



# Abundance

by Brenda Mensah

**I have come that you might have life, and have it more abundantly!**

In reflecting over the months that have passed since we last sent you news, **abundance** is the word that best summarizes it all.

In June we welcomed Dr. Doug Webster and Rev. Tyshawn Gardener from Alabama to lead 80 pastors and lay leaders from 38 churches in a week-long study of the Book of Revelation. It was a rich, uplifting, and challenging time together.

While we were all gathered together, we heard the NEA cargo vehicle pull in next to the

training centre with the much-needed container load of equipment and goods that had been carefully packed in Canada last February. We knew about most of the items inside, but were certainly surprised by the additional useful items our friends added so as not to waste an inch of container space!

The timing of its arrival was perfect, as a few days later we welcomed Allan and Nicole Chamberlain to the project site. Allan is an aquaculture specialist, and was able to use some of the equipment to help us improve our fish production in Carpenter.

In the past months, we've had the joy of seeing new wells bring fresh water to villages. We've been delighted as our various income-generating activities have grown.

Especially thrilling this year has been the fulfillment of a long-time dream as the heavy machinery needed to create fifty fish ponds in our project area is en route to Carpenter.

We are grateful to God for his continued favour and blessing on our work. And we are thankful for you, our friends, who continue to give so generously so that others can experience more abundance.

**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**.

## Volunteers Improve Fish Production



Allan and Nicole Chamberlain volunteered their time to improve NEA's aquaculture program.

This year we were privileged to have volunteers Allan Chamberlain, and his wife Nicole, at Carpenter. Allan has worked in aquaculture for over 30 years as a fish farm manager and more recently as head of the Aquaculture Department at Fleming College.

He and Nicole volunteered their time to provide additional training and guidance to NEA's aquaculture team. One of the recommendations to improve production was to increase the oxygen flow in the tanks. Thankfully the container that arrived just days before the Chamberlains contained the equipment needed to do this.

Before Allan and Nicole departed, the air blower and air stones installed in the ten 75'x25' tanks were vigorously bubbling – meaning that fish production can now more than double! NEA's Aquaculture Department Head, Soale, has since procured a new type of tilapia brood stock and is hatching about 10,000 fingerlings every two weeks. Fish in abundance!

## An Audacious Dream Come True

We have received wonderful news that all the equipment needed to build at least 50 community fish ponds has safely arrived in Ghana and is going through the clearing process at the port.

Having this special equipment started as an audacious dream a few years ago. We knew of the lack of protein in the communities, and we knew that people of the area love to eat fish. We also knew that to use rented heavy equipment would make it a very expensive venture to construct a fish pond for even one community. When David shared with the GRID board the dream of purchasing a bulldozer so that we could build fish ponds, they took it very seriously and prayerfully worked towards

seeing this dream become a reality.

We are very grateful for the people who gave so generously towards this project, and we're

thankful that the excavator, bulldozer, and the tractor and trailer needed to move the equipment are all now on Ghana soil.



A bulldozer, excavator, and truck and trailer needed to haul them are in Ghana now. These will enable us to construct fish ponds for communities.

# Reading Revelation in Ghana

by Dr. Douglas D. Webster

In June, seventy-six pastors and fourteen chiefs gathered for an intensive conference in Carpenter. In seven days we covered the entire book of Revelation, but in our last session, I shared with the pastors that we had only given them an introduction, a taste of the spiritual impact of The Revelation. We agreed that the real work continues as we endeavor to stay in the Spirit and in the rhythm of John's powerful beats of salvation and judgment.

All the pastors come out of villages steeped in witchcraft and shamanism. For them, the dangers of idolatry are very real. Villagers sacrifice chickens and goats before wooden idols and sacred stones. As the followers of Christ break away from these customs they are often blamed for whatever bad that happens in the villages. Believers are shunned and ridiculed; their lives are threatened. Simple acts of faithfulness are costly. These believers, like the first recipients of the Book of Revelation, know what it is like to suffer for not eating meat offered to idols.

To work through this biblical book with pastors who daily cope with shamans and idol worship was a reminder of what the first century believers faced in confronting the imperial cult. Ghanaian believers know the complexity and dread of evil in ways that Western Christians seldom acknowledge, much less confront. Western

Christians may not bow before wooden statues, but we are in danger of giving ourselves to the gods of success, sports and sex.

In many ways the emerging church in the northern region of Ghana resembles the first century church. She may be relatively small and beleaguered, but her witness is strong and her faith is vital. These dedicated pastors resonated with the apostle John's Spirit-led warnings and admonitions. They identified with his spiritual direction and his grasp of the Old Testament scriptures. They embraced his powerful visions of Christ and they understood his description of evil.

The Ghanaian pastors were free to concentrate on what John was saying without being burdened with the heavy load of misleading interpretations that many Western believers labour under. Instead of being bothered by rapture questions and millennial categories, they were able to enter into The Revelation with fresh ears and receptive hearts. They heard the apostle John's letter to the seven churches as a message to the churches in northern Ghana. May believers everywhere hear the Bible's canonical climax the way my Ghanaian brothers and sisters heard the message and took it to heart.

*Dr. Webster is a professor of Pastoral Theology at Beeson Divinity School. Rev. Tyson Gardner joined him as co-teacher during this session.*



Participants of the 2013 Pastoral Training Conference

## Notes of Joy



### Our New Poultry Enterprise

At the beginning of the year, we reported our newest income-generating activity – poultry! The NEA cook wondered why we kept buying chickens and eggs for our visiting teams and multiple training programs and threw the challenge to the agriculture department. A building was put up and 500 layers plus 500 broilers launched this sector. It has been a great success. We have an adequate supply for all the programs held at the NEA site, plus an abundance to sell at nearby markets. We've since doubled the size of the poultry

enterprise to keep up with demand.

### Clean Water

Water. We know we take it for granted every day. We turn on the tap and it is always there, always clean, but it's not the reality for everyone.

When one of our building teams came to Ghana we were invited to the village of Babator to a baptism. While watching the baptism, the team couldn't help but notice all of the women and girls filling huge aluminum pans with murky water, mounting them on their heads, and trekking the 20-minute uphill path back to the village. This murky water was what they would drink, cook with, and bathe their children with. The next village on this road, Chiberenyoa, was facing the same problem. Meanwhile, in the community of Baniantwe, people and animals were relying on one well and a local stream for all their water needs. When the stream dried up in the dry

season, the well was not adequate for both people and animals and there was no alternative but to limit water for human consumption. Many animals died.

Some of the team members felt challenged to address these needs. We are so pleased to report that the drilling rig hit excellent sources of water in each of these villages and now these communities are enjoying an abundance of clean water.



A new well in Babator

### Another New Venture

Our newest income-generating activity may come as a surprise: we're growing oyster mushrooms! Stay tuned ...

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