Christian education and nation building: promoting ethnicity and identity among the Ewes in Atlanta, Georgia through the study of Ewe language and culture

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CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND NATION BUILDING:
PROMOTING ETHNICITY AND IDENTITY AMONG THE EWES IN ATLANTA, GEORGIA THROUGH THE STUDY OF EWE LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

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ABSTRACT

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A Ghanaian proverb in Akan language says, obi nkyere akwadaa Onyame. This literally means nobody shows a child who God is. Naturally, the child grows up into this knowledge of God. This growth is spontaneous through informal education embedded within the child's mother tongue and the culture within which he or she was born. Our culture is rich with various attributes to God. Such attributes are proverbial and also observed in the names given to people. With the lack of knowledge of the child's mother tongue, the language and culture that carry these attributes to God, the child is deprived of the knowledge of God.

The problem of modernization and easy movement of people from one place to another in quest of economic, political, educational or religious prosperity or freedom has divorced people from their mother tongues and culture. Thus plunged into foreign cultures and languages, unforeseen social problems leading to frustration and isolation are created. Such problems ostracize people making
them strangers to their homelands. Future generations have a total loss of the mother tongue since they only communicate in the foreign language of their residence.

My project which is promoting ethnicity and identity among Ewes in Atlanta, Georgia through the study of Ewe language and culture is one way of addressing the above problem facing most immigrants in foreign lands. I started a center of worship and the study of Ewe language and culture here in Atlanta. The center provides opportunities for learning of the language and culture which are largely used in worship. This type of fellowship galvanizes the Ewes in Atlanta, and provides a platform for the learning and speaking of the language and putting cultural values in practice. It is a proof-text that we can be bilingual and bi-cultural as resident aliens. It is a call to end unconscious child-cultural abuse committed by parents who do not take pains to teach their children the mother tongue and the culture of their origin. To submit a child to a culture that diminishes the child's self-worth or self-esteem is tantamount to child-cultural abuse which this project seeks to address.
DEDICATION

Oh, sweet home - mother land!
Oh, sweet tongue - mother tongue!
How can I forget the riches
with which I have been born?

To my mother, Ema Yawa Akoto,
who saved me from a fire accident when I was four

and

To my father, Christian Woekpor Akoto,
whose hard work, self-sacrifice and disciplined life
equipped me for life.

J. Y. A.
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Finally, to my dear wife, Mrs. Dorothy Bloosi Akoto, in our journey together in the Interdenominational Theological Center, and our children--Obote, Ekeme, Makporye, and Ayrablor--whose patience, prayers and support helped me to reach the mountain top.

All of the above, together with many friends unmentioned, now join me to exclaim:

AKPE NA MAWU!

(Thanks be to God!)
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

When I first came to the United States, it did not take long for me to become homesick. Life was swift on the campus where I lived as a student and one's problems were one's own. I lived in a community that lacked communality. All was individualistic and different from home. My off-campus life was mostly with my Christian friends at church where I worshipped. In church, worship was dull for me, unlike that at home—full of excitement, music and dance. Nothing moved me. Soon I realized I was losing my spirit and social vitality which I had brought with me from home. I knew I needed a fellowship with a community of my own people and a taste of my own culture.

The church I attended created a fellowship for international students. Atlanta Ministry to International Students (AMIS) looked for host families for us, providing us with American hospitality once in a while on Christmas or Thanksgiving holidays, a gesture we appreciated very much. However, all these could not satisfy my nostalgia for the beloved community of Ewes. I was not alone in this dilemma. Other international students and Africans I met or spoke with had the same feelings--we missed home, our people, culture and language.
During the era of slavery, the slaves were forbidden to speak their mother tongue. They were forbidden to be called by their native names apart from the names given to them by their masters. Thus, they lost their culture. But thanks to be to God that slavery has ended. Hence, this generation of immigrants has no reason why we should not revive our spirits through the learning of our culture and the speaking of our mother tongue in a foreign land where now there is freedom of speech and religious activity. The world today has become a multicultural and multilingual community.

The purpose of this project is to promote ethnicity and identity among my own people--the Ewes--who reside in Atlanta, Georgia. One way to do this is through the study of Ewe culture and language in obedience to the mission mandate suggested by Revelation 14:6: to proclaim the gospel to every nation, tribe, language and people. Each ethnic group like the Jews in dispersion must come to grips with the fact that their fate lies in their own hands. "The Jews in dispersion were well acquainted with what it meant to live as strangers in a strange land, aliens trying to stake out a living on someone else's turf. Jewish Christians had already learned in their day-to-day life in the synagogue, how important it was for resident aliens to gather in order to name the name, to tell their story, to sing Zion's songs in a land that didn't know Zion's God."1

Hauerwas and Willimon, in their book, *Resident Aliens*, cited the Jews in dispersion and their struggle to maintain identity with God and the culture in which they grew. The religious and socio-cultural identity which plagued the Jews is almost the same as those which plague other races in foreign countries. As an alien in the United States of America, and like the Jews, I have seen the need of my people, the Ewes of Ghana, Togo, and Benin, and other African tribes living in the Western world and culture to come to grips with our own culture and language. Failure to do this will cause us to be engulfed by the Western culture to the extent that we become strangers in our own lands when we return home in the future. Strangers, because apart from the English language which most of us speak, we do not have any other means of communication with our wives and children, even though we have a mother tongue, our birth-right, which we unconsciously sell in exchange for the English language or other foreign languages. These foreign languages unfortunately have become our *lingua franca* and foreign cultures that define who we are. The next generation of Ewes, residents in Atlanta, Georgia, will therefore have lost their roots, if nothing is done.

This project has given birth to an immigrant fellowship or community of Ewes called a "Center for Worship and the Study of Ewe Language and Culture." At the center, Ewe language and culture is taught and the same is used for worship. This fellowship brought to life the beloved community back home which we miss so much. Children are taught kinship values and respect for
adults. We adhere to the idea that life is wholesome—both the sacred and the secular are one, thus material things should be used to glorify God. Family values, especially the notion of extended family, are emphasized.

In a nutshell, though aliens, we create a home here for ourselves so as not to allow ourselves to be engulfed by the Western culture and language. It is an attempt to remember who we are and where we come from. Paul admonished the Roman Christians not to "conform to the world, but to be transformed by the renewal of their minds." As aliens, this project purposely is transformational, spiritually and socially. In our interaction with other people in Atlanta, we speak English. In school, our children and us all use English. This project will finally prove that we can be bilingual and bicultural; a dire necessity for survival both here in America and finally at home in Africa. In my own view, failure to teach our children the mother tongue and the Ewe culture is akin to child abuse culturally; an unforgivable sin against the next generation of Ewes while in a foreign land. This is vital, especially as the American culture tends to give moral primacy to the individual. We must teach our children the difference, knowing our culture tends to give moral primacy on the community. "Communal stability and consistent training in the community's values are two necessary elements for moral formation. Both begin in the primary community of nurture, which is either

\[^2\text{Romans 12:2.}\]
the biological family or a surrogate family." The Center for Worship and the Study of Ewe Language and Culture becomes the surrogate family, an extended family in the African understanding which provides guardians and other mentors, uncles, aunts, and cousins for our children.

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CHAPTER II

THE STUDY CONTEXT

The study context of ministry for my project is the Ewe community in Atlanta, Georgia. The Ewes are originally an ethnic group of people from West Africa. Presently, they occupy the Volta Region in the southeastern part of Ghana and parts of Togo and Benin. Historically, they migrated from Notsie in Benin where they were ruled by a wicked king, Agokoli. As they migrated toward the West, they settled in the coastal lands of Benin, Togo, and the Volta Region of Ghana.

The main thing that binds Ewes together in Ghana, Togo, and Benin is their language and culture. Due to colonization and partition of the African continent, the Ewes, who were linguistically and culturally one nation, find themselves within different political and national frontiers created by their European colonizers. The British, the German, and the French colonize Ghana, Togo, and Benin. Not only were the Ewes torn apart by political barriers, but also the languages of their colonizers were imposed upon them. Hence, the Ewes in Ghana speak English, the Ewes in Togo speak French and German, and those in Benin speak French as their respective lingua franca, in addition to the Ewe which is their
mother tongue. European politics has torn Ewes apart and only a revisiting of their language and culture can reunite them.

Another mark of demarcation among the Ewes is their denominational affiliations. Some Ewes are Presbyterians, some are Catholics, and others belong to churches whose missionaries evangelized the various localities in which they find themselves. Thus, Ewes in Atlanta, Georgia, like those back home in Africa, fall into various categories of Ghanaians, Togolese and Benin-Ewes, who are also affiliated with the various denominations and churches. These churches are Presbyterian, Catholic, Pentecostal, Baptist, Methodist, and many more.

Atlanta, Georgia has become the mecca of African Americans. Thus, it is a Black city mostly populated by blacks. It is generally warm throughout much of the year. It is only in extreme cold winters that Atlanta experiences snowfalls. Hartsfield International Airport in Atlanta is the busiest airport in the world; hence, it experiences constant influx of people from all parts of the world. Atlanta has many attractions—the weather, its commerce, black colleges, culture, and people. Most Africans do not hesitate to settle here.

The Ewelands in West Africa are not very rich with natural resources compared with some other regions in Africa. In fact, in Ghana the Volta Region which is inhabited by Ewes is the least in natural resources. Therefore, most commercial centers are found in other cities outside the region where also higher institutions, colleges and universities were built. The above reasons compel Ewes
to seek higher academic laurels and industrial technology in other cities outside
the region. This is largely why Ewes love to travel. Their ambition, education,
hard work, and dedication to duty are rewarded with high positions in all sectors
of life where the nation needs qualified personnel. Roughly speaking, about
twenty-five to forty percent are residents in the cities and abroad. This also
constitutes the elite and the rich class of Ewes. Because of political instability in
Togo for the past twenty years, most Togolese have immigrated to other
neighboring countries as well as abroad seeking political asylum.

In Atlanta, Georgia, Ewes, which number in excess of two thousand, find
themselves there due to political, economic, educational and other social reasons.
As said earlier, Ewes are hard working and highly educated people who easily
work their way into all sectors of life wherever they are. They are also very
religious Christian people who worship wherever there are churches.

Ewes, like all other Africans, are community oriented. Their language and
cultural activities galvanize them wherever they meet. In a foreign country, where
as aliens we were always homesick, the usage of the mother tongue alone is
healing in itself. The language brings a common understanding of our personhood
in a special way. Apart from the language, cultural drumming and dancing are
integral parts of their lives. Drumming is not only a form of music in the lives of
Ewes, but it is a way of communication. In the past, drums were used to send
messages to people afar. Once you master the drum language you can
communicate with it. Such activities socially identify the Ewes as an ethnic group and have been an integral part of the project.

A major difference between Ewes or most Africans and Westerners is a sacred part of their lives which they observe through rites of passage. Rites of passage are observed at birth, puberty, marriage, and at death. Custom demands that these rites are observed. At birth, the child is welcomed into the community. He or she is given a name and prayed for in order to have a successful life. At puberty, the girls enter womanhood and are given the necessary education for womanhood; while for the boys it is a transition into manhood. The boys are initiated into manhood and are also educated on acts of bravery and patriotism. At marriage, the young men and women are educated again on the ethos that lead to a good and successful married life. They are made aware of the fact that marriage is not between two individuals only, but two families. This makes them aware of who to turn to when the marriage experiences any turbulence in life. Death is another important transition in life which is vital to us. During the funeral and burial, certain rites are observed for the proper homegoing of the dead person. The community is very much involved and that helps the bereaved family throughout their grief.

Life for us is a unified whole and there is no dichotomy between the sacred and the secular. However, improper knowledge and education of life as a whole, from birth to death, makes life incomplete for Ewes, or for that matter any African.
This is part of the culture and the holistic nature of our humanity, a major context for the project.
CHAPTER III
THE MINISTRY ISSUE

The Ewes, like all Africans, are community oriented in nature, yet we find ourselves in a cultural milieu that is individualistic. In America we become a people who are bilingual and bicultural. We came with the African culture and acquired the Western culture; we were born with a mother tongue which is Ewe and now communicate in English while here. Though bilingual, the younger generation of Ewes who were born here or who came here with their parents as children do not speak Ewe. The children spend much of their time at school where English is spoken and pathetically, most parents do not speak Ewe with them at home. For working parents who have little time to interact with their children, other activities like homework lock them up in English. Soon after homework it is time for them to go to bed. At other times, the children take time off to play with their peers. It thus becomes very cumbersome to teach and speak the mother tongue with the children. There are some Ewe parents who think because of the high competition that their children have with American children in school, their children need to master the English language. Because of this, even at home, communication is in English rather than the mother tongue.
A friend of mine who had been a resident in the United States for over ten years decided to return home with his family. He had two children who were ten and nine years old. Upon their arrival home, the children, who could only speak English, found it difficult to adjust to their new environment. Their greatest handicap was their inability to speak the mother tongue. In America, their parents never made the effort at home to communicate with them in the mother tongue. They were culturally crippled. The amazing fact was that even though both parents communicated among themselves in the mother tongue in which they grew up, they never made a conscious effort to speak it with their children. The factors could be either they were too busy to do it due to the little amount of time they spend with their children, or the great expectation to push their children onto an equal level with the American children. This recklessness or ambition of parents led to a cultural rape of their children. Intentionally, it is cultural abuse of children, or in a more polished language, it is Westernization of children.

Westernized Africans, upon their return home, become strangers in their own lands. Though educated, they are misfits to the mores and cultural values that assert their humanity. As for my friend's children, torn between two worlds and the demands of two languages and cultures, life became distasteful at home. They began to ask questions like, "When do we return 'home' to America?" For them, America is home. This continued to the extent that both parents and
children were frustrated. They then had no choice other than to return to America. Such children, no doubt, are forever lost to their culture. They said goodbye to home with its culture and language as they returned to America.

My wife and I came in contact with a woman when we attended a function in Atlanta. It happened that as I was telling my wife something in our language, the woman who was standing by our side heard me and immediately she exclaimed "Mone!" This means "my mother." In my language when people are shocked with excitement, they call upon their mother or father to save them. To our surprise, she comes from Amedzofe, the same town we come from. Hearing people speaking her mother tongue was reviving to her soul. She testified that for five years in Atlanta, she never came across anybody speaking the mother tongue.

The above is a dilemma which most Africans have to face daily. In the case of my friend they subjected the children to cultural abuse which has dislocated them from their roots and made them to sell their birthright, taking a flight from home in search of a "home" in America. However, for the woman, she has imprisoned herself for five years in a culture until the day we met when she experienced a cultural rebirth as a result of merely hearing her mother tongue being spoken. How do we get out of this dilemma is the challenge we face which becomes my ministry issue in this project.

This project is seeking answers and solutions posed by the following questions:
1. How can resident aliens maintain their ethnic identity in a dominant culture?

2. Can they be bilingual and bicultural, yet ethnically bound enough to survive the dominant culture?

3. What ministry is needed for a minority and culturally oppressed people in our society? Enumerate the challenges facing the church.

The loss of ethnic identity among Africans in general, and Ewes in particular, in a dominant Western culture calls into question the ministry issue. Obviously there is the need today more than any time in history to promote our ethnicity and identity as resident aliens who are experiencing the adverse effects that a dominant culture thrusts upon us. Such effects like lack of self-esteem, lack of mother tongue literacy, and cultural awareness are all enshrined in the lack of appreciation of one's ethnicity and a fear of returning to roots.

**Personal History That Informs Writer's Concerns Regarding the Ministry Issue**

I came to the United States of America without my wife and children. I came for further education. For three and one-half years I had not returned home once to visit my family. Many times I was homesick. I longed to see my family. I missed the community life in which I grew up. I longed for the beloved community and nothing came close to it here in America. All was individualistic. Communication here is in English. My friends often criticized me as having an accent when I speak English. Language has been a major hinderance that made
me often shrink into my shell of continued silence, pity, and loneliness. I thought by attending conferences during vacations I would find satisfaction to fill the void, but such was momentary. I turned to the churches but something was missing—I could hardly find the type of community for which I was looking.

Other international students I met faced the same problem. However, I discovered that in the community, there are Ewes residing here in Atlanta. An Ewe ethnic community can provide the missing link of culture and linguistic affirmity that Ewes as a group need for nurture and growth that will always bridge the gap between Ewes at home and those abroad.

Even though we are obliged to get connected to American culture as aliens, we need our own safe haven, a safe haven that will provide us with a cultural sanctity that will not rid us of our humanity as Ewes.

Several times I have met African Americans who look like us with a lot of resemblances of people I know back home. I met an African American lady named Abradela here in Atlanta. Her name is purely an Ewe name, yet unknowing to her. "Abra" in Ewe is a female born on Tuesday and "Dela" means delivery or savior.

Pathetically, most Africans who were brought to this country during the slave era were brutally abused culturally by the slave masters who forced the Western culture upon them, gave them English names, and forbade them to speak their mother tongue. However, once you grow up with a culture it becomes an
indelible part of you—your humanity which is difficult to be taken away from you. That is why much of the African culture and even African names are found among African Americans today. Most friends of mine within the African American community tell me how deeply they feel hurt by the Western culture which robbed them of their Africanness. Today, they are torn between two worlds and two cultures, none of which they totally claim as their own.

As I study the effects that slavery brought upon our brothers and sisters, the African Americans, I am more challenged to research into promoting ethnicity and identity among Ewes in Atlanta, and thus send a wake up call to ethnic groups to hold dear to their language and culture the only distinctive characteristics God has given each ethnic group. It is ingratitude to God should each fail to promote their ethnicity. The result inevitably will be loss of language and culture to those taking things for granted. Loss of language and culture finally leads to loss of one's humanity.

When my wife joined me in Atlanta, we were blessed with a daughter. Faced with the challenges of culture and language, we thought of no better way to raise her holistically, in affirming her as a Ewe, than to send her home to our parents who are raising her in our culture. Within a year of her return home, she could speak her mother tongue in addition to another Ghanaian language. She is thus bilingual. Even though our dreams for her are near fulfillment, that is to acquire the mother tongue and be affirmed by our culture, we sacrificed the child-
parent bond which has psychological effects on both child and parents. If there existed an Ewe community in Atlanta, there would not have been the need to send our daughter home. These pressures forced me into mobilizing Ewes together into a community to promote our own identity through establishing a "Center for Worship and the Study of Ewe Language and Culture." Others facing similar challenges were invited to join hands in finding ways and means in lifting up our culture and teaching our language to the new generation of Ewes in Atlanta, Georgia.

When we delve into concerns of culture, language, leading in a sense to ethnicity and self identity as a people, we cannot bypass the early struggles of African peoples in the diaspora and on the mother land in asserting their nationality and religious beliefs that promote Afrocentricism in contrast to Westernization or Eurocentricism that for centuries enslaved and dehumanized Africans. It is in this vein of research that I chose the topic: Christian Education and Nation Building: Promoting Ethnicity and Identity Among the Ewes in Atlanta, Georgia Through the Study of Ewe Language and Culture.
CHAPTER IV

PREVIOUS EFFORTS TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE

Historical Perspective

Culture and Christianity in Africa and in the Diaspora

Some years ago the missionary churches denounced everything indigenous except the language into which they translated the Bible and with which they unavoidably communicated with the natives. The very drums that produced African music were considered satanic and done away with in churches; instead, the organ and the trumpets with European hymns took their place. The symbols that speak of God, for example, "Gye Nyame," (Akan language), meaning "only God," were displaced by the cross and icons of many and other saints; the European saints displaced the ancestors; the powers of the British, Spanish, French and German monarchs coupled with the guns have displaced those of our chiefs and queens in Africa; the imperial rule has dominated traditional rule and leadership. In essence, European culture has crushed African culture though not to the point of total annihilation. Thus, the rise of religious educated men and women, visionaries filled with the Spirit of God, who began to address the need for true independence for African peoples.
Our church was then run by predominantly white missionaries who gave us the impression that anything Western and white was noble and Christian. It was certainly superior to anything African. For instance, the Western style of housing was considered better than the African traditional style. We were taught that a piano was more conducive to worship than the African drums. An African child with an English name was considered Christian, while one with an African name was regarded as pagan. This is why I was named Henry at baptism rather than Gwinyai.¹

Few educated African theologians raised the question why the church was quiet in the midst of what seemed wrong as Muzorewa did in his book as quoted above. The majority were swept from their roots with Western concepts and way of life to the extent that they became alienated from their culture and language. Instead of promoting their ethnic values among the Westerners, they were content with their own progress to the detriment of their children who were raised in the Western culture.


In the Preface to his book, *African Theology: Inculturation and Liberation*, Emmanuel Martey has this to say.

The search for authentic and prophetic theology has at once been a rejection of the dominant Western theological paradigms and an acceptance of African realities and worldview in theological hermeneutics. Consequently in Black Africa, African theology and South African Black theology have come to represent two different schools of theological hermeneutics. They are therefore not synonymous. Expressed respectively in terms of "inculturation" (or "Africanization" or "indigenization") and "liberation," there has thus been a tension or polarity between these two theological traditions since the early 1970s.²

Africanization and indigenization of the Christian gospel by African theologians paved the way to a more authentic and acceptable Christian faith and the planting of indigenous African churches in Africa. African names were accepted at baptism even though most Christian conservatives still use English names. African drums and African music crept back into churches. Rites of passage found a Christian flavor. Christian chiefs go to church while in active duty, thus bringing church and state together in accordance with African concept of life as a unified whole, be it secular or sacred. Most government officials, Christians or not, were educated in mission schools. They, therefore, do not pose any threat to Christianity. It is only when the Christian church and what it stands for oppresses the people that it meets opposition. Criticisms and schisms in the mainline churches came from

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its own members on the place of culture and spirituality; differences in their views led to the establishment of independent or indigenous African churches.

In South Africa, the oppressive apartheid government and the state church were met with Black Liberation Theology. This theology is politically inclined to seeking the dignity of oppressed black South Africans. Its thrust was not cultural but liberation from all forms of dehumanization. Similarly, blacks in the diaspora were fighting oppression. In the West, liberation theology is a reaction against racism, classism, and sexism.

Black struggle for liberation began from the slavery era. Whereas the fact remains that as slaves, blacks lost their culture and language and were transformed by a new culture and language of their masters, African culture and language, in which most of them were born in Africa, did not experience a total annihilation. This is because it was impossible to kill the spirit and the memory of the slaves. Traits of culture and language were passed on from generation to generation and this has made it possible for African Americans to identify with Africa. What made matters worse is the Western media that did not do a good job in giving a good image about Africa. This made most African Americans distance themselves from their roots in recent years. However, today there is a cultural reawakening among blacks; black churches organize church group trips to Africa, politicians declare "African Day" in some states, and in a majority, the "Black History Month" is observed. In churches and schools, black struggle for freedom
and justice are taught. Freedom fighters like Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X are given national recognition.

The spirit of black nationalism began to fuel among Africans, hence the continued struggle to free Africa from foreign powers. "African nationalism is, in fact, one of the forerunners of African theology, especially in its emphasis on culture, human dignity, liberation and solidarity." Muzorewa contended that African nationalism "has been concerned about three major issues: racial equality, political independence, and the preservation of African culture." Thanks be to God for early Pan-Africanists like Wilmot Blyden, W. E. B. DuBois, Marcus Garvey, who influenced African nationalists like Kwame Nkrumah, who preached African personality and fought for freedom and justice from colonialism. Such was the earlier reawakening among Africans for self-determination and self-esteem, contrary to European expectation.

From the proceedings it is evident that when a people are uprooted from their culture, as in the case of early Africans brought to this country, they always try to get connected to their roots. Then also as the dominant cultures become oppressive and determined to rid others of what they regard as primitive cultures, the oppressed always fight for their survival. This is what we have seen so far and the more a people experience freedom the more they come to the awareness that

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3Muzorewa, The Origins and Development of African Theology, 46.

4Ibid.
it is for the future generations that we work so hard; their survival is at stake if we give up so easily. Language and culture are two important factors that energize us to keep marching on. Much has been done and is in print as far as culture is concerned but not so much in linguistics.

The greatest effort in promoting linguistics in Africa can be accredited to missionary zeal in spreading Christianity among the many ethnic groups in Africa. Their primary duty as they settled among the various ethnic groups or tribes was the study and development of the language. In the case of Ewe language, credit was given to Paul Wiegräbe, one of the earliest German missionaries:

Paul Wiegräbe was to become one of the most remarkable missionaries in Eweland. After his initial missionary training, he took a course in Ewe with Professor D. Westermann in Germany. He was then sent to UK for English studies. Then he was ordained in March, 1926 and arrived in Keta. In actual fact, he was on active missionary in the field for 13 years--1926-1939. But his contribution while in Eweland and afterwards was very significant especially in the field of school books for Ewe and Bible knowledge. He also wrote a brief history of the church entitled 'Ewe Kristo Hame Nutinya.'

The greatest setbacks in development of linguistics in Africa is the multiplicity or diversity in ethnicity on the continent. Most ethnic groups are small in population and their language is limited to their geographical location. It was only the large ethnic groups that benefited in the development in written form of these languages. None was widely spoken to emerge as a national

language. Secondly, owing to fragmentation of Africa into countries by European colonial powers, foreign languages were imposed on the Africans as their lingua franca. This is the beginning of the domination of foreign languages upon the African languages. It is only in recent times that African governments embarked upon the teaching of vernaculars in school curriculum through mass or adult education. "This approach is mother-tongue literacy approach--to enhance self-dignity and better integration into national life and development, and to conserve and share oral traditions."\(^6\)

Presently in Ghana, college students are expected to pass in one Ghanaian language in addition to English. If appropriate steps are not taken, foreign languages will wipe out our native languages. This is a major concern for this project. The foreign missionary era whereby foreigners and anthropologists showed greater interest in the development of our mother tongues is past. We are our own missionaries and anthropologists and we must show interest in promoting mother-tongue literacy among our children. There is nothing wrong in speaking other languages, but something is wrong if one cannot speak one's mother-tongue. What is wrong, then, is we unconsciously lose an aspect of our humanity that promotes self-esteem and accords unity among a people, and that ultimately fosters survival among dominant cultures.

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The Creation of West Volta Presbytery of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC), Ghana

The Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana, was founded by the Bremen Mission in Germany in the year 1847. "It was born and cradled in Eweland. For almost 50 years, virtually all the evangelization and church establishment that its early missionaries undertook was limited to speakers of Ewe and the Central Togo languages whom the Ewes surrounded."\(^7\) The Eweland stretches from the Volta Region in Ghana to Togo and certain parts of Benin. The Volta Region and Togo are separated by a national boundary. Ewes in Ghana, that is in the Volta Region, speak English in addition to Ewe, while in Togo they speak French. Hence, the two sister Presbyterian churches in the Volta Region and in Togo are bound together by Ewe language.

It is important to note that in other regions in Ghana where Ga, Akwapim, Akan, and other local languages are spoken, there is another Presbyterian church called the Ghana Presbyterian Church. This church was founded by Basel Mission from Germany.

The Ewes who left the Eweland to other parts of Ghana worshiped with the Ghana Presbyterian congregations as well as other denominations in the localities they were residents. The Volta Region experiences a great deal of exodus of Ewes into other parts of Ghana, especially commercial cities where commerce and

\(^7\)Ansre, *Evangelical Presbyterian Church*, 1.
higher educational institutions attract them. This is due to the fact that other regions of Ghana are rich in minerals and natural resources, hence they are more developed than the Volta Region. Since we all speak English, Ewes fit well into the national setup of administration. However, in church life, Ewes met with linguistic difficulties since Ewe was not the main language of worship. This difficulty led to some of the Ewes founding house churches exclusively for Ewes. Today, most of those house churches have expanded into large congregations in most cities of Ghana where Ewes found themselves. These churches harbor some of the most highly educated and wealthy Ewes, the majority of who are in very high positions of leadership within the nation. With the multiplicity of the Ewe church in other regions of Ghana, the West Volta Presbytery of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church was created.

The motivating factor for the creation of the West Volta Presbytery was the desire to worship through a common linguistic medium which is Ewe. Some of the congregations built elementary schools where Ewe is also taught their children as an additional subject on the curriculum. In Accra, Kumasi, Takoradi, Tamale where Ga, Akan Fante and Dagomba/Dagbani are spoken respectively, Ewes found large communities which not only catered for their spiritual needs, but also their social and economic well-being. Thus, Ewes still maintained their cultural identity and promoted this identity among others who were culturally different from them. In like manner, other ethnic groups or tribes that found themselves in
the Eweland, especially in Ho, the regional capital, congregated in small fellowships and started churches of the denominations to which they belonged. This was how churches like the Methodist, Pentecost, and Baptist, to mention a few, gained ground in the Eweland, in the Volta Region especially. This act of congregating on linguistic grounds was for ethnic identity and survival in a land or lands far away from one's own homeland.

The Ewe Church of Washington, D.C.

The creation of West Volta Presbytery became a success story for Ewes traveling abroad, especially to America. The majority of these immigrant Ewes belonged to the congregations in the West Volta Presbytery.

In Washington, D.C., a handful of Ewes started a house church in somebody's home on December 12, 1982. News about the new church reached other Ewes in the city and they flocked in one by one. Soon they needed a larger space of worship and a search committee began to seriously look for a permanent meeting place for the new church.

In May 1984, negotiations began with the Catholic Church and the Bishop granted permission for the use of the Chapel of St. Alban High School. There they worshiped in Ewe. Their first worship in St. Alban Chapel was on June 17, 1984 and they called the church, the Ewe Church of Washington, D.C. They numbered two hundred that day.
If churches open their doors for immigrant communities to fellowship, such kind gestures will open doors for church growth in the future. The Washington case is an example of lay persons whose enthusiasm for spiritual growth brought the Ewe Church in existence there. This type of enthusiasm is common among many immigrant communities. Given the right encouragement and support, many immigrant fellowships will spring up and grow into congregations.

Atlanta Ministry to International Students (AMIS)

There are many ministries that focus on immigrants, especially international students. An example is AMIS in Atlanta, Georgia. This ministry brings internationals, mostly students, under one umbrella to provide them with fellowship and introduce them to American hospitality. AMIS provides each student with a host family which invites him or her to their home and takes them to other community social activities. In addition, to host family get-togethers, AMIS brings internationals into fellowship with each other each Sunday to hear about the history and learn the culture of the various nations that constitute the fellowship. This is a unique opportunity for us to learn about the nations, peoples, and cultures of the world. In Christ, we are one and we need to seek the unity of the faith and of all humanity. However, what we miss is the ethnic communality where culture and language thrive and what the larger American community misses is lack of knowledge of the other cultures of the world that will enrich the American culture. There must be a way to learn from others. It should be a
process of cultural exchange with a unique reciprocity. My concern is how do we make minority cultures thrive in a dominant culture? A further step that ministries, like AMIS, need to take is to encourage host churches to invite ethnic groups to start such fellowships that will promote ethnicity and the study of their culture and language. This is to say the various congregations, the host churches, become nesting grounds for immigrants. By so doing, the immigrant fellowships are given the opportunity to grow in churches that will learn to support their communities while away from home. This, then, guarantees empowerment and self-esteem to those immigrants to whom the churches minister. What this achieves in the end is the immigrant does not suffer from any cultural dislocation, a tendency that is the root cause of the brain drain of students from other cultures who study in developed countries like the United States of America. If one is in tune with one's culture one will ultimately be of maximum use to one's nation.

Dr. K. Agree, a famous educationist from Ghana who was one of the tutors in Achimota College, reminded his students that in playing the organ one needs to play both the white and black keys to bring about harmony. Culture is not static but dynamic. Inter-cultural dynamism brings about advancement peace and unity. However, a story was told about a farmer who hatched the egg of an eagle with the eggs of a hen. When hatched, the eagle grew among the chickens until it almost lost the tendency to fly as in the case of eagles. The farmer wondered why it would not fly. So he decided to teach the little eagle how to fly. He
climbed to a height and threw the eagle in the air in order to fly, but the eagle would dangle in the air and return to the ground where the chickens were. He did this repeatedly without success, yet unknowingly the eagle was acquainting itself with the techniques of flying. The farmer one day climbed a high mountain and threw it into the air again. The young eagle dangled and dangled. It opened its wings and began to sail higher and higher until it was out of the sight of the farmer never to return. It learned that its domain was the heavens (the air) not the ground.

Like the farmer we must teach people of other cultures who they are and not make them contend themselves with the seemingly advancements of other nations. We must use our God-given gifts of culture and language to climb to greater heights of civilization. Like the eagle, there is the need for a rebirth that is impossible in a foreign domain. As alien residents in foreign countries, we need linguistic and cultural rebirth, a mother-tongue literacy. This is possible when we create ethnic communities that will foster communication in the mother-tongue and nurture us in cultural values that affirm our humanity.

Korean and Korean-American Churches in Georgia

There are a few churches that cater to Korean and Korean-American communities. These communities came as a result of American intervention in the Korean War. Some American soldiers married Korean women. While here the women still speak Korean and their husbands speak English. The children speak
only English. There are other Korean veterans who fought in the American army against communism. Upon retirement, they came to settle in America. These families speak Korean since they were born in Korea. The same can be said about Vietnamese communities in the United States. War, resulting from communist and democratic ideologies, is the cause of the presence of immigrants of many ethnic backgrounds in the United States of America. Whereas these ethnic communities enjoy American culture, inwardly they have the nostalgia for their own culture; they speak their language in addition to English, they have their own restaurants where they enjoy home foods, they have their food-marts, clubs, and churches.

The Han-Mi Presbyterian Church, which has now been renamed Han-Bit Presbyterian Church, holds services in the old chapel of the Shallowford Presbyterian Church. Worship is bilingual--Korean and English. Whereas we have other Korean congregations in Georgia, Han-Bit serves a community of Korean women, married to American or African American men, and their spouses and children. In the early years of the church, sermons were preached in Korean and earphones were used to hear the translated version of the sermons by the English-speaking members. Later, two separate worship services were conducted; one for Korean-speaking members and the other for the English-speaking members. This arrangement was inevitable if the needs of the bilingual community were to be met. Since the interest of both groups was catered to, a number of people who would use the language barrier as an excuse for not
attending church, now found a place in this bilingual church as in other churches in Georgia.

Language has its own place in community. In the Korean experience as above, it serves two purposes; one, it facilitates fellowship and two, it brings together a scattered group of Korean residents in America. No doubt, language has its peculiar place for nation building. Han-Bit does not teach Korean classes to the children who cannot speak it, but at least it is a community where children will see their parents speak the language and gives them the urge to learn it, too, one day. I hope other larger and richer Korean churches will organize language classes for those eager to learn Korean. It is a matter of funds and personnel to teach these classes.

The Goethe Institutes

The Goethe Institute was founded in Germany in 1951 to promote a wider knowledge of the German language and foster cultural cooperation abroad. It is funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany. It is a non-profit organization headquartered in Munich, with approximately 160 institutes in seventy countries. There are twelve Goethe Institutes in the United States. They are located in Ann Arbor, Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Cincinnati, Houston, Los Angeles, St. Louis, San Francisco, Seattle, Washington, D.C., and New York, which is the largest and houses the regional office in the United States.
The Goethe Institute has a language department, a library and program department. The language department promotes the teaching and learning of German in Germany and abroad. The libraries of the Institute contain volumes of books in German and English with particular emphases on German literature, language, history, art and German affairs. Also available are newspapers, magazines, CD-ROMs, CDs, cassettes, instructional materials, documentary videos and special sections for children, teachers and students of German. Visitors may view satellite television and "surf" the World Wide Web (www) on German issues. The program department organizes and supports a wide range of activities in the Arts and Humanities. Events which include film series, conferences, lectures, classical and contemporary music concerts and workshops, dance performances and workshops, theater and puppet theater productions, and art exhibitions are some of the functions carried out by the program department.

In my opinion, through these institutes and the wide range of activities they undertake, the Germans continue to create and maintain colonies throughout the world to cater to Germans all over the world and for people who have a vested interest in Germany. My project can, therefore, be a simulation of the Goethe Institute of the Germans, although here it is meant for the Ewes.

The Theological or Biblical Foundations of the Project

From the Genesis account of the creation, God saw that everything God created was very good (Genesis 1:31). This included, though not mentioned in the
text, man's language and culture. Later in the text was it mentioned that the whole earth had one language (Genesis 11:1). At Babel when men conspired to build a tower to reach the heavens in celebration of themselves rather than God, God confused them by giving them different languages. This was the origin of various ethnic groups that exist. Ethnicity was a curse of humanity at Babel. Yet in God’s mercy in Christ all the ethnic groups are reconciled to God.

In the past and even at present, people misconstrued ethnicity and that leads to division, wars and ethnic cleansing in various parts of the world. My contention is that ethnicity led to diversity and this project seeks to bring about unity in diversity. Promoting ethnicity, therefore, empowers people to understand who they are, know the gifts they have through language and culture, and find ways to share such great gifts with their neighbors and the rest of the world. The emphasis is not one group proving they are better, thus trying to dominate the other, but we must endeavor to promote any cooperation and co-existence for the betterment of this world. Promoting ethnicity and identity through language and cultural studies leads to self-worth and self-affirmation and also affords others the unique opportunity to know who we are as we live together as God’s people in the global village.

As Africans in the motherland and the diaspora, we have inherited foreign domination. With the ruthless treatment given to the blacks by white or European superiority, with the partition of Africa and colonization that impoverished the
entire continent and enriched the colonizers, Africans have been depraved. Furthermore, the evils of slavery that raped blacks in the diaspora of their language and culture has cast a slur on the theological implication of God's intention of diversity of ethnicity in the world God has created. Blacks ever since their coming into contact with foreigners who misconstrued their hospitality and exchanged it for slavery and servitude of their colonial masters, masters who should have been friends and partners in trade, have misgivings towards people of other races. Worse than that, the trust they accorded their neighbors from different tribes became suspicion and full of unthinkable animosities. Ever since the slave wars, Africa has become a war zone in which gun manufacturers turn their attention to make profit from African dictators, rulers that have the backing of the very foreign powers that colonized us.

Since Africa is a continent with multiple ethnic units, only a theology of ethnicity that affirms God's blessings upon every ethnic community and promotes peace and unity among all languages and cultures is what will rid this world of division, racism and wars that plague the world.

It is not African nations only that become the victims of degradation from the dominant cultures of the world, but the Jews also felt uncomfortable to "sing the Lord's songs in a foreign land" (Psalm 137:3). Jews in Babylonian captivity lamented and saw no need of singing the Lord's songs while in captivity. Their suffering did not end there but there was more under the holocaust of Nazi
Germany in which an estimated six million Jews were killed. It was ethnic and
religious differences among the Jews and the Germans that resulted in the
holocaust of the Nazi Germany. It each accepts the other as equal in humanity
before the God of creation, the holocaust would have been avoided.

Christ was a Jew. Yet in Christ both Jews and Gentiles are one. Paul
declares that in Christ there we are all one. In Christ, therefore, all peoples of all
races, all peoples of all languages, all peoples of all cultures culminate into one.
While on earth, we are aliens and our commonwealth is in heaven (Philippians
3:20). A theology of ethnicity calls all humanity into oneness and affirms God as
our Creator. A theology of ethnicity exhibits tolerance among people of
differences in race, color, language, religion or creed. Therefore, whenever we find
ourselves as nationals or immigrants, we are all aliens living in the world, but not
of the world--citizens of heaven. In Genesis, the human race with one language
was scattered over the surface of the earth with many languages. But in Acts 2: 5-
12, we are told that all the peoples gathered in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost
heard the great works of God in their own languages as the disciples spoke in
tongues. In Christ all languages became a language of love. In Christ all tongues
are affirmed.

Worshiping God in one's own language is more understandable, more
meaningful, and more soul inspiring than worshiping in a foreign language. In 1
Corinthians 14, the apostle Paul forbids the speaking in tongues when there is no
interpreter. Hebrew or Greek could remain the *lingua franca* if they were the sole carriers of the Christian message. The early Christian fathers knew the importance of language in the communication of God's wonderful acts, hence their seriousness in the translation of scriptures into various languages. The translators of the Bible endeavored to foster an even better understanding of the scriptures by producing a variety of versions of the Bible even in the same language. Today, the Bible society attempts to translate the Bible in all vernaculars or local languages. This tells us that the Christian's attitude to ethnicity is to affirm all mother-tongues as God-given vehicles to communicate the gospel.

In the book of Revelation, John refines the theological basis of this project when he states in his vision: "Then I saw another angel flying in mid-heaven with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on earth--to every nation, and tribe and language and people" (Revelation 14:6). The gospel of Jesus Christ is to every nation, tribe, language and people. To promote ethnicity through language and cultural studies is for the purpose of carrying the eternal gospel to a people within the context of their understanding of God's word.

The challenge for Christendom is how can we use language and cultures (which in the world are divisive weapons that ruin kingdoms and nations) to bring about unity? The answer we are attempting to find is by helping people to understand that language and culture bring communality, and self-worth with God as the union of all languages and cultures. Jesus chose twelve disciples and
trained them and sent them first to the Jewish nation, an ethnic group of people. This mission was later broadened to the Gentiles, all nations of the world. A further question addressed in the project is "How can the Western churches support and promote a ministry which encourages language and cultural studies among the aliens who are resident among them at the door steps of their churches?" The effort should not only be the translation of the Bible into the language of those aliens, but also in "opening the doors of the churches" to the immigrant fellowships to worship God in their own mother-tongues while in a land foreign to them.
CHAPTER V

THE TITLE OF THE PROJECT

The project is entitled "Christian Education and Nation Building: Promoting Ethnicity and Identity Among the Ewes in Atlanta, Georgia through the Study of Ewe Language and Culture."

The world has become a global village today. People travel faster and more often. Conditions of war, economic advancement, the quest for higher knowledge of education and technology, and political upheavals that suppress human dignity lead to massive exodus of people from one part of the world to the other. Such exodus is not permanent because people return home when conditions improve or when their mission is achieved. National growth or stability is derailed as people exit for long periods of time. Their way of behavior changes, they acquire new cultural habits, and more pathetically their children born abroad in foreign countries lose their culture and their mother-tongue. Upon return home, they become strangers in their own nations. Such drives the fear of returning home into people and they end up permanent residents of their new found homes. However, while away from home, any patriotic citizen thinks of nation building for his or her own home country as a priority. How to ultimately return and fit into life at home is our subject for consideration; hence, I chose "Nation Building and Promoting
Ethnicity through Language and Cultural Studies" as our focus. As a pastor, I chose the Christian education approach to the subject.

**Nation Building**

A nation is a group of people bound together by political ideologies which united them toward a common goal of the development of that part of the world they call home. Nation building, therefore, is the art of unifying a people for political, economic and social development. Whether home or abroad, nation building needs enhancement; otherwise one becomes alienated from one's own people.

The alienation of blacks, African Americans, from home through the evils of slave trade is the rape of African nations. This rape of African nations was perpetrated through the destruction of their culture and languages they took with them to the New World. If care has been taken to retain their culture and language, alienation would have been totally impossible. The Jewish nation continues to grow stronger and stronger. This is because every Jew looks back home to Israel and lends support to their country. The Germans look back home. The German government, through the Goethe Institutes, makes provision for their nationals abroad through language and cultural programs that keep them in touch with home. The Irish do not forget the celebration of St. Patrick's Day. Many European nations have something to hold onto, something to be in touch with home. Being in touch with home is what is essential for nation building. Nationals
in foreign countries are obviously the link between home and those foreign countries in which they live.

Talking of nation building is therefore the process whereby some form of education is kept alive among a people, a community, or an ethnic group, reminding them of their roots so that their achievements abroad will lead to development of their home nation. Nation building is not only home bound, but it could be foreign bound as well. Many people use the foreign experiences as a springboard for promoting development at home. Working with others or being in partnership with foreign nationals is great gain for nation building. This is what made many European nations great. The ill-effect of it was colonization and exploitation of the less advanced nations. If European nations were to be in true partnership with the rest of the world, especially African nations, the world would have been better developed than it is today and many problems facing developing nations today would have been averted. Nation building is a must for a better world. The starting point could be in promoting ethnicity and identity among people of the same nationality.

**Ethnicity**

Some of the characteristics that help us to define an ethnic group are:

- their geographical location
- stories of migration that brought them to their present location
♦ the language that they speak
♦ traditions, values, and ways of life
♦ folklore, music, and dance
♦ food

A few of the above characteristics may be similar to those of neighboring groups surrounding them. These might have been acquired through interactions with people. What distinguishes them mainly is their language and particularities within their culture that are unique to only that group of people. Ethnicity, therefore, has racial characteristics that distinguish a people from others, and usually such characteristics are hidden in their language and culture.

People think Africans are one group of people because we are black in color. Though we have many things in common culturally, yet an in-depth study reveals how different we are linguistically. The maps in Appendix A show the different peoples of Africa.

Another word in place of ethnicity is "tribal." A tribe is a distinct group of people, large or small, usually with the same origin, history, traditions, and most importantly, language. Distinct and visible are characteristic tribal marks on their faces or parts of their body like the tattoos on people's bodies. Visible also are the type of clothes they wear and the food they eat. These characteristics unite a people as a community that faces life's adversities together. In essence, ethnicity can be used in a positive way for their empowerment, self-affirmation, and
survival. It is in this positive sense that one has to look at this project. As a theme for this project, I will say, "ethnicity for construction and not destruction of humanity, and ethnicity not as a weapon for independence, but as a weapon for interdependence that culminates into nationhood."

Self-development and interdependence are two key words that guide and shape this project. Self-development through pursuing such characteristics that lend us strength and self-esteem to know who we are as Ewes.

As said earlier, the Eweland is poor in natural resources. Our people are our greatest asset. We need to come together, understand each other and work together. In the Volta Region, Ewes are divided into northern, central, and southern groups. Though we all speak Ewe, yet each group has identifiable language accents. Ewes in the south are called "Anlos" and those in the central and northern continent are called "Ewedomes." Self-development will bring unity across tribal lines to enable us, especially in Atlanta, see each other as one people.

In Atlanta we have other Ghanaian and African ethnic groups. This project is intended to advance towards interdependence with other groups so that together we can promote Africa in Atlanta, a city that stands as the "mecca" of African Americans. That which divides us as blacks is language and ethnic groupings, but our humanity as blacks unites us as one people. Through interdependence we can achieve a formidable unity across ethnic lines which are not dispensable.
Language

Language is the medium through which a people communicate with each other. It is more than the written alphabets, thus written or unwritten, it is of great value. The Ewe language is rich in proverbs. With them much can be said in a few words. It carries attributes to God and these attributes are linked with names given to children at birth. A child's name has more to do with who he or she is and circumstances surrounding his or her birth. This is why naming ceremonies are a vital rite for an African child. As a result much is lost to a child without a knowledge of the mother-tongue.

As said earlier, nobody shows a child who God is. The knowledge of God is embedded in the symbols, proverbs and attributes found in our language. This wisdom is affirmed by the names given to us; names like:

"Mawunyo" God is good.
"Selase" God (the hearer) has heard.
"Elikplim" God is with me.
"Elolo" God is great.
"Nunana" God's gift or gift from God.
"Dela" Deliverer

Think of the following names and their meanings and why people are given these names:
With such names and many more, we empower the child, give him or her a level of self-esteem and indicate our appreciation to the Creator for such a gift. Indeed, gone were those days when one (an African) was given an English, French, or German name at baptism because some missionary is called by that name.

Recently my daughter, whom we have named "Makporye," meaning "I will praise God," wrote to me that she wanted an English name because all her schoolmates have English names. I wrote back to her for the meaning of the name she chose which she could not tell. After explaining to her that white children are not looking for African names because they are white and laugh at our names and make fun of them, she confessed her ignorance. She was sorry for desiring an English name, and rather expressed greater satisfaction with her present name.

Our language is a gift from God and we must endeavor to pass it on to our children instead of transplanting them into somebody's language. However, being bilingual or trilingual is even a greater asset to a child. It is opening windows into the world for him or her.
In the West it is a political issue to open educational opportunities in a second language for minority children with English as a second language. It is a means of Westernization. With the growing numbers of Hispanic and African children, some states have no choice than to opt for bilingual education in schools. A project like this one will benefit a minority whose languages cannot make it into the school system.

Africa, with the multiplicity of ethnic groups with diverse languages, is never threatened linguistically as the West or some of the European nations with a single national language. For us, the more languages we can speak the better; hence, African nations' openness to multilingual education in their school.

Culture

Culture is a system of ideas and values in which we are born. It shapes our behavior, our thought patterns and feelings about life. Such customs and traditions define who we are.

Culture is the reality with which we must deal. And culture—inafore as it presents a way of life and therefore functions as a religion—is communicated through a process of socialization which (1) establishes a perspective system in relation to a worldview, (2) forms a conscience according to a value system, and (3) creates a self-identification out of personal relations within a social group. Religion in the Western world is a sub-culture that communicates itself in the same way, religion and culture being mixed in variety of ways according to the specific religious tradition.¹

Ellis agrees that culture is a way of life of a people which culminates into their religious beliefs through which one acquires faith in those traditions. One therefore owes one's self-identity to that particular group in which one is brought up. Thus, as immigrants, we are the products of our culture which becomes a sub-culture with various ethnic or African overtones. This sub-culture is the resultant culture as the alien culture clashes with the dominant culture in which we now find ourselves. This is a search for a cultural identity, an African personality which becomes our struggle as aliens. A discovery of this identity leads to true freedom. Culture is therefore life in its totality. It is holistic.

In this project, we shall aim at helping our people see life in its totality and help them not to become engulfed in the materialism of the West. We have to teach them the difference between individualism and commuralism. The former stresses the importance of the individual, while the latter stresses upon the community values of the society. The Western culture is individualistic while the Ewes as Africans are community oriented in nature. The Center has been giving orientation to Ewes who are new arrivals to know what to expect in the culture here in the West.
CHAPTER VI
THE MINISTRY MODEL

My ministry model for Ewes in Atlanta, Georgia is a celebration for our gratitude to God for the special gift of language and culture; the foundation on which nationhood is built. To exchange this special God-given gift, our mother-tongue and culture, for one belonging to another ethnic group is like selling one's birthright and being ungrateful to God for our personhood in light of God's creation. It is therefore imperative for this model to hinge on Ewe language as a means of communication among Ewes and also as a medium through which worship of God is conducted. It espouses self-esteem in expressing gratitude in fellowship with God and fellow Ewes, thus strengthening the ethnic bonds of love and peace among Ewes.

This chapter discusses the four phases of my model which are aimed at spiritual upliftment, linguistic (mother-tongue) literacy, cultural upliftment, and promotion of national ties in multi-ethnic communities. The model has short and long range developmental processes. The short range process was the establishment of a "Center for Worship and the Study of Ewe Language and Culture." Our main focus has been the Ewe community in Atlanta, Georgia. The
long range process will be expansion of the Center in a non-denominational worship center and the study of languages and culture. This long range process is envisaged because of numerous ethnic groups of African residents in Atlanta. Through this we would affirm each individual ethnic group and encourage solidarity and unity among the various ethnic groups at the center.

**Spiritual Upliftment**

One thing we have in common is our belief in God. Most Ewe residents in Atlanta are Christians. A worship center is therefore a starting place to rally them together. In Africa one misses something should one miss Sunday church services. In the West where the economic lifestyle provides work for people seven days a week and twenty-four hours a day, most people's jobs make it impossible for them to go to church on Sundays. Secondly, because of language problems people who do not speak English do not find church life inviting. For such people the center will be a unique place to hear the Word of God in their own language, a pentecost experience which is spirit uplifting.

We have the Ewe Bible and an Ewe hymn books. The reading of scripture and the preaching of the word as well as praying in Ewe makes one's spirit feel at home. The climax of this worship experience is the music—the sound of the drums with African beat and the hymns and other gospel music in Ewe, our mother-tongue is spirit inspiring. It is most uplifting, especially in a foreign culture where
one scarcely hears one's language spoken. The language and culture together entice one's spirit into fellowship. This is one great plus for a project like this.

**Linguistic (Mother-Tongue) Literacy**

A large number of our children do not speak Ewe since they were born in the United States, and most of the people around them, especially their peers and teachers, speak English. The center provides mother-tongue literacy lessons for them.

The literacy program engaged both children and their parents in a class setting and encouraged the same in their homes with homework given after the lesson. The lessons are thirty minutes in duration. The longer the lesson, the more boring it is to beginners. As part of the homework, parents and children set up their own time, thirty minutes a day for practice.

The curriculum of study includes the following:

- Mastery of the Ewe alphabet
- Formation and pronunciation of words
- Mastery of numbers, days of the week, and months of the year
- Greetings and simple conversations

Our textbook is "Gomedzegbale," a beginner's manual written by Paul Wigräbe as seen in Appendix B. It is to honor him for his enormous contribution to missions and Ewe language in particular.
During worship services at the center, the children read the scripture lessons in English while their parents read the Ewe version. Children who can read Ewe fluently, because of a firm background from home, are asked to read the passages in Ewe.

Cultural Upliftment

Cultural drumming and dancing is encouraged by this model. Ewes love music, and drumming and dancing form part of their social life. Once or twice a month there will be a two-hour cultural drumming and dancing program. We will learn how to drum and dance. The songs are in Ewe. Hence, apart from socialization, we will engage in indirectly learning of the language through music. As we learn songs in Ewe and internalize the meaning each time we sing, we relive the ethos of our culture. For example:

“Miwo novi le agbeme
Menye ku fe novi wo woa o!”

This song calls upon us to show love to each other, for it is in life that we love not in death. The song ends thus:

“Amama wodzim
Amama ko magayi!”

It finally cautions us that we were born naked and shall leave this world naked; hence no matter how rich we are we shall die without taking them away.
Another aspect of cultural enrichment is observance of rites of passage. Two very important rites of passage we can meaningfully undertake are during the birth of a child and during the death of a member. When a child is born, he or she is "out-doored" into the community. "Out-dooring" is welcoming the newly born child into the larger extended family and calling upon the community to be responsible in assisting the parents to train the child to fit into the community. The community thus claims the child as their child. The other important rite of passage is when death strikes the community. It is a blow to lose a member of the community. Funerals and burials are community tasks. Just as how we share the joy of a newly born child, so we share the grief of the death of one of us. All we emphasize is that the community is there for all of us. Other rites of passage which are meaningful are marriage or when one is successful in life—getting a promotion, graduating from school, buying a house or even a car—is worth celebrating. For none of us can be successful in life without the support of the community. As we gather at these celebrations and observance of rites of passage, we sing, drum and dance. These activities galvanize the community. This negates the individualistic culture of the West. Whereas the West emphasizes the importance and individual rights, we Ewes emphasize the place of the community in regards to the individual. Thus one's life is disoriented without the community. This project is a rebirthing of the community that is so vibrant at home and non-existent in foreign countries where Ewes find themselves. Cultural enrichment is one way of

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doing that in a capitalistic society that tears the individual from families through the over-emphasis laid on work ethics and personal success. There is a place for leisure, fun and community, and this is what this model is about. This model provides healing for the stressful society in which we find ourselves.

**Nation Building in a Multi-ethnic Society**

The greatest achievement in the West is the unity among the states in America. All come together as a nation, thus America grows stronger and stronger. There is disintegration among developing nations which leads to wars and loss of lives. The malady of European colonization of Africa is partitioning of Africa into tiny nations that can never stand on their own without European aid. Today, even these European nations that fought each other to emerge as a world power are coming together. We who live in the West must learn the rewards in unity across nationality or ethnicity. How then can we emphasize ethnicity and call for nation building? This is the task for this model.

There is a saying that "charity begins at home." If the family is strong, the nation can be strong. We need to foster unity in diversity. Our diversity fortunately lies only in linguistics, but the culture is the same. In stressing ethnicity we discover who we are and through self-discovery we will realize that we are not different from people from other ethnic groups.
The West with its national structure helps us to discover our unity as Africans. As aliens, we are in the minority and we know how the majority oppress the minority. As oppressed people we need to come together.

This model makes room for a united front with people from other ethnic groups. As we emphasize the Ewe language, we use English as a second language for the non-Ewes. The Sunday services are bilingual, Ewe and English. The songs sung, the scriptures read, and the sermon and prayers use both languages. When we get enough people of different ethnicities, we will find more language instructors and encourage mother-tongue literacy in each ethnic group.

Secondly, there will be other ethnic groups already doing things together socially, or worshiping together. We shall plan inter-group worships and picnics together with them on festive occasions like Thanksgiving, Christmas, or Easter. Through such activities we will learn to integrate and foster nation building as a long-range goal.
CHAPTER VII

PERIOD OF EXPERIMENTATION AND RESULTS

In Search of a Place of Worship

When I conceived of the idea to start a Center for Worship and the Study of Ewe Language and Culture, I discussed it with a friend, Ms. Sarah Humphrey, the chairperson for Presbyterian Answer to Hunger (PATH). When I mentioned to her that I had Decatur Presbyterian Church in mind, she made the contacts and convened a meeting with Mr. Ron Johnson and Mr. John Prichard, who were members of the Mission Committee of Decatur Presbyterian Church. This was about three years ago. The idea appealed to them and they promised to discuss it further with the session of the church. The session approved and gave us their chapel to use for worship each Sunday at noon after the morning worship of the church had concluded.

Our first service was on Palm Sunday in April of 1996. We were nine in number and prayed for guidance of the Holy Spirit upon our efforts to bring all Ewes in Atlanta together as a worshiping community, and to experience the Pentecost revival of hearing God’s message and worshiping in our own language.
It was a faith journey, for even though we knew what we expected we still did not know how it would turn out.

The Early Journey

Like any new beginning, the start was not easy. The community hailed the idea, but it was not easy to pay the price of sacrifice to belong. Even up until today, we have occasional visitors, especially on major functions at the Center.

The early journey was frustrating due to poor attendance, but my wife and I and a dedicated few continued fellowshiping. The major problem was we were dealing with a working class of Ewes who went to work on Sundays, unless they were off. Hence, for the first year there was not much progress to report. However, I continued to appeal to people and we kept the church doors open for worship Sunday after Sunday. I paid visits to some families until we received a few constant and serious membership of about twenty; that was two years ago, the time I will consider the start of the project. The twenty who were constant I call the control group. The other group visited when they liked.

There were a few surprise occasions when the church was full. The first occasion was when the Ewes inaugurated the Ewe Association of Georgia. On this occasion, I received a signal of hope that our dream for the Center would come true in the near future with a community response like this one.

It was not long before a disaster befell the community. We lost a member and had come together as a community to plan the funeral and burial. We played
our part and had a memorial service during the first anniversary. Sooner than that another member passed away. At this time people began to see the importance of the Center. Our attendance then increased slightly and we felt some seriousness among ourselves. We were there for the bereaved families and assisted them in every way possible--morally, spiritually, and financially.

The cost to travel home to Africa is expensive. On other occasions when a member lost a relative at home, especially a father or mother, and could not travel home, we kept vigil and mourned with the member, prayed with him or her, and gave donations to help financially.

In the same way we celebrated happy occasions with members. These occasions have been birthdays, weddings, anniversaries, and outdooring of newborn babies into the community. We had one baptism of a child and a twenty-fifth wedding anniversary of a couple in the Center. They were moments to be remembered. Just recently in January this year, there was a wedding ceremony which we performed jointly with the Sunday worship service. All these were great successes we can record during the project period.

**The Center in People’s Homes**

Outdoorings of a newly born child is done in the home of the parents of the child. It is done at dawn before the day breaks. The community gathers at dawn amidst singing and prayers for the baby that he or she will have a successful life. It is there that the child is named and the elders of the community entrust the baby
to the parents. Parents are charged to do their best in the upbringing of the child while the community pledges to give the parent the support they need in this venture. The ceremony ends with a feast for those present. We had two outdooring ceremonies in homes of our neighbors.

Another incident took the form of counseling between a father and his son. The son, who is seventeen, was brought to the United States from home by his father two years ago. Due to cultural shock as well as lack of a cordial father-son relationship, the father put the boy out of the house. The elders of the Center became involved with many counseling sessions. Evidently, the father was an alcoholic. Each moment there was trouble we would get involved until the father openly said he did not want to see the child again. We decided the Ewe community could handle the matter rather than handing the boy to the state for foster care. Back home, the upbringing of children is a concern for the entire community. Therefore, one of the elders took the responsibility for the boy to live with him. This took an entire year while we continued to talk to the father. After a year's separation, the child was ready for college and the father was willing for peacemaking between him and the son. Peace was made before the son went to college. The father pays him visits and the son comes home during vacations. This is the influence of a beloved community of elders, uncles, aunts, and cousins. Without such an influence of vigilance, love and care, our people will daily face a
tremendous amount of stress and disillusionment, which of course is the number one killer of immigrants and minorities who are not in any community.

Language and Cultural Studies at the Center

One major concern outlined in the project is language and cultural studies. For the past year, we intensified language and cultural studies. We held a thirty-minute class each Sunday in the form of Sunday school. These classes were held before the main worship. The lessons were mainly language lessons for beginners, but once a month we touched on cultural subjects that affect behavior, the family and the community. Subject matter dealing with the following were discussed:

a. African music
b. Proverbs
c. Marriage and Family Life
d. Birth and naming ceremonies (Ewe names and their meanings)
e. Evil and illness
f. Good and wellness
g. Death and ancestors

As homework, parents were asked to repeat the lessons covered with their children once a day until the children mastered the subject or language lesson taught.
Cultural Enrichment Program

This took the form of a socialization process. A different environment was used at the campus of the Interdenominational Theological Center. There we practiced drumming and dancing. Through this we got to know each other better since everybody shared his or her talents. A majority who could not attend worship at the Center showed up. There is always an average number of thirty. We experienced greater numbers at outdooring ceremonies, weddings, and at funerals. Such activities draw out the community of Ewes who otherwise might be invisible and unknown to us.
CHAPTER VIII

EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION

The entire Ewe community in Atlanta, Georgia can be placed into two categories for the purpose of evaluation: (a) occasional participants and (b) regular and active participants.

Occasional Participants or Visitors

Over seventy percent of persons interviewed have been occasional visitors to the Center. This group visited when they felt like coming or when an important function was scheduled at the Center that involved the entire community. Such events included funerals and memorial services, baptisms and weddings.

Persons in this category are workers and students. They complained that their schedule for work and other activities conflicted with the time the Center operated. For such persons, week-day programs at the Center would be more convenient to attend. This means full-time staff, together with enough volunteer staff, would keep the Center open on week days. With this, mid-week worship services, as well as other programs for language and cultural enrichment classes, were necessary. With a full-time staff, the Center could touch the lives of many people than it had already touched. This would keep the line of communication open and individuals as well as groups could have engaged the services of the
Center. This inevitably calls for funding of the Center into question. The operation of the Center on a full-time basis is easy with proper funding. Such will be considered for long-range planning for the Center.

People find the existence of such a Center quite necessary. It is first a focal point for the Ewe community, and second it is one of the ways to promote one's language and culture in a foreign country.

On random visitations to the above category of people who are uncommitted to the Center in a serious way, I noticed the following:

a. Mother-tongue literacy is not an issue to them. English is the medium of communication in the family.

b. The majority are isolated individuals that are struggling for survival in an alien culture. Most of them are Westernized residents and are not thinking about returning home in the future.

Having been engulfed by Western culture and ideologies, it is a task to conscientize them about African culture and values which are inescapable shadows that follow them wherever they go.

Regular and Active Participants

The faithful few who continued regularly with the programs instituted at the Center are twenty-five to thirty in number. They could be classified as the control group for the project. Together they formed a beloved community, a true testimony of the vision of the Center. Adults love and affirm the young while the
young give due respect to adults among whom they see not only their parents as authority figures, but others as uncles and aunts and grandparents who command equal respect like the one given to their parents.

At worship all complement each other. Children and youth perform skits making the sermon come alive even to the adults. Children and youth participate in prayer, reading of scripture lessons and the blessing of the offertory. This gave them self-esteem and confidence in worship.

Language classes were mostly meant for children, but we involved their parents as well. Through this process, parents evolved as instructors who helped their children with their assigned homework. This ensured continuity of the speaking of Ewe in the home. The few cultural lessons they had during cultural enrichment made them better children with African values that sustain the community. They exhibit respect for their elders and see life as a unified whole. There are no two lives, a secular and a scared essence. There is therefore a gradual rebirth of African moral and cultural values within the community of the faithful at the Center.

Conclusion

Within this short period of experiment of promotion of ethnicity and identity among Ewes through the study of Ewe language and culture, one will say that people devoid of cultural values are never fully human. They have identity deficient syndrome, children of two cities--never claiming a citizenship of any.
Just as each tree has roots supplying nutrients for the tree, so is cultural identity a process of self-discovery of who we are in the midst of other responsible selves.

The multiplicity of ethnicity in the world, and particularly in Africa, must not be seen with a negative eye as a deterrent measure for progress of world civilization. Rather, if ethnicity and identity are properly nourished, we would be producing responsible selves who will engage in building of nations and a world that understands diversity en route interdependence, a virtue of the globalization process.

The goal of this project is going back to roots to help find ourselves. It is a cry for community rebirth. It is being at home in a busy and lonely world. It is an ethnic harvest for the Kingdom of God.

For a faithful few, the goal of this project has been achieved as one will discover in their testimonies in Appendix D. However, for the majority, the torch has been lit for a rebirth of their lost humanity.
The History of West Africa

The land and peoples of West Africa

West Africa: Major Ethnic Groups

FULANI

- Aristocrats
- Nomad and Semi-Nomads

South Atlantic Ocean

Gulf of Guinea

Miles 0 100 200 300 400 500 600 700

1:4
APPENDIX B
Gomedzegbalē

Engbola nye
Paul Wiegräbe

Tata evelia.

Supplied by:
E. P. Church Bookshop
P. O. Box 42
Ho - V/R
Ghana

Bremen
Norddeutsche Missionsgesellschaft
(Bremen Mission)
1937
Gômedzegbalë
Ndagonya.

Womafia alfabetu blibo la kat'a hafi awo agbalé sia n'iti da o, ke boj ele be nufiala nafia ngóldzesiawo ahe alesi wodze wo nsewo yome le agbalé sia me la ene. Enumake esi woake de ngóldzesi yeyea de n'iti ko la, nufiala adze agbagba alia dëviawo nyuie le tatlo gá la dzi gbá, eye wóabu tame le mo nyui vovo, siwo dzi wóoto alia be dëviawo nde nyu asrëe bòbòe la n'iti. Le aghagbadzedze le eguti vo megbie hafi wóana woaxlé axa, si dzi ngóldzesi ma le la fe nyawo. To mo sia dzi la woate n'iti awu agbalé sia nle fe gbáto me. Nufiala nado vevie aqo susu, siwo le nonometatawo me gome na dëviawo nyuie, eye wòagadi aloo akpa gùlinya nyuia dëwo, siwo do dë wo n'iti la, bena woado dzidzó na dëviawo wu.

Mele akpe dam na amesiwo kpe de n'iyin yele nonometatawo gome ahe Aft. G. Dæuble, J. Bruce, P. Desewu k. b. ene. Nonometataa dëwo há to Nufialawo fe monufiame gbále (Teachers' Journal) me. Meda akpe na Nufiala P. Agboka há, si na kpekpegegu ge dem le Evegbé gome.

Mele mo km'om be agbalévi sia ado dzidzó na nufialawo kple sukuviwo siaa.

Ho, Dezember 1932. (Tata gbáto)
Bremen, April 1937. (Tata evélia)

P. Wiegräbe.
ze

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fu...fu, fu-fu

fo...fo, fo-fo, fi...fi, fi-fi
fu fu-fu, fa fa-fa
zo zo-za, ma ma-ma
fe fe-fe, zu zu-zu
fo zo mo, fo-fo zo cm
ma-ma fo, fo fo zu, ze, zi
fi-fi, fa-fa, mu-mu, mo, mi
zo-zo, fe-fe, fu-fu, fa, fi
lo

1...o lo, la, lu, li, le, lo
lo la lo-lo, la-la, li-li
lo la le mo me, fo-fo lu-lu
fo li-li mi, fo-fo le lo la
zu le zo la me, li-li, fo
ma-ma la-la mi, zo-zo, ze
fu-fu lo-lo, fa-fa, ze, zu, mo
fo fo zi la, fo-fo, fe-fe, fi
la-la, fa-fa, lu-lu, mu-mu
d...a, da, da-da
de, di, du, dp, do, do-do
du-du, di-di, da-di, de-du
da la di-di, ma-ma lé do
da-di de fe da-da la, fa-fa
du la lo-lo, lo la le do la me
fo-fo lé da la, fo li-li da la
ma-ma di zi la, fo fo ne la
da la le zo la me, da la lo-lo
da la mi-mi da-di la, fi-fi

t...o, to, ta, te, tu, to, ta-ti
te la lo-lo, tu la di-di, ta nu
fo-fo da tu da-di la, tu-ti la di-di
da-da to fu-fu ne, te-ti, tutu
lo la le to la me, to nu, te-te
te la le ze la me, di nu la le to
da-di fi te la, fo te la na mi
fi-fi, fi-fi-fi, tu-tu-tu, te-te, to-ta
da-di la fu ti-ti-ti, ta li ne
a-fi, a-fö
a-mi, a-me
a-ti, a-li
a-zi, a-zö
a-fu, a-tö, a-lo
a-me, e-me, a-fö, e-fö, a-ta, e-ta nu
e-da tu la, e-mi a-fi la, e-no nu
e-to fu-fu, e-lé da-di la, e-fu ti-ti-ti
e-no zi, e-na nu, e-zö mo, e-tu nu
e-lé do, e-le afi, e-lé a-fi, da lé a-fi
fi-fi, fi-fi-fi, ti-ti-ti, tu-tu-tu, ta-ta-ta
nu-na-na, nu-no-no, nu-lo-lo, de-du
nu-to-to, nu-ta-ta, nu-tu-tu, la-la mí
tu-da-da, mo-zö-zö, zi-no-no, nu-zu-zu
nu-lé-le, do-lé-le, a-lé-le! a-fi-lé-le
a-me do-do, e-lé a-fö ne, a-fö li ne
zo la lo-lo, a-mi le e-me, lu-lu

dö, dö, di dö la a-zö
tö, dö, tu, du, dö, dö nu
a-me la dö nu, e-dö te la
a-ti, a-dö, a-du, a-de, e-dö to
da-dö dö na ne, to la dö
ze la dö-dö, te dö-dö la
nu-dö-dö, nu-dö-dö, to-dö-dö
fo-fo di dö la dö to la me
e-de a-fi la le zo la me, e-lo-lo
e-tö de a-fi, dö mi le do la me
ma-ma dö te la, te-dö-dö, to-dö-dö
dö de-la la, a-dö, dö-dö, dö-dö-dö
dö-de, dö-ti, fo-fo di a-me la, e-dö de mi
ā, ū, ē, ī, ō, lā, dā, fū, dū
lē, tē, mō, lō, fō; a-tí fē la
a-mā, a-fā, a-zā, a-dā, a-lē, a-fē
e-đē lā, e-đu nu fū, e-lō mí
mō la lé lo la, e-lū ta na fo-fo
e-li fe, lē la le a-fi, lō a-me
a-to, e-to nu, a-tō, e-tō, e-mā mi
zi-no-no fū mā ma-ma, e-lē a-fi a-tō
fo-fo lé lo e-tō, e-lā a-tī la, e-mū
a-fū do fū, e-do a-dā, fo fō la
e-lō ta, ta-lō-lō, e-lō phia, phia-lō-lō

g...a, ga, gu, ge, go, gā, gō
gā gā la ge, ge-ge, go-go, gā-gā
a-gō, a-gu, a-ga, a-gōo, go la lo-lo
ma-ma la go-go mí, fo-fo to ge
gā-nu, ga-ti, ga-mō, ga-go, ga-ze
go-lo, go-me, go-nu, go-ta, go-me
ze gā la ge деж to la me, a-lē-lē!
a-me gā-to la le a-fi, e-da tu
ga la le quī-quī ge, əo to, e-əi a-zō
du gā la le mō la nu, e-di-di
ma-ma gā le do-lē-le me, e-lo-lo gā
fo-fo gā te me, gi-di-gi-di, gu-du-gu-du
y...i, yi
yi-yi
yoo, yuu
yo, yo-ye
ye, ye-ye
e-ya da-da
me-ya fo-fo
ma-ya ma-ma
e-du a-yi, a-ya
ya-me fa a-zo, e-yi ya-ya-ya
a-yi, a-ye, e-ye, e-yi, e-yi-na
ma-yi a-zo, a-me ye-ye la yo mi
ya-do, yi-qa a-loo a-fè, mo-ya-ya
ze la me-ya o, e-ya do na mi
ma-no a-me la yo-me, do-ya-ya
ze gā la du-du yo-yo-yo, e-ya-me
ya tu-tu-tu me-yi o, me-lō o
aye-ta, eya-ta, a-me la ne-yi faa

ny...i, nyi, ya, nya, yi, nyi
nya, nyi, nyo, nyā, e-nya, e-nyā
e-nya nu, e-nyi mi, a-me nye gā
mō ye-ye nyo, nya la nyo, fo-nye, da-nyē
a-nyi, e-nyi, nu-nya, nyi-no, nyi-du
nyō-nu gā la, nya-ti, gā-nye-nye
fo-fo nyo nu, da-nya nā nu
gā la nye tō-nye, gā-tō me-nye
me-nya o, me-nya nu o, me-nya anyi o
nya-nu la nyo do-me na mi
lā la nyo-nya, me-nya na mi o
fo-nye me-nya nu-nya-nya o
b be, ba, bu, a-bo, a-bi, a-ba, a-bu
ba-ba, a-ba-ti, e-fo ba
fo-fo yi bo-fo, e-fe ta be
e-be yea-wu be, be-wu-fe la di-di
be me-vo-na le be-no-fe o
e-va a-fe le fië, do va wui
ba-ba dū nu me-dua ga o
nye a-bo-lo la vi-vi-na, be-be-fe
me-fo a-bo-lo la gā-gā, mi-va loo!
bo-boe-fe, e-bo-bo no a-nyi
e-do ba-ba na mí, ba-ba na wò
me-ga-ba a-me o, a-me bu-bu
e-bu a-be, bii me-dua a-me o

k ke-se, ka, ke, kɔ, ku, a-ko, a-kɔ
e-ke nu, wo-ko nu, wo-le te kum
ke-se-vi la le ku-kum, e-ka ṣe eme ne
ko-to-ku, ke-te-ke, ka-ka-li-ka
a-ka-ñi, wo-ka-fu mi, a-ka-gā
e-wɔ ka-lē, lā ka-ke, ka-ba, ka-tā
ke-se-vi la lia atia ṣe le fië
a-ti la de asi ɗi-ɗi me ka-ka-ka
mo la ke-ke, e-ke-ke ve-me
e-ɗa, a-ka-lo, mɔ-ke-ke, ɗi-ke-ke
ke-ke-li ne-va, fe-fe-fe a-loo kɔ-ɗi-fe
su-ku la fe ke-ke-me, kɔ-kɔ-ke
e-ko nu ke-ke-ke, ka-ka-ka, ko-ko-ko
dzo, dze, dzaa, e-do dzo
dzi-dze-dze, e-bè dzaa dzo
tsi, tso, tsā, tse-nye, a-tsu
dza-ta le tsa dīm, dzi-dzo, dzu-dzo
a-tsu yi a-ve-fo-fe e-tso, nyo-tso
dzo-do-do doa dzi-dzo ne
e-dā nu, do wui e-te-fe me-kō o
dze me-le e-me o, e-le dze-gui la me
de-tsi vi-vi, lā le e-me fū, dza-lē-lē!
a-vū me-dzua a-vu o, e-do dzaa ne
a-fe-nya me-wua a-me o, e-dzu mi
tsi ma-do-ma-ŋo me-wu-na o
ke-sè be: ge-ge tso-na wua dī-dī

X xo, xa, xe-xe, xo-xo, a-xa
mo la xa-xa, e-le a-ti xa, xo-xo
p pe, pe-pe-pe, pe-pi, pa-pa
xo sia nye fia to, e-lo-lo
wo-tso fia ñe a-pa-ka më yi tsa-dī-fe
a-pa-pa le e-sī, wo-le tu dam
ñe-vi e-tō le fe-fem dzi-dzo-toe
de-ti ne-nie le xo la xa? mō la xe
xe-vi ne-nie le ya-me? xa-xe-fe
fo-fo le xo-me, e-fe a-fa-wo le xe-xe
wo-xa-xa, wo-xo ga le e-sī xo-xo
xe-xe-më lo-lo, xe-xi, pe-pi
wo-tso a-la-ti lōa xa-dza, xe-vi le eme
v vu,
a-va, a-va-vu, a-va-tia
e-fu du rrr . . .
tse, tre, tso, tro
vu-so-so, e-tsi tre
tre me-toa ge o
wo-le vu som le gbo-me
nya ka dzɔ? ana dzɔa?
kpao, wo-le fe-fem le a-blɔ-me
a-me-wo ka-ta fu du rrr . . va fo fu
wo-va vu-so-fe, wo-va ye-du-fe
wo-le e-dzi vuu . . ke-ke-ke
wo-tra mc e-tso si va yi, wo-tre mɔ
me-ga-ka a-va-tso o, me-nyo ku-raa o
e-le ve-vɛm, e-to fo-foa ʃe ve me
e-nyrɛ eʃe krante, ʃe-tsu-vi ʃe-ka

ŋu, ɔ, a-ŋe, ŋu-sɛ, ɔ-dzi, ɔ-ti
a-fi ɖu ƙpe-ze, ɔ dzi gui
ŋu ne-ke ɖe wɔ, ŋu le e-ŋu-ti
ŋdi, ɗo, ŋku, ŋko, ɗo, ɗo
e-ŋko ɖe? ŋko-wo ɖe?
vi-dzie la fa avi ɛs-ɛs-ɛ
ŋu-te-te, fo-nye mate ŋu a-zo mo o
koŋ, boŋ, fo-foŋ, ŋu-te-te, ŋke-ke
kpo ɖa, ɖe-vi ko me-ga-nye
nye ŋu-sɛ hɑ le sue, e-dze ŋe
fo-foŋ vi-vi-na ŋa-na-ŋa-na, ŋu-tɔ
ŋɔ-ku-ŋɔ, ŋu-po-po, ŋu-kpe, ŋu-gbe-tɔ
I u o e va wɔ sɔ xa ze
I U O Ɛ Va Wɔ Sɔ Xa Ze
U u Dɔ Mɔ Nu
nu ɲɔ mɔ nu

Su-ku-vi me-nye!
Wo-yam be: Mansa.
Me-ser ṃɔ-ŋlo-dze-si sue-wɔ ɔɔ.
Me-le gã-tɔ-wɔ srɔ ðe.
Nu-so-ʃe doa dzi-dzo nam.
Me-le e-dzi ɲuto.
Dɔɡ-ɡbe nye azɔ-li.

Xe-le-kpe, Va-kpo, Zia-vi, Êe-to, Ma-
tse, Dɔ-tnie, Sa-la-ga, Wu-ɖo-me, Nyi-
ve, Ima, Otto, Ma-wu. Nuka ma-wɔ?

Ama, Ko-fi, De-nu, Eve, Ke-ta, Aŋa-
klu, De-ɖe, Afua, Đku-nya, Êe-nya.
Nu-fia-la bia Ama be: De-ka kple ðe-ka kple ðe-ka, ele ne-nie? Ama ðo ɛnu be: Ele et5. Nu-fia-la ga-bia be:
Da-di ðe-ka kple xe-vi ðe-ka kple ðo ðeka, ele ne-nie? Ko-fi ðo ɛnu gblo
be: Ele et5. Nu-fia-la ko nu he-gblo
be: Kpaɔ, me-le ne-ne-ma o. Ele ðe-
ka boŋ! Esia wo mo yaa na Ko-fi
kple Ama, eye wo-bia nu-fia-la be:
Nu-ka-ɲu-tie? Nu-fia-la ðe e-ɡo-me
na wo gblo be: Eme ko ʃa! Xe-vi la
mi ɲo la, da-di la ðu xe-vi la, da-di ðe-ka koe ga-su-so.

Alo-ba-lo.
Mi-se alo-ba-lo loo! Alo-ba-lo ne-
va! Du-tsu eve yi gbe-me gbe ðe-ka.
Wo-kpo zia ðe, si fe nu me gbe le.
De-ka be: Ma-đe gbe la le nu me ne, ke zi la ma-nyae o. Eve-lia be: Ma-đe wò dzi-wui le ɳu-ώ wò, ga-ke mà-nyae o. — Wo do-me-tɔ ka wɔ do se-sɛ-tɔ wu?

Avu kple efe vo-vo-li.


ha ba ga
Ha Ba Ga

Ba-ba ɖu nu me-ɖua kpe o.
Ha be: ṃdi tsie nye tsi.
Gbɔ̄ ku-ku me-hea dzre ve o.
Bu-bu yi, bu-bu gbɔ-na.

Gbɔ̄ ku-ku me-vɔa ade-tu o.
Hɔ fo nú, me-foa kpe o.
Ho, Gẽ, Be-sã, Kwa-mi, Sɔ-kɔ-ɖe, Ma-wu-nya, Nya-nyuie, Ha-le-lu-ya.

Abla-dzo kple akɔ-ɖu.

yi-yi tu-tu
Yi-yi Tu-tu

Ye-vie-fe, Ta-vie-fe, Aŋlo, Eve, Ye-su, To-ve, Ha-ve, Xo-xoe, Ya-wo, Ku-ma, To-dzie, Yo-ke-le, Ba-me, Yo-sef.


ye Xe.

Xi kple no-via Xe-/tsa. Xe-yea me-dia fo o. Xe-yi-yi si va yi. Dku, Yo-na, Da-wid, Mo-se, Na-tan, Kpandu.

Xe kple ahom-ya.

Xe kple ahom-ya de asi nya-he-he me ḍe-ka. Ahom-ya gblo na ye be ȵu-sê le ye si wui. Xe hà gblo ne-ne-ma ke be ȵu-sê le ye si wu ahom-ya. Te-te wo-kpo ame tsi-t sia ḍe, si tsyo avo ti-tria ḍe do go va xe-xe ndo ftype ge. Ahom-ya gblo na ye be: Mele nu fia wô ḍe nàkpo! ḍe ame tsi-tsi la fe avo le enu afu gbô. Ale wô-de asi fo-f o me se-siè. Ga-ke ḍe-ke ale-si wô-fo se-siè la, ḍe-ne-ne-ma ame tsi-tsi la hà bla efè avo ḍe ȵui se-siè wu le vu-vo ta. Ale ahom-ya mete ȵu ḍe ame tsi-tsi la fe avo le enu ḍu gbô o.

Xe hà de asi ke-klê me azô, ale be ȵdo ư se-siè ḍe ame tsi-tsi la dzi. Esia wo be fi-fia te ame tsi-tsi la, eye wô-ɖe efe avo ti-tri la enu-ma-ke. Ale ye ḍu ahom-ya dzi enye esi. — Gbe ble-wuu xoc nu le fia si.
lā, fe-fe, pe-pe-pe
La-te, Fi-ạ, Pe-ki.
Lo-me, Fan-tí, Lia-ti me-di-di tso
Xo-xe gba o, Fu-me, Le-kle-bi, Pe-
kitọ wo, Fọ, Pau-lo, Li-dia, Fa-ra-o.

Li-sa, Fo-li kple Pe-ku.
Nyọ-nua ọ̀ anyi gba-ọ̀ gbe.
Enkọ nye Li-sa. Edzi vi eve. Wo-yọa
wo be: Fo-li kple Pe-ku. Do va to,
eye Li-sa yi gbe-me gbe ọ̀ ka. Esi-
me wọ-gbe la, ka-siaa Fo-li ku, Pe-
ku hà bu ọ̀ gbe-me. Ada-ba-fo-fo
via ọ̀ koe le Li-sa si. Ne etsọ di Pe-
ku la, afọ. Ga-ke Fo-li ma-ga-gbe
agbe o. Ke ati-ke a ọ̀ hâ le esi. Wo-
be ne etsọ ka ku-kua ṣi la, agbo
agbe zi ọ̀ ka. Ga-ke gbe-me-tọ la abu
ken. Ka wo ọ̀ wọa-la?
Fli-te-ti, a-flä, a-ka-tsa le flo-ya-flo-ya
E-ŋo flo-flo-flo, e-le bi-bim fla-fla-fla
Klæ e de a-ti ŋu, wo-kläm, ke-klæ,
Xle-ti, nu ya-yla, yli-do-do, a-yli
Fle nu nam, e-flo fó, a-si fu-flu
E-yi nu-fle-fe, gli la flo, fla-tsaa
Ulë, vi-vli, asi-vlo, avli-me
Xlë agba-lë, xo-xl5, xlaŋ-xlaŋ,
Hlo, hl5-bia-la, ahl5e, hli-ha, hl5-gbe
Nu-ŋo-ŋlo, nu vlo wɔ-wɔ, a-si-kɔ-klo,
Sr5 nu, tre, de-ti-te-tre, tr5-su-bɔ-la,
Mo-ta-tra, tɔ-tra-gbɔ, e-tru nu
Dze, dzre, dzra nu, dzrae ɔo, dzre-nya
Tsu, tsri nu, tsra-laa, te la tsr5 keŋ
E-gbɔ, e-gbɔ, a-gbe, a-gble, e-gbłe,
Nya-gbɔ-gbɔ, ŋdɔ gbla-gbla, gbe-gbłe
Kpɔ, kpl5, kplu, a-kplë, a-klæ, kplɔ-la,
E-kplɔ mí, a-kplɔ, kpla-kpla-kpla,
Dɔ, ŋu, ŋdɔ, ŋku, ŋgo, ŋkɔ, ŋgo-gbe,
E-nyo, me-nyo o, e-nyrɔ, e-nyrë he la

Ya-yra, a-yrɔ le sue, e-nyrã-na ðaa
Tsyo nu e-dzi, tsyo-ti, atsy5,
Tsi le tsyo-tsyom, a-vu la da tsyom,
Xe-xe-me le me-gbe, e-le ŋgo-gbe
Wo-me-trea fa-no-no na a-l5-da-da o,
Gbe-lo-ti, gbe-gble-vee.

Yesu fe alë.
1. Yesu fe alë menye,
Eyata dzi le dzoyem
Le nye kplɔla nyui la ɳutï.
Ele dzinye kpron le nyiyem.
Edze sim, eyle wɔ-lõm
Hetsɔ ɳkɔ yeye hã nam.

2. Esi mezu Yesu to
Ale dzi madzom o ma?
Ne meku hã, Yesu lakplom
Ayi dzingõli me, axɔm
De efe' ako me kpron
Be madzudzɔ le egbɔ.
Mise gli loo!


Wode asi emi me. To be yee se eņko, eyata ye toe. Afọ be: „Akuā! Miawo, miyena nu loo! Wò to èse nu, ke mètso le wò tefe o. Aleke wòanye mia tøa? Miese kpo o be ṣku kpo zi me-wua zi oa? Nyee nyäe hëdë tui. Eyata tønyee!“

Asi be! „Kpao! Esi wóa nědo la la gbọ la, èléa? Nyee blae! Eyata tønyee!“

Nya la zu dzre ṣe wọ dome. Esuso vie wọ-
da kal gō. Wobe yewoatsọ nya la ayi afẹe, ne aṣẹawo nadrọ na yewo. Wotọ enumake hedze mo yina. To de asi hadzidzi me be:

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Mide afia ṣe, mide.
To mese o ṣe, ṣku akpọa?
Afọ mfụ du o ṣe, asi aléa?
Mide afia ṣe, mide.

Esi wọdo fia feme la, to gadzi ha ma ke, eye ame bubuwo hà gbọ wọfe nya. Enumake mü, si nye tsiamue la, tsì tre eye wọgbọ be to la to dzọ. Dùtunwọ keŋ dzọ kple dziku.

Ke le zā sia zā me la, mü va to gbọ va noa gbogbọm ne be: „Towò dzọ.“ Ne mü va alea la, ekema asi nyāns Ḟa be: „Te wò didrinya Ḟa le afi!“

Asime.


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Dùtsuvi kple gbọtsu la.

Dùtsuviya ṣe no anyi gbàdẹgbẹ. Elọa nụgbọọ kple alọdọ wua aghbalẹ-xẹxlẹ. Eyata wonọ eyọn bena: kuviato. Esia medze enu nyuie o. Eyata
wọgblo gbe ọsaka bena: „Mígbọ dze dì kol! Mégbọna ẹrevie do ge nu miakpò!“ Étsọ ẹje agebalẹ, eye wọdọ go yi ablome. Atikpoa ṣe, si ẹnu ame-wo tona yina enuenu la, le afima. Dutsuvi la bobo no edzi. Eke ẹje agebalẹ la, eye wọtọ ẹje ta ọsẹ akọme. Ele agebalẹ la me kpom ṣi abẹ exlèm wọlẹ


Bu ame.


Enumake Agoli dọ to, eye wọdọ go tso ụveke la me kpoo. Gake Ata mebu ụnụke ọse na le nya la naneké o, eyata wọgato dì hele didim be, yeawo sefo sefo bubuwo akpe. Kasia da ẹnu esi do go tso angbawo dome, eye wọdọ asisome nọ. Ata va lé dọ ụntọ, eye wọle nọ be, wọase ọve gege, eye wode kuku ge kloge g9 hā.

Vi masenu la, ọgọkakii kua to nọ.

Mawu kpọa ame ta.

Gbe ọsaka la làkplọvia ọse ẹgbọna bu, eye esi wọle edim le avea ọse ọse, zá do ọse. Le viviti ọse tsyọtsya la ẹva ọse ọse ụnụ-keco ọsako. Edze
agbagba uu be yeado go tso eme, gake edo kpo. 
Etsi afima, eye mbeba la eyi alô me vi.
Le ñi me, esime wôle la, ekpo bena abu gogloa de nuc yembo. De wonye de yegade abo zi ɖeka ɖo ta ɖogbe la, ne yege dze eme, eye yefe afowo kple asiwo naje kenkep. Mawu to ñuye la me ñee tso ku me.

Abei kple agalâ.
Abeia de kpo agalâa de gbe ɖeka wôle tsa ñim, 
eye wôgblö ne bena: Wô hâ ñe ɖu aɖe abla vie tso!" Agalâ gblo be: "E, mate ɖu aɖe abla wu wô ɖu ɖi gâl" Abei gblo na agalâ la bena: "Na mîke dudime, ne mïakpo amesi ate ɖu aɖe abla wu la." Agalâ hâ lô hegblö be: "Enyo, amesi atre du, si le mía ñgo la me, ño ɖo ɖa azu dzigula. Wôa, no ngênye, eye maxlê nu etê, ne miadze egôme." Agalâ xlê ɖeka, eve, etô eye wôwô kaba lé abei fe asike nu dzaa. Abei menya o. Efû du sesie zi ɖeka. Esi wôyi daço dua me la, etô kpo me-gbe be agalâ hâ gbona mahâ? Kasia agalâ de asi le efe asike ñu dzaa tɔ yi ñgogbe hegblö na abei bena: "Mele afisia xoxoxo!"

Koklowo fo zi, eye woko abei ñuto ale bena 
dzi kui, eye wôgblö be: "Ne malé mi la, ekema 
maqû mi kokoko." Tso ekema dzi la abei lé fu koklowo ñutoñuto.

Kese kple afôkpa.

Kesea de kpo afôkpa vuvua de le gbeme, eye 
wôde hû hegblö be: "Ehê! Afôkpa futaa nye esi! 
Zi nenie nye esi mekpo amewo do afôkpa hele 
yiyim prao-prao fiatoe. Ele dzroyem xoxo. Egbe 
la, nye hâ mate edodo akpo kokoko! Ne novi-
nyewo akpom la, aleke gbegbe wôawô nuku na woel"

Ale kese tra af de afôkpa la me xaa. Kasia 
gbe de asi vavâ me gbona. Adela nye esi va do. 
Dzidzi fo kese la. Edi be yeadê efe afôkpa alia 
atî kaba, gake mete ñui o, elabena afôkpa-dodo
memâe o. Ale kese tsi anyi kplanya, eye adela va lée.

Ḏdi-gbedododa.
Aleke menyõ kple dzidzo ale!
Aleke medõ alõ le zã me kpo o ale!
Wõeno gbonye kple wõ dzikpokpo.
Oo, Fofu, si ele dziwo,
Xo akpe le esia ṣuti,
Eye nakpo dzinye le ṣkeke sia ḣa me,
Bena vùa ṣkeke nagava dzinye o.

Kwasiqagbe.
Kwasiqã me ṣkeke vivito nye Kwasiqagbe. Międzudza na le edzi tsõa miafe dowçawo kata me, eye mięyia Mawuxça me. Ne wołe ga manlela jom la, sukuviwo, dēkakpuiwo, dïtegbuiwo kple ame tsitsiwo vana, eye wobọ naa amaguiwo dzι kpo. Wodziah ha, eye wodoa gbe ãja. Ekemạ nyan-qbbla xleá Mawunya, eye wọde aegome na nyaselawo. Emegbe la wodzõa нu abe akpedada na Mawu ene, eye wogadzia ha ṣeka aloo eve. Le gbedododa kple yayraçxço megbε la amesiame yia afe he bureaucracy tame le nya, si wọse la ṣuti.

Esi miafe Afeto Yesu ḣa no ṣevime la, eyi gbedoço me kple dzidzo. Efe dzilawo yia Yerusalem fe sia fe ḣeka ṣkekeenyuiye-çufe. Esi Yesu xo fe wuiye la, wogayi Yerusalem le ṣkeke-nyuiye la fe koa nu. Eye esi wowu ṣkekeawo nu la, Yesu ñevi la tsi Yerusalem le wofe totrogo me, ke efe dzilawo menyae o. Esi wobu xa bena, anọ mọṣọha la dome la, wọzọ ṣkeke ṣeka fe mo, eye esi wodii le wofe fomeawo kple ame nyanyereawo dome, eye esi womekpo o la, wogatra yi Yerusalem le edim. Le ṣkeke etọ megbε la eva ve me bena, wokpo le mawuše la me le anyinọfe le nufialowo dome, hele to dom wo, eye wọle nya biam wo.
Amesiwo kätä se efe nyawo la, fe mo wo yaa le efe nugöme-sese kple efe nufufo wo nüti. Esi wo-kpoe la, kuvia do wo, eye dadaa gblo ne bena: „Vinye, nuka-nüti nêwâ de mia nu ale? Kpo qâ, mia kple fofòwö miedi wô kple nuxaxa.” Yesu gblo na wo bena: „Nuka wo miedim? De miênya bena, ele nam be, manâ nusiwô nye fofonye to la me o mahâ?” Ke womese nya, si wògblo na wo la gôme o.

Yesu yi kpli wo, eye wôva Nazaret, eye wô-bõbô edokui na wo, eye dada tso nya siawo katâ dzra do de efe dzì me. Ale Yesu isi de dzì le nunya kple tsitsi kple amenu-veve le Mawu kple amewo gbô la me.

Kpo qâ, qevi ko meganye.
Nye qusê hà le sue.
Mele didim be, naxçi nam.
Yesu, fia mo nyui lam!

Amen.
APPENDIX C
QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What is your tribe of origin? ________________________________

2. What is your marital status? (Married/Single/Divorced) ____________

3. If married, to which tribe does your spouse belong? ________________

4a. Do you have children? __________ 4b. How many? __________

5. Which language(s) do you and your spouse use as a means of communication?

_________________________________________________________________

6. Which language do you use to communicate with your children?

_________________________________________________________________

7. Which language(s) does/do your child(ren) speak frequently? Please list them in the order or degree of fluency beginning with the most fluent.

   a. _____________________________  b. _____________________________

    c. _____________________________  d. _____________________________

8. Are you a Christian? ______________

9. With which denomination do you affiliate? (e.g., Catholic, Presbyterian, Methodist, Pentecostal, etc.)

_________________________________________________________________

10. Which church do you mostly attend? ________________________________
11. How often do you go to church in the month? __________________

12. Which language(s) is/are used for worship at your church?
   a. ___________________________   b. ___________________________
   c. ___________________________   d. ___________________________

13. What will be your preference? To worship in your mother-tongue or in a foreign language?

14. Which language do you use when you pray?

15. Which songs or hymns move you most? Those in your mother-tongue or those in other languages?

16. Do you affiliate with any ethnic organization or association in Atlanta?

17. If yes, which one(s)? _______________________________________

18. Do you attend their meetings regularly? _________________________

19. What attract you to these meetings? Is it the community fellowship, the language spoken, social life (music, cultural dancing, food and drink) or any other? State which one(s).

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________
20. What advice will you offer to those who do not belong to any ethnic group(s) or association(s) in Atlanta?

21. What aspects of the culture of your community do you miss most here?

22. Can you suggest some ways in which we can bring these aspects of our culture to life here?

23. What is your opinion about organizing an interdenominational church of our ethnic background for our community where worship is done exclusively in our mother-tongue?

24. What is the most suitable time for you to worship on Sundays? (morning, afternoon, or evening)
   a. __________________  b. __________________  c. __________________

25. Do you think it good to organize language and cultural studies classes for our children and those who want to participate in these activities? ________
26. Please give some suggestions as to how this can be done effectively.

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

27. As a people of one nation or ethnic group, what will be your greatest desire for us to achieve within the next five (5) to ten (10) years should we continue to live here together?

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

28. What talents do you have that you can contribute to make this dream or desire a reality for our community?

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

29. When was the last time you visited home? State years or months. ________

30. What do you miss most since the time stated above?

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

31. Do you have any suggestions as to how we can alleviate homesickness while here?

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

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32. To what extent do you think the pastors or ministers we have in our midst can be helpful in fostering a lively fellowship and uplifting our spirituality while we are here?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

33. Do you have any other helpful comments, suggestions, or words of encouragement on this questionnaire that you would like to offer? Please feel free to express them.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

The anonymity of this questionnaire is guaranteed, but if you choose to provide me with this optional information, feel free to do so. Thanks.

OPTIONAL INFORMATION

Please give your full name, address, and telephone number if it is your wish for us to continue this dialogue further. You may state your profession also if you so desire.

Name  ________________________________________________________________

Address ______________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Telephone Number ______________________________________________________

Profession (optional) ____________________________________________________

ACCEPT MY SINCEREST THANKS FOR YOUR COOPERATION.
MAY GOD RICHLY BLESS YOU.
My personal opinion regarding the Center is that it helps me sustain my native identity and fellowship with other Ghanaians with similar backgrounds. I have found it very reassuring and exciting to visit the Center and be able to sing hymns in the Ewe language that are familiar. More so, I am able to use my own Ewe Presbyterian hymn book that I have owned, but otherwise never used. The Center also offers me an avenue for speaking the Ewe language and sharing company with people in the community that share the same background.

My husband and I celebrated our 25th (silver) marriage anniversary on November 28, 1998 at the Center for the following special reasons:

a. To enjoy the familiarity of community support here that the original marriage celebration had back in Ghana.

b. To help my children who have grown up here in the United States to experience a culture that they have not had.

c. Finally, to offer an opportunity for our American friends to witness a very special African cultural marriage celebration.

I am comfortable and at home whenever I have the opportunity to visit the Center for fellowship regardless of the size of the group. Language is a very important part of cultural identity. It is, therefore, appropriate that the Center has placed emphasis on teaching the Ewe language to adults and children to help them sustain a self-worth that can easily diminish in a foreign land. I believe that with adequate support, the Center's services can benefit a larger population.

Doris H. Appiah, Ph.D.
The Center for Worship in Decatur has helped me to speak Ewe better now. I always look forward to wearing my Ghanaian clothes on Sundays, and socializing with people with whom I share a common culture. I also enjoy the singing in the Ewe language, and above all, I love to hear the Bible being read in Ewe and listening to the sermon in Ewe. I am able to understand most of Jesus' teachings better.

In summary, the Center has helped me to be better grounded in the Ewe culture, as well as to meet many people. Little did I know, for instance, that I would meet a family from Cameroon, who know my dad very well, but for the Center for Worship.

For me, going to the Center for Worship feels like going to meet members of my family that I have missed all week. However, I have been disappointed by the low attendance at services, considering the number of Africans or Ewes in the area. But maybe it is just as better that we are not too many. It could be the reason why we feel so close to one another.

Esi Avoronyotse
It is said that culture is a way of life and the behavior of a group of people. This is evident in the language they speak, the common laws and mores that make them distinct from other groups of people. Beyond this identity factor, for me, it is healing.

Imagine my reaction in May 1992, after five long years' stay in Atlanta without once communicating in Avatime language—my mother-tongue, I run unknowingly into my own people. As we stood next to each other, the lady began to speak our language with her husband. I was stupified and shouted with an exclamation in our language: "My mother, my mother!" (as I clung to the lady). It was a healing balm that I longed for all the time.

Sooner, there came the birth of the Center for Worship and Study of Language and Culture. During the language teaching sessions in which both children and adults participate, followed by the church service in our mother-tongue, I experienced a sense of belongingness and security. Previously, I was homesick but now I am greatly inspired, healed, and very much at home among my own people. Then I discovered the importance of one's language and culture. Its absence left me with a void, an emptiness and lack of self-worth.

Beatrice Ayrakwa
College Park, Georgia
Thank you, O Lord, for answering our prayers once more. Finally, here we are communicating with our Almighty God in our own native language as Africans, in a foreign land—America. Not only do we get to worship in the language we know best; we get to present and teach our young ones a little about our African culture in the house of prayer. The Bible and Ewe language class, initiated by Rev. Johnny Akoto, made it possible for parents to lay back and have an authority of both the language and the scripture teach our young ones the values that make us "different."

Unfortunately, at the beginning of any successful endeavor are the barriers that make goal achievement be work and not merely an activity. The main barrier that interferes with our worship is the inability to get higher numbers of the congregation to attend at a time which works well with working parents and the church building donated to us when the owners are not using the building. Fortunately, the works of Rev. Johnny Akoto and his wife have made our goals attainable.

Aloysius Kwakumey
March 28, 1999
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