



As Christmas is rapidly approaching, I wish to thank all our generous donors who have contributed much to the Ghana School Project.

A few folks have asked me, "How did this project begin?" My involvement started in February, 2007 when I first had the courage to ask. As Lent had just started that year, I decided to take on a physical project to help the needy. My thinking was along the lines of Habitat for Humanity in order to volunteer some manual labor. I knew that the SMA Fathers (Société des Missions Africaines) often had priests at my home parish, St. Paul's. They also have a house in Dedham. One February morning, I drove there and rang the bell. Fr. Tony Fevlo answered the door and I told him I'd like to volunteer. Well, he broke into a wide smile and said he had just the project! It seems that the folks in his village, Fiagbedu, had written him a few weeks prior. Their 60 year old Roman Catholic elementary school, in a state of disrepair, needed to be rebuilt. They asked, "Could he help them?" And in walked Charlie.



Fiagbedu is one of seven villages that form the town of Dzodze (it is pronounced Georgia). Fr. Tony was born and grew up there. His father had only been through the fourth grade but wanted his children to go farther. Fr. Tony and his siblings attended high school. An SMA father helped Tony become a priest and go to London for college. Fr. Tony's

mother and brother live in a large square compound. Each side has three small houses attached. The central area is a large courtyard, where the children play, where the clothes are hung out to dry, and where the central cistern is. All the rainwater from the roofs is channeled into this well for use the rest of the year. His mother is in her 90's and I met her. She is a stabilizing factor in the extended compound.



What is the community like? It is located four hours by car from the capital of Ghana, Accra. Dzodze is in the Volta Lake region and can even be found on GoogleEarth! There is one Roman Catholic central parish, St. Peter & Paul, which has a large church, school campus and a rectory. Dzodze has about 20,000 people but very few cars. Most people walk,

ride bicycles, or use motorcycles or mopeds to get around. The people are friendly and speak their native language Ewe. Some can also speak English. Ghana used to be a British colony before obtaining independence in 1957.

What strikes an American visitor immediately is the sight of economic difficulty: houses deteriorating; lightly clothed children and other problems. The people seem to go about their business, all without money. Some raise vegetables, while others set up small shops which have very few goods for sale. The only anomaly, however, is that CDs, videos, and

cell phones are everywhere! Most people don't use the phone though, since they cost \$1 per minute. On a humorous note, due to all the missionary activity in Ghana, the Ghana natives name their children after Christian virtues, such as Martin Wisdom Apo or Gail Patience Xmu. Their stores also carry this theme, for example: "Bless the Lord" Nail Salon and "The Lord is My Shepard" Icehouse. On my trip to Ghana last January, I noted a very large number of Ghanaians going to Mass on Sunday. St. Peter & Paul church was packed to overflowing with about 1,000 people. More were standing outside, listening through the open windows and doors.

Overall the people seem happy and Fr. Tony is working with community leaders and tribal chiefs to raise consciousness about the importance of education. This is where I believe you and I can make a significant impact, both now and into the future.



Their schools have no electricity, no water, and very little teaching materials. The buildings I saw were damaged and falling apart, having holes in the sheet metal roof. Fr. Tony plans to complete a linear, seven room building. This building has been mostly completed. Now, we are raising the remaining funds to finish the beams and the roof. This is our immediate need. Construction is a community effort: those who can not afford the \$1 per year tuition work to pay for their schooling instead. They work clearing the rubble for the new construction. It is truly amazing to see how much can be done as a community.

To date we have raised **\$15,725!!!**
Please help us raise \$ 9,275 more.

To donate make a check out to: "SMA Fathers – ADF"
Write in the memo of the check: "Father Tony's Project"

Please mail to: Charles Bures
7 Pilgrim Circle
Wellesley, MA 02481

We appreciate your support so far, and hope you will continue to help us in the future as we help empower the people of Fiagbedu and Dzodze, Ghana. Through these efforts Ghanaians will continue to learn more, educate their children from earlier ages, learn in better facilities, and empower themselves to greater heights.

God bless you,

C. Bures
Director of the Ghana School Project
www.ghanaschoolproject.org