

# PURE RELIGION

## A Bishop in Ghana

Kweku A. Anno knew from the moment he was called as bishop of the Ghana Odorkor 1st Ward that his ward members would look to him for answers to their questions: “How will I feed my children?” “How can I afford to see a doctor?” “I have no roof; how can I keep my family’s clothes and food dry?”

These questions are born out of a poverty that can scarcely be imagined by those who have not seen it firsthand. Most of the members in Bishop Anno’s ward were unemployed. They lived in crumbling, unsafe buildings without running water. They were hungry most of the time. Many had simply given up, unable to even hope that they and their children would ever know anything different.

Bishop Anno immersed himself in the scriptures and searched materials the Church provided about welfare. When able-bodied members asked for assistance, he told them, “The Church will help you, but you must do all you can to help yourself.” Bishop Anno put them to work cleaning the Church meetinghouse and picking up litter.

He spent time at the LDS Employment Resource Center, where he heard about one company that wanted to hire more than 100 people. The only catch was that they were looking for people who could type faster than 60 words per minute with less than a 5 percent error rate.

Bishop Anno presented the opportunity to one young man who lived in an uncompleted house and who made a few meager coins by selling “odds and ends” on the streets of Accra. The young man had never worked with a keyboard before and was doubtful that he could learn. But with the encouragement of the bishop, he decided he’d try.

Out of fast offerings, the bishop bought a small, used typewriter, and the young man began to

practice. To his surprise, he not only learned to type, but he was offered a position with the company. With a steady income, he was able to afford an apartment. It wasn’t long before he had been promoted to a position of supervising an entire floor of employees.

When others saw his success, it bolstered their confidence as well. Additional keyboarding classes were organized. Eventually, more than 30 ward members obtained similar employment and were able to lift themselves out of poverty.

But that wasn’t all. Bishop Anno knew that education was critical for his members, but to get into the Ghana equivalent of high school, students had to pass a qualifying exam—one that only 12 percent of Ghana’s 170,000 students pass each year. Few of the youth in his ward passed the test, and, therefore, they were not able to continue their education, albeit dooming them to a life of distress and want.

So, Bishop Anno called in a few of the most educated members of his ward and asked if they would be willing to hold a special class for the youth of the ward and tutor them in math and English. When the next exams were taken, nearly all of the youth of the Odorkor 1st Ward passed the test and went on to high school.

As the ward began to lift itself from temporal bondage, other wonderful things began to happen as well. “Tithing in our ward increased tenfold,” Bishop Anno says. “Fast offerings also increased, and we were able to care for those in distress without asking for additional funds from the stake.”

“I tried my very best to do what Heavenly Father wanted me to do,” Bishop Anno says. “When the Savior was on the earth, He looked out for people. If He were here today, I’m certain He would do the same.

