participate in or support the 2010 medical team, please visit us online at:

teams.grid-nea.org

Towards Sustainability

From its early days, NEA has kept the goal of sustainability in focus, seeking ways to earn income in Ghana to augment the support of our much-appreciated donors.

In 1992, a cargo truck was donated for this purpose and has continued to play an important role in income generation. Its primary use has been to haul the shea butter produced by a group of about 500 women from 11 northern villages for The Body Shop International. In 2009 that amounted to 270 metric tonnes.



Income for GRID/NEA Programs in Ghana

In addition, NEA generates income through crop sales (primarily seed corn), and through the sale of animals (cattle, ostriches, pigs).

In 2008, NEA generated 27% of the total in-country budget. We think this is a noteworthy achievement!

Farming Success

Adwoa Hagar

Adwoa Hagar, a mother of 7, is one of the early members of the South Mo women's co-op. Hagar had no formal education and in the area where she lives there are no job opportunities.

Through NEA's program, Hagar received land, training, seeds, and funds to hire help. This year Hagar received the regional award for the Best Woman Peanut Farmer.

It was a very special event for her to be picked from her village, taken to the venue and honoured by the Regional Minister with a bicycle, a radio, 4 machetes, rubber boots, a sprayer, and a beautiful 6-yard piece of Ghana cloth.

Hagar reports that from the profits from her farm, she and her family are able to eat better, are enrolled in the Ghana Health Insurance Scheme, and she has her two younger daughters in school. In addition, she has been able to start a small business of selling sugar and other basic supplies in her village.

We are proud of her achievement!

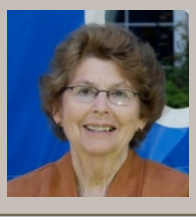
Ella's Corner

We have already welcomed in another New Year with all of its God-given opportunities. You will note that our newsletter has taken a "new look". We hope you will enjoy this new format.

You will now be able to enjoy pictures to help you see the people and places that you have so faithfully supported over the years. Please understand, it is not a case of "off with the old and on with the new" — but a way of drawing together all of our information from the project sites (including our website information, which may be unavailable to those without computers) to give you updates of the work in a more efficient manner.

Welcome to any "new supporters". We hope you quickly feel that you are an important part of our GRID family. We are overjoyed by the work that has been completed in the past — the clean water, strides in agriculture, the piggery, our fish program, new churches, (and many of the Chiefs becoming Christians), children receiving an education — to mention a few.

2010 has been given to us by God. Together, let's determine in our hearts to help – prayerfully and financially – to attempt GREAT THINGS FOR GOD for those who need our help in Northern Ghana.



Ella Porter serves on GRID's Board.

Korowii teya kiri: May God give us tomorrow

The Lord being our helper, we look forward to having an impact on even more lives in the year ahead.

Our plans for 2010 are to carry on with the sectors that we are already involved in and to expand into some new communities with the women's co-op program.

We are already enlarging our piggery, hatching more ostrich and emu, and preparing to harvest fish from the 10 large fish tanks that were completed in 2009.

We are planning for more pastoral training and a series of conferences designed to nurture existing churches.

We have set dates for the next medical/surgical mission and have a waiting list of surgery patients.

We value your prayers, encouragement, and continued support as we serve together in 2010.

NEA is organizing the first ever **Northern Christian Chiefs' Conference**, to be held at Carpenter from **Feb 25 – Mar 1, 2010**. Expected are 75 to 100 chiefs from various regions in the north of Ghana. Some of these chiefs are standing for Christ alone in areas where they face severe pressure. **Please pray fervently for this very special event**.

Emu Chick

Pastoral Training

Plans are starting for our 2010 Medical Team.

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Why not subscribe to our quarterly eNewsletter? By receiving our newsletter by email, you will reduce our administration costs and save paper.

To learn more, go to grid-nea.org.

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