



**CHRISTIAN RURAL AID NETWORK
FRIENDS CIRCLE e.V.**

CRAN Freundeskreis, H. Wallhäuser, Purweider Winkel 82, 52070 Aachen

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Dear CRAN friends,

„In our struggling with social and international problems we have to remind: It will not be us who change this badly world in a good one. All what we can do is, to announce God’s kingdom.“

This quotation comes from an impressive theologian of the 20th century, Karl Barth. Long ago? Yes, before Ghana has become independent. What has been 50 years Jahre ago – how this was and is – read a German article about that at the end of this newsletter...

Currently this also meets our last visit to CRAN Ghana. Experiences there are impressive for guests. So we like to tell about our experience with people there and from people there, who assist and help. So you will find some of our impressions here (our Annual Meeting will take place 2nd June).

Thank you so much for accompanying and assisting us – for the children there, for the villages, for the women... Many areas need our support. „Ecumenical miracles“ we cannot do. But yet help is definitely needed.

Hans Wallhaeuser

Our visit - full of impressions - impressive

Sunday, 18th February

the first complete day of our visit - Sunday begins with a church service. All staff members of CRAN go to their churches. We join the Evangelic Presbyterian Church. A long time ago this church was established by German missionaries. Fellowship based on God encourages: It is helpful to experience this foundation alive. In the afternoon there is a reception in the neighbouring village Gbi Atabu. This place is rather catholic. But for CRAN this is not relevant. The reception is a celebration with speeches delivered by the leaders of the village, dynamic music and a show especially presented by the children. Then we visit the training centre for carpenters; may computer training be added? That could refer to hardware - Hohoe is already quite remote and could do with knowledge on the spot. A dream ... but understandable.

Monday, 19th February

The office in Hohoe was built in 2002. From here all the programmes in the area are lead: help for the farmers to obtain better crops and a greater variety of products. Indeed there are far more possibilities than traditionally known. A lot of work in convincing is to be done.

As a representative village we visit Liati Wote - a remote place close to the border of Togo, below the very beautiful waterfall Tagbo. For a long time CRAN has been well known here. In the meantime electricity is available in the village. Why then are the computers in the school (!) not used? O yes, you would have to pay for electricity and that does not seem important enough to look for a solution - that is too bad but must be solved. The mushroom production for example runs well - so convincing that most of the mushrooms are collected even from further areas. It is similar with bees: about 20 people from the village were so convinced by the instructions that they are now running it in addition. It is really worth testing the honey! Other projects have also convinced some people - the mechanical processing of palm oil kernels. Apart from CRAN as organisation a team of village members is responsible for all the programmes. So meetings for clarification are hold - that is necessary and good.

Tuesday, 20th February

Today a delegation of World Bank arrived to evaluate the sponsored projects. That is of course very important. We continue our journey and wish good progress. Then we hear the bad news of a tragic accident. After good inspections a good car of CRAN overturns several times after an axle was broken. Two people die (among them David Avornyo an agricultural consultant who in 2004 spent some months in Germany for practical training and who delivered a speech at our annual meeting), three others are seriously injured (among them the District Director Cosmos Abiwu). How can such a tragedy be handled and the families consoled? Should the preparations for a journey be improved? Many more questions remain. The team meets regularly for prayer. And yet: For the people who are benefiting from the work of CRAN goes on as we see at our visit.

Wednesday, 21st February

In Cape Coast is the head office of Micro Credit. In the meantime about 5000 persons take part, 2/3 are women. Since last year - finally!- the Loan Performer System of the computer administration has been operating. This shows the two different worlds that are meeting. The target group are those who have no chance with big or small banks, but whose work is supported by credits and helpful instructions - with regard to the

organisation of their work as well as the practical use of credits to gain real profit. We visit the villages around Cape Coast and see the micro banks and some clients. On the other side we see the administration in the office after some years, now with a very good system and highly motivated staff. To look better after the clients they are grouped (20 or more); their leader e.g. keeps the repayments for some days, discussions with CRAN and training are also organised for the groups. It is very impressive to see how this helps and that credits are not misunderstood as "gifts" and positively used.

Thursday, 22nd February

We are again on the way in the Cape Coast area. In the village of Abakam a kindergarten started in 1993, the school with grades 1-9 is well accepted. Where before hardly anybody could read, write or calculate now two students finished their further education (in Cape Coast where there are very good schools of grade 10-12) with excellent results. Does a dream come true? Yes, maybe someone will go to university! Everybody would be delighted.

In Sanka near Elmina CRAN is actually only running a kindergarten. A primary school was built with EU funds, the water pipe from a small hill at a greater distance was organised by CRAN some years ago. The children are obviously and while singing also audibly enthusiastic about what they have. We like to rejoice with them.

Saturday, 24th February

Ghana will (soon) be 50 years old. Apart from the official festivities in many places celebrations take place already before. So we who have to leave "too early" can also celebrate. (50 years - enjoy another article.)

Sunday, 25th February

Today again church service, this time in three village churches of Global Evangelic Church. You need (or have) more time for this than here in Germany. Texts from the Bible to share, "classic" songs from the German 19th century (do we still know them?) and also the dynamic songs with drums and dancing are there. "Help" thus offers everything you need for life. Many people are CRAN clients and do not go to church, but some really love to be involved. Then working and living better.

Tuesday, 27th

A day in the office. It is good to talk with individuals about their work, experiences in the development of Micro Credit. How can the exchange between school children and German sponsors be improved? It is very positive to get to know the chief bookkeeper personally and also the staff member who is in charge of all the "social projects" in the area who knows everybody and visits all of them, this time he did so with us. He also needs time in the office to take notes of applications, experiences, wishes. CRAN has grown much more than our friends' circle and is learning in an impressive way to handle the growth and stay focussed on helping the simple village people.

Friday, 2nd February

What a pity, the day of our departure came so fast. If only it were possible to get a deeper understanding of many things...So at least for a short time we visit those injured during the car accident in hospital in Koforidua and meet them personally. With Cosmos the director in Hohoe we sense it clearly: "Of course I want to go back to work as soon as possible, There are so many chances and a lot is to be done. This is my responsibility and I like it very much." The help of the team is deeply rooted. The villagers definitely need support in many areas but are also able to learn.

"And under God march on for evermore!" So ends the Ghana's national anthem. "For ever" we do not know. But need for help remains. We rejoice that we are walking the way together.

Hans & Anna Wallhaeuser



At the official 50 years' celebration we were no longer in Ghana. But even weeks before people were greatly celebrating. Do we remember our 50 years of Federal Republic of Germany? No? O yes, independence there is celebrated completely different. It was the first African country that then became independent. Here is an article about history and presence.

Freedom and self-service

Fifty years ago Ghana was the first African country to gain independence and people believed in an economic miracle. What remained of this dream?

6th March 1957: This was the day that announced the end of the colonial era. The day when Gold Coast as the first country in Africa became independent and changed its name to Ghana. And soon the torch of freedom was blazing all over Africa. The correspondents in Africa at that time let themselves become infected by the people's collective euphoria, they went into raptures about a literally unleashed continent.

"If a leader like Kwame Nkrumah the first president were not removed from his office, then Ghana would be much better off, it would flourish." Is that true? Reports about the continent normally deal with civil wars, coups, famines and floods of refugees, infant soldiers and dictators. And as to crown it all the aids-pandemic is raging like nowhere. So Africa is often written off as a hopeless case.

Nevertheless when facing the disastrous conditions of many African countries some unpleasant questions remain. How could it happen that the humanist Kwame Nkrumah one of the most brilliant heads of the continent finally died in exile embittered, far away from mother Africa, in the grey, cold Romania of tyrant Nicolae Ceausescu? The history of Ghana answers some of these questions because it reflects the development of post colonial Africa, the optimism of the first years, the tremendous expectations and the bitter disappointments, the extreme over-estimation of one's abilities and the catastrophic setbacks. But the heavy inheritance must not be forgotten that Ghana and all the other newborn nations inherited: the arbitrary cut up or joined together national territories, the central administrative structure of the colonial regime, the economic "monoculture" that established a dependency on one or two resources and agriculture goods, the poor education of the black elite.

At the end of the British colonial rule things were looking comparatively good for Ghana. It was then what we call today an emerging economy. It was the world's greatest producer of cocoa, mined loads of gold and owned precious tropical trees. The charismatic president wanted to industrialize his nation at accelerated proceeding to catch up with the wealthy nations within one generation. He had highways built and factories, universities and schools, hospitals and splendid office buildings. His most gigantic project was the Volta dam, the water power of the world's greatest artificial lake should generate the electricity for the economic miracle in Ghana and the neighbouring countries. But nothing was invested in the maintenance of the railway. You still can see timetables from colonial time in the decayed train stations.

But soon President Nkrumah had to hear the reproach of wasting government money for "white elephants", for useless objects of prestige. Gradually the treasury was emptied, in addition prices for cocoa fell on the world market.

At the Independence Square in Accra that was polished for the jubilee you still can feel the totalitarian spirit of the first years. In 1966 Nkrumah fell because of military putsch. A neocolonial conspiracy was talked about - the West was said to have brought cocoa prices down thus to nip the Marxist experiment in the bud. You did not hear much about Nkrumah.

The successors continued. They straightly went into the trap of debts and sometime the financial commitment ate up to 70 percent of export income. Ghana fell further and further behind. Then came the time of painful restructuring programmes, for a short time the country became a model pupil of World Bank and International Monetary Fund. It recovered under the regime of Jerry Rawlings, who seized power by force in 1981, but the mistakes of the beginning could no longer really be compensated. At the end the gloom oracles of Franz Fanon, the progressive thinker of anti colonial revolution, came true: The black liberators took over positions and privileges, the desks and swimming pools, the silk beds and the servants. External exploitation became self service. They had powerful allies in Washington, Moscow, Paris, London or Beijing. Nevertheless after all the mistakes and confusion it looks quite good for Ghana compared with the continent. It is an island of peace within West Africa, that suffers violence, democracy is fairly working and the economic growth has lately been quite considerable. But if you visit a small town on the coast like Princess Town and ask people to take stock of 50 years of independence you only receive distressing answers: "We have no jobs. The streets, the schools, the hospitals, everything is miserable. Nothing has changed since I was born." Or the director of a primary school who at once asks for donations: "Pencils, paper, books are missing. We have nothing. The parents cannot pay the school fees." Breakfast. Lunch. Supper. These words are written on a slate - a sheer mockery for children who at best have one meagre meal per day. There are thousands upon thousands of such schools in the country.

You ask yourself why it was not possible within half a century to establish a partly working education and health system and partly a suitable administration - it is difficult to blame an unjust global economy for these shortcomings.

The best example of rank growth is the Cocoa Marketing Board. The administration for the most important source of foreign exchange employs 105.000 persons. An independent study found out that this was double the amount that was necessary for efficient work. 15.000 of the salaried employees at a closer check turned out to be inactive members. We would have liked to ask John A. Kufuor the current president of Ghana about all the past and present absurdities in post colonial Africa. Unfortunately the interview could not take place. That is how it is in Africa

shortened article by Bartholomaeus Grill from DIE ZEIT (The Time), 02.2007