

PURE RELIGION

Living Water in Africa

Neil and Marjorie Darlington had lived in Ghana before. Neil, a chemical engineer, worked for a large company that extracted aluminum from raw ore. Marjorie, a nurse, entertained government dignitaries and business leaders.

They had been looking forward to the time they could retire, because it would give them an opportunity to serve as senior missionaries for the Church. When their mission call arrived, they were delighted—their call was to return to Ghana, this time as humanitarian service missionaries.

“It was what we were praying for,” Brother Darlington says. “I was hopeful and excited.”

Their work in Ghana, among other things, involved drilling and refurbishing water wells—an effort that brought water to an estimated 190,000 people in villages and refugee camps throughout the country.

“We were always on the front line of disaster,” Brother Darlington says. “In areas of famine, disease, and social unrest, we were there as representatives of the Church, extending a helping hand to the destitute, the hungry, the distressed.”

The Ghana National Disaster Management Organization, the primary council on disaster relief, invited the Darlingtones to serve as members of their organization.

“They liked the way we handled responses to disasters,” Brother Darlington says. “They came to us frequently because we could often respond

within a week, whereas others sometimes took months.”

Village leaders would often say to the Darlingtones, “Many people come here and promise to come back, but we never see them again. You did what you said you would do. You came back.”



When you talk to the Darlingtones, however, it’s hard to know who benefited most from their service, the people of Ghana or they themselves. “This experience was one of the most precious things to happen to us,” says Brother Darlington. “It is probably the most spiritual experience and the greatest blessing I have ever had in a Church calling.”

“We’ve set an example for our grandchildren,” Sister Darlington adds. “They’ve watched us go on a mission; we hope they will want to do the same.”

Of the many remarkable experiences they had in Ghana, one stands out in their minds. After drilling a new well, they met with the tribal council. The chief and the elders of the village were there—each dressed in their regal tribal attire. After receiving their expressions of gratitude for the new well, the Darlingtones began singing a Primary song, “I Am a Child of God.”

The chief listened, tears streaming down his face.

“He not only received water that day,” says Brother Darlington, “he also tasted of the love of the Savior.”