

HODA NEWS

September 2009

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On 22nd March, the Diocese of Ho began its seventh milestone as an autonomous diocese, created from the Diocese of Koforidua-Ho in 2003. On days like this, I am always filled with emotion which takes the better part of me – emotion of mixed feelings.

When in 1993 the Anglican Church in the Volta Region was very much struggling we, the Clergy and Church Wardens serving in the Region had series of meetings to discuss the future of the Anglican Church in the midst of other dominant Churches such as the Presbyterian Church, the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of Pentecost among others. We resolved among other things that five years from then Ho should be split from Koforidua to bring Episcopal oversight of the area much closer and more effective. The meeting recommended among other things that a Missioner be appointed for the Region, In 1997, at a Diocesan Synod in Koforidua, our long cherished dream for the autonomy was proposed for 2002.

I can vividly recall the pains of going round from Vicarage to Vicarage in England, soliciting help for the eventual take-off of the proposed diocese. Many parishes which promised to assist us could not fulfil their promise except some of the few supporting parishes we have today. If not by the hard work of these parishes our dreams to take the mission closer to the people would not have been realized.

A year later, when the Province of West Africa was satisfied with our support base which was HODA, (Ho Diocesan Association) a group of Parishes which came together to form a charity to assist the mission of the Volta – now known as the Diocese of Ho. The Diocese of Ho was duly inaugurated on 22nd March, 2003. Recalling the past of this Diocese with mixed feelings, I can only say Thank You, and to God be the Glory.

Because we are on a mission field, every year brings its own challenges, and last year was no exception. There were three Quiet Days for the Clergy and Bishop last year, to reflect on our combat readiness for the spiritual warfare we battle with every day.

PROJECTS:

1. St. Paul's Agbozume began efforts to extend electricity to the Church in addition to plastering the inner walls. After the completion of those projects they will then think about pews being seen as another major project
2. St. Matthias' School is still at its deplorable state. Mrs. Yvonne Lawton from York through friends donated assorted teaching and learning aids to the School to boost up their morale
3. St. Mary's, Tove – The School building project is still on course with 100% support from Newbury Church of England School and Church
4. St. George's Cathedral, though tiny in size, could boast of its beauty last year when the building was repainted
5. St. Patrick's, Kpando, has cut the sod for the start of their Vicarage on the Church compound. This is a major project which needs much attention of Bishop, Clergy and People to see to its completion in the next few years.
6. St. Mark's, Dzoanti, after roofing the Church, with the help of the Benefice of Moseley in Birmingham, also cut the sod for their Vicarage
7. St. Michael & All Angels, Worawora also benefited tremendously from St. Andrew's, Bishopthorpe, York with their efforts to re-roof the Junior School building ripped off six years ago.
8. St Luke's, Hohoe, have had the necessary funds raised by Ss Peter and Paul, Stokesley to acquire a new piece of land for a place of worship

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MOTORBIKES:

Through the constant generosity of the Boys Brigade *Wheels Appeal* led by Bro. Albert Ryder from St. Mary's Tottenham and the Faithful of St. Margaret's, Ilkley almost all the Clergy have got Motorbikes to help them on their missionary work.



Canon Terence Grigg admiring the new motorbike bought for Fr. Joseph Hayibor with funds raised by the Boys Brigade

STIPENDS:

We continue to be grateful to all the Parishes that continue to support us by sending regular contribution to the HODA Account in England through which we get our regular Stipend on this mission field. We are very grateful to Parishes that increased their stipend donations to enable us have a bit more added at the beginning of each year.

VISITS:

There were visits from the following Guests whose coming continue to inspire us on our field:

1. Mrs. Yvonne Lawton, York – Helped with the Regional Manager of Anglican Schools to put some discipline in the Administration.
2. Miss Elizabeth Wilton, a daughter of Fr. Chris Wilton – Sherburn-in-Elmet. She helped with St. George's Infant School for three months with lot of admiration
3. Fr. Chris Coates from St. Andrew's, Bishopthorpe, York – A pastoral visit to many of our parishes with a visit to St. Michael & All Angel's where he donated the roofing materials to the Parent Teacher Association of the School. Fr. Chris was the Preacher at the Installation of the first Archdeacon of the Diocese of Ho, the Venerable Joseph Bentum.



Ho Diocese - bringing hope to children of the Volta region

4. Canon Bernard Dagnall from St. John's, Newbury led a delegation of six people from his Parish including the Headteacher of St. John's School, Mrs. Jan Goode-nough with her husband and a teacher from the School to pay us an inspirational visit. The joy of this visit was climaxed with an Ordination Service of two Deacons (one from Togo and the other from Nigeria) in which Father Bernard was the Preacher with a moving Theme: "You will Die"



5. Dr. Mary Baird and daughter, Dr. Susan Exon, my English family, were special Guests of Honour during the wedding of my daughter, Mary and husband Edward.



Building a School in Tove, with help from St John the Evangelist Infant and Nursery School in Newbury



Over the last five years St John the Evangelist School has developed strong links with Bishop Matthias in Ho and has raised over £6,000 in order to build a school in one of the poorest areas of the Volta region. The school in Tove has three complete classrooms with two more due for completion this year. The children of St Johns raised the money having 'powerless' days, walking to school, enduring no heat or warm food. They

have spent the last year working on a friendship project, exchanging letters and photographs. Bishop Matthias and Father Simon from Ghana visited St John's School again last summer and brought news and photographs from the school in Tove.

Much work is still to be done and the children are now fundraising again to provide uniforms for the children.

In February I was very privileged to visit Ghana at the invitation of Bishop Matthias. Mrs Pearce, one of my teachers was also able to go. We had the most wonderful trip which words cannot really describe. Holidays are usually forgotten quite quickly on return to work, however this visit has left both of us with many thoughts and questions which continue to haunt us.



Mrs Goodenough presenting footballs to the headteacher of Tove School

Although we were in Ghana at different times we were able to meet for just a few minutes at the airport in Accra at 10 o'clock in the evening. I was returning to cold, snowy England and Mrs Pearce was stepping out into temperatures of 30 +. Little did she know that having travelled for over 12 hours, she was to travel a further 3 to 4 hours on very bumpy roads to Cape Coast.

The week we each had went so quickly and were action packed ! It certainly wasn't a rest, as most days involved between 12 hours of travel and visits. Bishop Matthias and Father Bernard have boundless energy and plans were often changed at the last minute. We both learnt not to mention things. 'I would like to take back a cocoa pod' resulted in a detour !

The weeks were a mixture of 'tourist' visits which included the Volta Dam; a monkey sanctuary; a waterfall; a crocodile park; the prisons at Cape Coast, from where slaves were transported to the West Indies and a rain forest walk high above the trees. These trips were wonderful but we were always on our way to see the real Ghana, which the Bishop proudly wished to show us !

The welcome from the parents and children at the school in Tove was magnificent. The drums played and the parents and children danced. We felt very humble as many parents had given up the weekly market visit to meet us. The families live by taking their produce to the market in order to buy staple foods for the week. The school is in the middle of fields, reached by a five kilometre track. The children walk this distance to school, taking water with them for the day. The new classrooms allow the children to stay at school in the rainy season instead of having to return home when it rains.



Mrs Pearce presenting reading materials and football strips to the school

The Bishop proudly showed us his country. He has great dreams for the children and people of Ghana- working tirelessly for their benefit. He has a great sense of humour and is really fun to be with but everything he does has his people and the life of the church at the centre.

The highlight for us both was the visit to the school in Tove where we have made a good start. We were treated to a fantastic welcome by overwhelmingly friendly people. We are haunted by some things but we both felt that although most families have very few possessions , children have little but their imagination and existence is a tough call every day, the people of Ghana have so much that perhaps we have lost. They have a strong faith, they enjoy their worship and above all they have close extended families that they value.

Mrs Janis Goodenough - Headteacher

A New Car is Needed for Ho

This August, Bishop Matthias was able to pay a surprise visit to the retirement service of Canon Bernard Dagnall, (pictured) Vicar of St John's, Newbury and a faithful supporter of HODA. Our thanks to the Bishops of Ebbsfleet and Richborough who kindly funded his trip.



The next three weeks were filled with visits to supporting parishes to tell them all that was going on and to say thank you. It became apparent as to the considerable burden the Bishop constantly carries for his Diocese. Established Dioceses have their structures in place, but in Ho this is still being created and funds don't allow for all that is needed.

We seek to help from HODA by paying stipends, funding projects and providing the Bishop with what support we can, in particular funding his Internet access and providing his laptop, without which he would be lost.

The greatest concern is the state of the Bishop's car. We bought it second hand five years ago and it is now well and truly at the end of its life and is now both unsafe and unreliable, and liable to break down in the most inconvenient and dangerous places. Just before his visit, the car let the Bishop down in an area noted for armed robbers, but he was fortunately rescued by the Roman Catholic Bishop who was returning from the same meeting several hours later. On another occasion, visiting clergy from the UK had to be pulled out of the car windows as the doors wouldn't open! Can you imagine that here?

Such a situation would not be allowed here, and we can't allow it for Bishop Matthias also, so I am appealing for supporting Parishes and Friends to help raise the funds for a replacement. If we can raise £10,000 it should be able to provide a basic, suitable and reliable vehicle.



Please can I ask you to help as a matter of urgency. If we know support is coming we can release funds from the accounts, but we cannot use the clergy stipend money without knowing it will be replaced. Thank you all for all you do in supporting the mission of the Church in Ho.

Revd Canon Paul Peverell, Chairman of HODA

HODA ACCOUNTS 2008

<u>CASH FLOW STATEMENT</u>	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
Carried fwd 1/1/07		19375
Interest	86	
<u>Donations</u>		
Great Ayton & Newton	4,626	
Brookfield	210	
Newbury	978	
Ordsall/Retford	510	
R Brunswick	1,000	
Sneyd	50	
Stokesley	1,561	
Bishopthorpe	600	
Cottingham	136	
Denstone	77	
Albert Ryder - Boys Brigade	1,073	
Moseley	1,386	
Barnsley Deanery	2,000	
Ilkley	2,314	
J Pawson	10	
Anonymous	300	
	16,917	
Sub-Total		36,292
<u>Payments</u>		
Stipends & Expenses	12,932	
Wora Wora School Repairs	2,922	
Motorbikes	1,074	
Bank Charges	109	
	17,037	
Carried forward 31/12/08		19,255

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