

GHANA PROVINCE REPORT

The last year when the **AFRAM formation Board** meeting took place in Nsawam, Ghana I gave a short report on our province mainly focusing on the formation in Ghana. SVD Came to Ghana in 1938 and took over two parishes and a number of outstations in the wider Accra area and they have now grown to be three dioceses. In the mean time we have also moved to another four dioceses of the North. Our Province is the biggest province in AFRAM with about 160 members from 16 countries. So far we have about 80 Ghanaian Priests and Brothers. About 55 percent are working in the country and the rest 45 percent are working in the rest of the 'world is our parish'. We have another 40 Ghanaians in the novitiate and in the temporary vows. We have been averaging 5-8 vocations a year over the past few years. We thank God for these vocations.

At present we are about **115 Priests and Brothers** in the various ministries in the country:

We have 2 SVD Ghanaian Bishops here.

10 Confreres are directly involved in the **formation**. (Bro. Formator 1. Novi. 2, Pre CFC 1., Phil. 3 and CFC 3.)

11 are in the **School Apostolate**

12 confreres are in **Various Ministries**.

5 are in SVD **Business Enterprises**.

3 are **retired** and 4 are **semi-retired**.

3 of us are in **Province Administration**

5 are **studying outside** the country

The rest are in **Various Parishes and ministries** in the seven dioceses we work.

In the last year we had our **Province Chapter**. We came together to reflect on our life as religious missionary communities here in Ghana. It is not just any religious community's life we have reflected on, but that of the Society of the Divine Word in Ghana. We reflected on our lives not only as individual religious, but especially in community – local and provincial.

We have fewer and fewer confreres coming to Ghana from the "developed" countries and more and more coming from the "developing" countries. We are also getting new confreres from our newly professed and ordained, one this year, three last year as well as Ghanaian confreres returning with many years of experience in other countries.

As said above we have five confreres studying abroad. 5 confreres have been working on earning their B.A. and MAs locally. Several others have applied for studies both inside and outside of Ghana. We are happy to have confreres who have both the interest and the ability for advanced studies since we need people who can be our future teachers and formators.

Generally our **confreres are reasonably healthy**. Some elderly confreres however feel the burden of old age and are not as strong as they used to be. All confreres are taking care of their health needs. We thank God that we do not have many confreres who are suffering from illness and that most people are in good health. We have a rather good national health insurance scheme and all our confreres have been asked to register. Most are already registered.

We see that our new members as well as the **new missionaries** get good introduction to the culture and also are taught the methodology of learning a new language. These days our younger confreres are doing very well with language learning. The Province Formation Board in conjunction with TICCS and the coordinators for the accompaniment of new missionaries are all involved in this task. We have also restarted the ESL (English as second language) programme – anybody wanting to learn English is welcome.

Our **brother formation programme** has only four brothers in formation at the present two of them are in Philosophy. One of our brothers went to the Philippines for the Assembly on the Brother Vocation. Our local chapters and Province Chapter also put emphasis on the brother vocation. We are setting up a committee to look after the implementation of the recommendations of the 2009 Brothers' Assembly in the Philippines.

There has been much talk in past chapters about **self-reliance**. Every year the amount of help we get from outside Ghana is becoming less. We need to be very serious about self-reliance. We need to start by not being wasteful, but by being as economical as possible. In using our resources well we can accomplish our task with less than we may be used to using. Local communities are developing their own projects, which have to be financially transparent, to become as self-sufficient as possible. Many of the financial ventures of the Province have not in the past yielded the desired results. Though at present we are not loosing as it used to be in the past in these ventures, we are not making much money either, because of lack of trained and dedicated confreres and others and also because the people just cannot see us as business people and find it difficult to pay for our service.

What about **local benefactors**? This idea we hope will slowly catch up. We have now in some of the parishes what we call 'friends of the SVD'. They come together in various parishes and pray for missionaries and help whatever little way possible. We want to start this in all the parishes we work in. Several confreres have been working with this group of Associates for some years and now we see the fruit of their efforts.

We are very much aware that we need personnel in various areas and ministries. We have to manage with the confreres we have but we are always short of a dozen. For long time now the Ghana Province has been providing the needed staff to the CFC. We would very much like confreres from other Afram Provinces also help us with some **formators for the CFC**.

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