The Progressive
February, 1958

GHANA:
So Young, So Hopeful

by LEONARD S. KENWORTHY

Accra, Ghana

GHANA is a fascinating country to see, and it is a perplexing place to analyze and understand as it struggles to find and develop its own personality in its first year of independence.

Perhaps Ghana can be characterized best as a country of

- color, creativity, and vitality.
- vivid contrasts.
- breath taking changes and constructive achievements.
- continuing crises and conflicts.

There are many other sides to its complicated personality, but these are certainly the essential characteristics.

Color

Color is the most striking of these qualities. It catches the eye of the visitor as soon as he arrives in Ghana and is evident everywhere. Having visited 63 nations to date, I can say that only Guatemala, Burma, and Thailand are comparable.

The markets are riotous with color—from the small stands with their red peppers and tiny tomatoes to the piles of gaily patterned cloth which make the Hawaiian patterns seem pale by comparison. The chatter of the market women is punctuated by business-like banter as well as laughter; these women are shrewd bargainers and excellent trades people.

Then there are the flowers—red and purple bougainvillea, the yellow cassia, the various colored hibiscus, and poinsettias in profusion during part of the year. In the forests there is color in the giant, silver barked cotton trees towering over the smaller trees and plants, in the deep blue clusters of flowers on the lignum vitae, and in the yellow squash-like cocoa pods which cling directly to the trunks of the trees like tiny lanterns tied on by some prankster.

The visitor is also struck by the linguistic sticks or staffs, long carved poles with gold plating, the tiny gold weights in the shape of animals and birds, and the ever present hand carved wooden stools.

In the countryside or in the cities one can see brightly clad women carrying children on their backs and everything on their heads from wicker baskets filled with cassava roots to small, glass enclosed "bakeries" or trays of three or four dozen eggs.

The men wear anything from Western suits to the familiar English shorts and open shirts. Many still wear the bright colored kente cloth during the day or to social affairs. These cloths are hand-made and brilliant in design, with yellow the predominant color. The men who wear them leave their right shoulder bare and they are as colorful in this garb as the women.

In the evenings one can hear the talking drums in the villages and see men or women dancing on the packed earth in front of their homes. Or one can listen to the more sophisticated calypso-like music as played by Ghanaian orchestras. Another vivid experience is listening to congregational singing on Sundays in the chapels or churches as I did at Aburi, with 500 or more in attendance—all singing. The tunes are often familiar but the words are likely to be in Twi, Fanti, Ga, or one of the other dialects of Ghana.

Much of the ancient art of Ghana has been handed down unchanged and too much of it has been commercialized, but there are a few contemporary artists such as Oku Ampofu, Kofi Antubam, Bertie Opoku, and J. D. Okae expressing themselves in pastels, water colors, and sculpture and possibly leading a movement for a modern Ghanaian art. Ghana has also produced a comic strip artist, Roderick Achaempong.

Nor can one overlook the overloaded lorries as another sign of color. Painted above their windshields in English or in one of the nation's dialects will be such words or phrases as "Show Your Love," "Freedom," "Man Engine," or "The Love of God Is Better Than Riches."

Contrasts

Then there are the vivid contrasts of Ghana, such as the barefooted woman with a baby on her back whom I saw timidly approaching the escalator in the air-conditioned, modern department store, the Kingsway—or the crowd of illiterate men, women, and children in a village whom I saw listening intently to the sound of their kente cloth looms being played back to them by a visting journalist, using the latest model Swiss tape recorder. Such contrasts can be seen anywhere in Ghana today.

Near the modern, 600-bed hospital at Kumasi, capital of the Ashanti Territory, I saw scores of mud-brick houses with their owners living in filth and squalor. Not far from the ultra-modern Ambassador Hotel in Accra, the "show-window" for tourists, are the "tin tops" or shanties of the poor, like the hovels on Capitol Hill in Washington, D. C.

In the interior there are thousands of people riddled with yaws, river blindness, and many water-borne diseases, yet there too are some of the finest specimens of humanity that one can find anywhere in the world. Many of the Ghanaians have the carriage and poise of people who are

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proud of their past and present and confident of their future.

I have seen here some of the most modern school buildings in the world, such as the Prempah College in Kumasi, designed by Maxwell Fry, and the incredibly beautiful buildings at the University College of Ghana at Legon. And I have seen corrugated iron shacks and lean-tos which pass for schools.

On the way to the new ten million dollar harbor at Tema I stopped to photograph the fishermen mending their nets and applying tar to dugouts or canoes fashioned as their ancestors had made them for centuries. Equally as impressive were the men carrying huge loads of hay on their heads while a West African Airways plane circled overhead and a Volkswagon bus sped down the highway.

In the groves one can find the fetish priests. And often nearby are the missionaries of a wide assortment of groups, including Methodists and Moslems, Presbyterians and Seventh Day Adventists, and, more recently, Jehovah's Witnesses.

One sees the linguistic staffs of the men who speak to the people for the chiefs, representing a centuries-old form of local government, and one sees the flag of Ghana with its red commemorating those who worked for independence, its yellow representing the wealth of the nation in gold and cocoa, and its green reminding people of their forests and farms, with the black lode star of Africa in the center. These symbols also represent the contrast today between local and federal control, between the old chiefs and the newly elected representatives of the people.

Changes

Along with the color and contrasts one finds an almost terrifying pace of change and many constructive achievements of the period leading up to independence on March 6, 1957, and in the months since that important event. The most obvious change to the newcomer is the astounding array of modern buildings, including the Public Library, the Ambassador Hotel and the Bank of Ghana in Accra, and the Central Hospital, Bank of Ghana, and Post Office in Kumasi.

New roads and bridges are also much in evidence, including a giant span over the Volta River at Adomi. And most impressive of all is the new port at Tema, 18 miles from Accra, built to supplement the already overloaded port at Takoradi, to provide a port closer to the capital, and to form part of the ambitious Volta River Project, the biggest dream of Ghana.

In education the Ghanaians are rightfully proud of an increase in literacy from 10 or 15 per cent to 30 or 35 per cent, partially accomplished through a nation-wide adult literacy program and partly as a result of an enormous increase in elementary schools. They are proud, too, of their Vocational Training Schools and their Rural Education Centers as well as of their extensive and highly modern University at Legon and the Kumasi College of Art, Science and Technology.

The Vernacular Literature Bureau, aided by UNESCO, has started publishing newspapers fortnightly in English and six dialects and has already published several basic readers for newly literate adults and for elementary school children. An extensive library system has also been started with fine modern buildings in Accra, Kumasi, and other smaller towns and with two book-mobiles as an initial service for rural areas.

Housing has not been neglected in recent months, as some 50,000 people who live in new homes in the cities, in the mining areas, and in places stricken by floods can testify.

Progress has been made in health in the fight against yaws, leprosy, and malaria, largely through the work of the Medical Field Units. Many clinics and small hospitals have been started, but much remains to be done.

Numerous small industries have been started with and from the Industrial Development Corporation, such as a cement plant, a tire factory, and a laundry and dry cleaning establishment.

The economic base of Ghana is agricultural, and some work is being done to improve and change the crops grown and the farming practices of this nation. An inventory of the agricultural possibilities has been made and farmers are being urged and helped to diversify their crops.

The people of Ghana can point with pride to these and other achievements in recent years during the period of their evolution to independence and since they gained their political freedom.

Continuing Crises

Despite these achievements Ghana is confronted with a host of problems. She is trying to pole-vault from the Middle Ages to the Atomic and Space Age, and from a splintered conglomeration of tribes and regions to a unified and compact modern state. She needs to improve industry and agriculture, promote health and housing, encourage education and technical training, resolve the language problem, and develop a stable system of local government. This is more than the reservoir of money and trained personnel will bear, making the present a trying transitional period and a time of tension and growing pains.

First of all, the economic base needs to be widened and buttressed. There are high hopes that Ghana can develop a huge Volta River project to make use of her deposits of bauxite to produce aluminum, to provide electricity for homes and factories in the eastern region, and to irrigate the rich black clay soil of this area.

Her economy has been based for far too long on cocoa, with its widely fluctuating prices on the world market. She needs to limit the area in which cocoa is grown and improve the yield. At the same time she needs to diversify her agricultural economy by producing more rice, tobacco, bananas, cotton, corn, sugar, sorghum, kola nuts, coffee, and palm oil. She needs to add truck farming and poultry raising and to develop her forest preserves, for 20,000 of her 30,000 acres of timber land are already exhausted.

Such changes demand different land tenure and farming practices than are now in existence—and such changes are not easily made.

The political cauldron is boiling at the moment and will doubtless continue to boil for a long time to come. Ghana has many of the problems which confronted our own government in its infancy and still plague us—such as the problem of local versus federal control. Nkrumah is in

a hurry, perhaps too much of a hurry, and he has run into strong and sometimes violent opposition from the chiefs. One can regret the difficulties leading to the deportation cases of recent months and still realize that the Federalists in the United States passed the infamous Alien and Sedition Laws in the early years of our Republic as their way of countering opposition to the new government. One must also remember that these things are happening *in Africa,* and the pattern of democracy here will undoubtedly be different from that of the English or Americans.

There is some tension here within the Cabinet and within the Convention Peoples Party, headed by Nkrumah. But it is not yet clear whether the new United Party, a coalition of opposition groups, can weld together such divergent groups as many of the intelligentsia, some of the chiefs, and the cocoa farmers, or bring a better government to the nation.

Progress has been made in health and housing, but malaria still persists; river blindness is a special scourge in Ghana, and public health and sanitation are poor almost everywhere. Housing will become an even greater problem as industrialization and urbanization increase. The disruption of family and tribal life has begun, and the speed of disintegration only for the elite and for minor years ahead. The development of a new, stable society of a different kind will be extremely difficult to achieve.

A start has been made on public education, but about 70 per cent of the population is still illiterate. The English have left a legacy of education only for the elite and for minor political posts which will be hard to overcome. Administrators and technicians are badly needed and an entirely new concept of education needs to be formulated and developed.

Ghana has made tremendous progress in recent times, but its problems are staggering. They are part of the growing pains of a newly born nation. The ink is not yet dry on the first page of Ghana's history as an independent country. Perhaps it would be wise for us of older nations to be charitable in pronouncing judgments on them in Ghana's first few months of freedom.

The Trial of Pilate—Today

by LEROY COLLINS

Invited to deliver what everyone expected would be a perfunctory speech of welcome to the Presbyterian Men's Convention at Miami recently, Florida's Governor LeRoy Collins surprised his audience by delivering a speech which has won wide attention in Florida. It is adapted here with his permission.—THE EDITORS

ROBERT SHERWOOD, the distinguished playwright, has written a new play that has not yet been published, although it has been presented by Robert Montgomery on a television program. The title of the play is *The Trial of Pontius Pilate.* That title captivated me because I thought in terms of the trial of Jesus in thinking of Pontius Pilate, but Sherwood tells a great story: in that event of history Pontius Pilate himself was on trial.

The first act starts in 25 A.D. There at Rome at the emperor's palace, Pontius Pilate was a young, fine, handsome man at the court. He was a comer, he was the kind of man everyone expected to develop into a great leader of the Roman Empire. He was awaiting a new assignment. He and his wife, a wonderful woman, and his daughter and others around him were all eager and anxious to know what his assignment would be. They thought he was going to be the procurator of Egypt—then the prize outlying area of the Roman Empire. When the time came for the choice to be made, Pontius Pilate came home dejected. He told his family mournfully that he had been assigned to be the procurator, or governor, of the little, insignificant country of Judea.

That was almost like a man in this country close to the White House thinking about his possible selection as ambassador to the Court of St. James, only to be notified that he had been given an assignment to the little country of Haiti. But Pontius Pilate went through with his assignment.

The second act, of course, tells us what happened there. He wanted to make good. He had capacity and the determination to do a good job.

When they started after the Nazarene he began to get pressure. Members of his own official family and of his own personal family were saying, "We must do something about this because this man's ministry is developing in a way that is dangerous to the Caesars." The Pharisees, of course, took Jesus and they tried him. They came in and said, "Pontius Pilate, he must be crucified." And Pilate said, "Why must he be crucified?"

"He is dangerous, he is evil, he is insidious."

"But why?" Pilate said. "Why, they tell me someone asked him down on the street yesterday what he thought of the Caesars, and he took out a coin and he said, 'Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's.' What's wrong with that?"

"But it's dangerous."

And his wife Claudia came in and said, "Pontius, I heard him talk too and he said, 'I did not come to establish a kingdom on earth, I came to establish a kingdom in heaven.'"