



THE NEWSLETTER FOR ELIZABETH SIDWELL IN GHANA

Project 329: Issue 12, October 2005

The gospel in the language of Ewe



Baptism service

Translating the Bible into the mother tongue of a congregation is essential if church-goers are to grasp the meaning of the gospel text. But in Ghana there are many tribes and peoples who have never heard the scripture in a language they can understand.

The language commonly spoken in the Volta Region of Ho is Ewe. Scholars have been working hard to translate the liturgy

into this language. However, about 80 per cent of the people here are illiterate. So putting the translation into a book is still not much help.

Another problem in Ho is that three of the priests do not have Ewe as their mother tongue.

The diocese has a solution. It is planning to train the priests to understand the language better so that they can teach the congregation the liturgy in Ewe by rote.

Teaching the teachers

The government in Ghana has announced new legislation requiring all school teachers, even in remote regions, must be fully qualified in order to teach.

This affects two ministers from Ho who are working as school teachers, despite having not completed secondary school education themselves. To keep with the new legislation, the diocese is sending the two ministers to Ho Polytechnic so that they can earn the qualifications required to continue teaching.

USPG missionary Elizabeth Sidwell said:

'The exams will not only enable the ministers to continue teaching, they will also give them the opportunity to study for a degree. The importance of qualifications, both for job opportunities and for self-confidence, is very high. Dioceses with a university have well-qualified priests, but in Ho we have no graduates. In many ways I feel this is a good thing, as it means there is not too large a gap between the ideas and hopes of the priests and their people. I hope the education won't separate them too far from their congregations.'

The rains begin

The Diocese of Ho experiences major rains and minor rains. The minor rains this year appear to have been good and there is hope that the minor harvest in November – the second harvest of the year – will be good, though it will not fully compensate for the poor main harvest earlier this year.

Encouraging the youth

The church is encouraging young people to attend services by offering music lessons and encouraging involvement in church through the boys' and girls' brigades.

Elizabeth said: 'Children from the Anglican junior school came to music lessons three times a week for four months, and there have been others who have been keen to join in. The girl who plays the trumpet seems to be a born leader. Let's hope she comes back to the village after her secondary education.'

The musicians have played at many processions and at a funeral. The children were taught to march by a local policeman.

Elizabeth continued: 'The children march beautifully. Many wore their new uniforms, which is one of the attractions, as Ghanaians love uniforms!'

It is hoped that as the church gets more involved with children's work, the children will become a stronger part of church life in Ho – perhaps even becoming leaders and ministers themselves one day.

Give thanks

- For Elizabeth and her work in Ghana.
- For the commitment of the church leaders in Ho to local needs.
- For the minor rains.

Have you sent back your Project Christmas card yet? It's not too late. If you have not received your Christmas card, please contact the Projects team on 020 7803 3441, or email: projects@uspg.org.uk

