

THE TOKURANU WATER PROJECT

WE SEE A DAY...

by Katie S. Sherman



Dr. Lea and Evangelist Narh plants a tree as villagers and Chief look on.

It has been more than two weeks since I returned home from Ghana, yet I have not been able to get the trip out of my mind. I can still vividly remember walking into Kotoka International Airport in Accra, Ghana, the night of March 4th and being greeted by the warm words "Akawaaba," "Welcome," "Welcome home" as the musician, a one man band, played what sounded like Reggae music. Noticing the wording on our tee-shirts, he transitioned into his version of "To God be the Glory."

About two years ago, Dr. Lea, asked the congregation for donations to help fund mechanized water systems (wells) in Ghana, West Africa. The California Baptist Convention and several other churches, including Mount Calvary, partnered with HIOTW Ministries to fund what is now called the Tokuranu Water Project.

We see a day when short term mission travel is organized and launched from Mount Calvary Church to share the love of God and the Gospel of Jesus Christ by ministering to the felt needs of those in foreign countries. Providing services for medical, educational, and humanitarian endeavors, we want to establish strategic partnerships with the growth potential for members to be involved in reaching out to nations and places historically disenfranchised, impoverished, or ignored socially and spiritually, such as Africa, Haiti, South America, and India.

These words are part of Mount Calvary's Vision Statement. Since unfolding our Mission, Vision and Value statements, I have read and recited these words many times. However, none of these places, least of all Africa, were on my radar. I never dreamed of going to Africa. So imagine my surprise when a group of Mount Calvary members, led by the pastor, Dr. Claybon Lea, Jr. and Evangelist Charles Narh, founder of Help Is On The Way (HIOTW) Ministries, were preparing to go to Ghana, West Africa, in 2006. The Holy Spirit spoke to me saying that I should go. Not wanting to argue with God, I started looking for ways to make it possible. My aunt reminded me of our family reunion and the fact that it had been 30 years since we had one and that I should attend the reunion. I shared that information with God. His response was family first. During the fall of 2006, I was talking with my sister when she mentioned some work she was doing for the next Ghana trip. I asked her to include me in the list. It was the beginning of an experience I will never forget.

Who is Evangelist Charles Narh and what is HIOTW Ministries? Evangelist Narh is a native of Ghana. He smiles when he says, "I'm a Tema Boy." Tema, Ghana is where he grew up. I asked how the project came about. He shared with me that before his grandfather died, his grandfather had called him because he was very concerned about the people of Tokuranu. His grandfather told him, "Take care of the people. When the people hurt, you hurt." It was a conversation he took to heart and never forgot.

Evangelist Narh shared his feeling of needing to help the people with his pastor, Dr. Fred Campbell, of the Mt. Zion Baptist Church in Redwood City, CA, who embraced the idea. He returned to Ghana for a visit accompanied by one of the missionaries from Mt. Zion, Sis. Ajennette Jones. She met the people of Tokuranu and asked them what they needed. Their answer was water. In 2003, Evangelist Narh, with the help of the Holy Spirit, founded HIOTW ministries.

"When the people hurt, you hurt."

The ministry is both spiritual, ministering to the soul, and humanitarian, ministering to the physical needs. "Help Is On The Way Ministries was a vision given to me from God, and all I heard was 'help is on the way.' That, coupled with my passion for helping I started to form and model this ministry. Wherever we have wells, we can change them to



Contractor drinking the water to show it is good!

a mechanized water system to supply over 6,000 people through underground pipes. One thing I know is whatever the ministry needs and whatever, whoever needs through us, *help is on the way, through our Lord and Savior,*" says Evangelist Narh. For more information on HIOTW Ministries or the Tokuranu Water Project, visit www.hiotwm.org.

The Village of Tokuranu is a six hour drive from the city of Tema, Ghana. After about three and one half hours into the trip, the road condition changed. There was a lot of dust on the red clay dirt road. There were many holes in the road reducing some areas to almost one lane. Even a skilled driver must proceed with caution.

In 2006, the group went to do the ground breaking ceremony for the well. For the people of Tokuranu, that meant planting a tree as a memorial. There were no water hoses or faucets, so the water for the freshly planted tree was carried in a bucket from another location.

There was water in the Village of Tokuranu before this project began. When the group went in 2006, they saw water being manually pumped by the women. Unfortunately, the water was yellowish. The pumps were old and would often break and repairs were expensive. When the pumps were broken, the women and children would have to find other means of getting water.

We arrived in the Village of Tokuranu on March 11, 2007. After receiving our room assignments and eating dinner, we sat in the front yard and fellowshiped

with the people of HIOTW Ministries Tokuranu. That was a special time that I will always remember. We sang, we prayed, the minister read from Matthew 5 beginning at verse 13, *You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men.* I can't remember how many verses he read because at that moment, I realized that God was reviving me; He was refreshing my **salt**.

The next day, we walked up a hill in the back of the village. It was a beautiful sight looking out over the Volta Lake and down into the village. Also at the top of the hill was a statue of the Virgin Mary; and yes, she had dark skin coloring. Before the water project, there were two huge poly tanks atop the hill to hold the water, a reservoir. Now, the reservoir is enclosed in concrete. The question was asked, "How did they get the concrete up here?" The answer, "The men carried it on their shoulders, and then mixed it here." There were no trucks, no ready-mix, just manual labor.

As we descended the hill, the contractor led us to three different water areas. There are approximately 6,000 people in the village, 9 clans, each clan with its own Chief and now its own water area. The contractor, who donated three more water areas for a total of 12, drank at one of the areas giving his approval that the water was good for drinking. He said, "I did all the tests, the water is good."

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Ribbon cutting at one of the water areas.

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At some of the areas, the water pipes were high enough for the women to stand under with their pans on their heads.

We went to the well house. The contractor dug a well approximately 100 feet deep. No more manual pumping water, the system is automatic. Water is pumped from the well to the reservoir then disbursed to the water areas.

*"Help is no longer on the way,
help is here!"*

After touring those areas, we went back to the house where we were staying, had breakfast, then waited for the ceremony, dedication of the well, to begin. The ceremony could not begin without the Chiefs, all nine of them. Then we heard the singing and chanting; the Chiefs had arrived. Clad in our blue tee-shirts, we marched with the singers to the area of the ceremony. I felt honored to be part of this occasion. The people danced and chanted. We greeted the Chiefs, and then their linguists/interpreters greeted us. The MC and others spoke of their appreciation for the water. One gentleman said, "Help is no longer on the way, help is here!" One of the young school girls said, "We did not have water to take our baths before we went to school.... Now with the water we will do better in school."

The highlight of the ceremony came when we went back to one of the water areas and did the cutting of the ribbon signifying that the project was complete and a success. The water ran clear into a bowl. The Chiefs, the contractor and Evangelist Narih all had a drink of fresh, clean water.

Can you imagine not having clean water to drink? I realize that some of our homes are older and the pipes might be bad thus making the water taste funny. However, we have choices. Can you imagine not having a choice? The next time you drink water, think about the choices you have, then think of those people in the Village of Tokuranu. Many of us have refrigerators that dispense water and others drink bottle water. In many cases, we can drink our tap water. The next time you take a shower and allow the water to run for 15 to 30 minutes, think of the villagers. When you brush your teeth and allow the water to continue running during the process, think of the villagers. These are just a few things that I am asking you to think about. After that, I encourage you to count your blessings and thank God for His goodness.

Are we living better than they are? I don't think so. You see, they are appreciative of the small simple things that God gives them. We take many of those things, like water, for granted.

Mount Calvary, your contribution to the Tokuranu Water Project was well received. "To God be the Glory. Amen."



Evangelist Charles Narih (in yellow cap), Dr. Carol Munch (on his left), two of the village Chiefs and Queen Mother on his left. See page 30 for more water project photos.



1. 2006 photo with Dr. Lea, Mt. Calvary members, the Village of Tokuranu Chief and Queen Mothers
2. The hill in back of the village and one of the poly tanks that was used as a reservoir for the old water system
3. Mechanized water area for one of the village clans created by the water project
4. Automatic well pump created by the water project
5. Concrete reservoir now being used for the water
6. Mechanized water area for one of the village clans created by the water project. This area allows the villagers to stand with the containers on their heads to collect their water.

(2006 photos by Arie L. Williams; 2007 photos by Allie C. Capers and Katie S. Sherman)