



THE REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO THE 40th GILLBT ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)

By:

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Chairman of the Board; Board Members; Trustees; our special African guest and Brother, Boureima Ouedraogo, the Director of ANTBA; Rev Prof Ansre, the chair of the GILLBT@50 Planning Committee; Ministers of the Gospel; our fraternal Partners; staff, members and friends of GILLBT; distinguished ladies and gentlemen; the media—and all protocol observed.

This is a report to the AGM covering the period from the last AGM to the present. Although there was no AGM in 2012, there were nonetheless a series of gatherings including the launch of the anniversary in Tamale, the April conference at the University of Ghana, and the grande finale celebrations in September 2012. At all these events a state of GILLBT report was given. Thus to some extent, part of the report from 2012 has already been given.

This notwithstanding, this report picks up from the last AGM in 2011, and will seek to follow the traditional format of building on the reports of the various departments. While it builds on the reports of the Heads of the various departments, it nonetheless deviates significantly from these reports, as well as the format of previous years. Specifically it focuses on the progress we have made in the bid to develop into a viable national organization. Consequently, it is a report on the New Foundations we seek to develop for GILLBT, and will therefore be structured around the objectives of these new Foundations. Infact, I intend to use this format as a way of establishing a template for accountability for the things we have promised to do until the end of my tenure in December 2016. The template will therefore consist of two parts, namely a section summarizing the activities of the past year; and a second part made up of a progress report on the Vision of building a viable national organization which we have set ourselves.

Given that last year was our golden anniversary, this year's report for the 40th AGM is therefore structured around two main sets of issues, namely i) Post GILLBT@50 assessment and ii) Progress report on Vision 2016

II) POST GILLBT@50 ASSESSMENT

The yearlong celebration of the golden anniversary formally ended in the grande finale celebrations in Accra Septembers 18-23 with three events: a Wycliffe Alliance Missiological consultation on "community;" a "State of Bible Translation in Africa conference ",and a grande finale celebration on September 22, culminating in thanksgiving services at various churches in Accra on September. Overall we can report of a celebration in which the favor of God was with us throughout the year. At a year when the Wycliffe system witnessed drastic reductions in funding, we still were able to hold three major international conferences, and a grand finale celebration.

The year enabled us to celebrate fifty years in which we are the inheritors of a triple heritage of language development, adult literacy and Bible translation. Three major conferences were organized to celebrate this heritage.

In concluding this assessment I, once again, want to pay a special tribute to all who have played a part---expatriates as well as Ghanaian, past and present members---in the making of GILLBT. It is a credit to their commitment that GILLBT is where it is today. We pay homage to all these people, beginning with the two Johns: the late John Agamah, who first invited SIL to Ghana and nurtured it to maturity; and Dr John Bendor-Samuel (JBS) our founding Director who came to Ghana to establish the relations with the University of Ghana. Beyond the two Johns, the list of honorees includes the numerous individuals, expatriate and Ghanaian, who have given years of their lives to the organization. Beyond the individual level are the institutions that have supported us through the years. The first is the University of Ghana which has, over the past fifty years, and through the Institute of African Studies, extended its friendship and support in various ways for our work. Still at the University of Ghana, this also includes the Linguistics Department; the Language centre, and the Institute of Adult Education--now the Institute of Continuing and Distance Education (ICDE). This Institute of African Studies, its past Directors, and its current Director, Prof Akosua Adomako Ampofo, deserves particular mention. As I indicated in my speech at the grande finale celebration on September 22, 2012, if our relationship with the University of Ghana was a marriage, we would have given the University, specifically the Institute of African Studies, a golden ring to mark the golden anniversary. Fortunately for us, this is not a marriage and so we don't have to do that! But we certainly appreciate the years of support.

But the institutional support goes beyond the University to include SIL, our founding organization which has been with us throughout. We were privileged and grateful to have had the participation of the SIL President, Dr John Watters, as well as the SIL Executive Director, Freddy Boswell with us in Accra for the celebrations. The Wycliffe Global Alliance and its family of organizations; Wycliffe UK; Wycliffe USA; Wycliffe Canada; Wycliffe Switzerland; Wycliffe Netherlands; Wycliffe Africa Area; OneBook Canada; Seed Company; JAARS; Wycliffe Associates--and most recently Wycliffe Russia; Wycliffe

Romania; Wycliffe Slovakia; all deserve commendation for their support. The presence of the leadership of the Wycliffe Global Alliance, including the CEO Kirk Franklin and Africa Area Director, Mundara Muturi, was itself a show of such support.

We have also been privileged to enjoy the support of leading Ghanaian Christians and institutions. These institutions include the Accra Chapel, now the Korle Bu community chapel, which has been our longest church partner in Ghana; the Ridge Church; Presbyterian church of Ghana; Legon Interdenominational Church (LIC); Church of Pentecost; Assemblies of God; International Central Gospel Church; (ICGC); Word Miracle Church Interntional (now Perez Chapel Int); and others who have all been instrumental in the making of GILLBT. We are grateful to all these for the years of support for our work.

There are a number of follow ups we expect from the anniversary, including publications. One of such, involving collaboration with the Akrofi Christaller Institute's journal—the Journal of African Christian Thought-- is already out and will be launched at this AGM.

In a very concrete sense, the anniversary year was the culmination, infact the end of the first phase, of restructuring GILLBT. It was akin to the building of the wall in the days of Nehemiah, and allows us to begin to look at the next phase—the future-- of our work.

It is this future that the next section of my report to the AGM focuses.

III. GILLBT'S FUTURE: VISION 2016 AS A NEW FOUNDATION

In the conclusion of my "State of GILLBT" address at the grande final celebrations on September 22, 2013, and indeed throughout the anniversary year, I argued that the future of GILLBT will revolve around addressing what we can legitimately describe as **the National Question**. This National Question in GILLBT, I argued, relates to addressing three analytically distinct but interrelated issues, namely: 1) national ownership to be achieved by mobilizing national institutions----state, private, research, the churches--- in particular the churches, around our mission; ii) national relevance to be achieved by rethinking and redefining our roles in language development, literacy and bible translation to meet changing needs in Ghana, and iii) national cohesion to be created in GILLBT by addressing the conditions under which our national staff work. Ultimately the resolution of these three issues was to help us develop GILLBT into a viable national organization whose legitimacy derives, in a major part, from the quality of our relations to Ghanaians and their institutions.

To provide a concrete platform upon which to achieve this vision of the future, I submitted a proposal to the Board detailing a strategic plan of action for this purpose. This plan, dubbed Vision 2016, was itself tied to the renewal of my mandate as the Director of GILLBT. Similarly it was aimed at building on the developments of the past three years, in particular the restored relationships at the national, local and international levels. In other words, as an organization that depends so much on different external partnerships, the restored relationships provides us with the context, and the goodwill, for moving GILLBT

into the future. The challenge, therefore, is to focus within the walls and to engage in a process of internal restructuring that prepares GILLBT for the future. This internal phase (2013-2016) would see the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan in FY 2014, and a leadership transition in 2016 when my role as the Director of GILLBT formally ends. More specifically the Plan, approved by the Board on December 14, 2013 and supported by the Management, is built round four pillars, namely: i) Consolidating Governance, ii) Strengthening the Administration iii) Institutionalizing Domestic Resource Mobilization, and, iv) Planning for the Future. Together these are aimed at providing new foundations, against the background of the changed and changing context in which our work currently takes place. The focus of the report is on the progress towards the implementation of this plan. As indicated earlier this “progress report” format will be used for my reports until the end of my tenure as Director.

A) Consolidating Governance.

The first pillar of the Vision is to consolidate the new governance architecture that was put in place to replace the Executive Committee and the Board of Trustees. This means ensuring that this new governance architecture, which concretely means the Board of Directors and the other organs to be associated with them, develops into a critical tool in the quest to embed GILLBT in the Ghanaian context. In practice this entails constituting the committees of the Board and making sure they work. With the development of the Accra office, and with additional capacity, the expectation was for this process to begin in earnest the beginning of 2013. The plan also envisaged the extension of this process to the local level where our projects are located. Specifically the nature of governing our projects at the local level must change through the restructuring of our language project committees to ensure legitimacy. This was to be achieved through the inclusion of critical institutional actors at the local level—local council of churches; traditional authorities; youth associations; etc;

Overall the Board has been a critical stabilizing force in GILLBT, actively shaping the direction of GILLBT’s future through its policy initiatives, and providing critical structural links to Ghanaian institutions, particularly the churches and the University of Ghana. But for the external Board, the polarization that existed in the organization upon my assumption to office in 2009 would still be with us. Indeed if GILLBT enjoys stability and goodwill from our major national institutional partners, it is largely due to the presence and role of the Board. There is no doubt, whatsoever, in my mind that without the Board, we would not be enjoying the current visibility and goodwill we are enjoying from Ghanaian institutions. And the same is true for the international; system. Indeed one of the reasons the international system gives for the current interest and excitement is the quality of the GILLBT Board. Beyond their policy and stabilizing roles, Board members have also played representational roles, including the recent participation in the funeral of one of our major donors, and recently at the send off reception for Tom and Mary Holman on May 19, 2016. The remaining challenge is to fully constitute the committees of the Board, and further deploy it in support of GILLBT and its mission.

Similarly the process of strengthening the legitimacy of our projects has started with the Ahanta project where a new project committee was constituted on March 1, 2013. The new

Committee, constituted in close consultation with the GILLBT leadership, has institutional representation from the major social groups and actors among the Ahantas. Chaired by the Paramount Chief of Lower-Dixcove, who also doubles as the Vice President of the Western Region House of Chiefs, it has the following members:

Nana Kwesi Agyeman IX, *Omanhene* (Paramount Chief) of Lower-Dixcove, (also Vice President of the Western Regional House of Chiefs) ---Chairperson

Rev Dr Michael Asilidjoe, President, South West Ghana Conference (SWGK), SDA Church

Mr Desmond Okine, Claims Manager, National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS), Ahanta-West

Prof John Aminna, Faculty of Science Education, University of Education, Winneba (UEW)

Hon J.C. Kwofie, Assemblyman, Busua Area

Rev Elizabeth Emil, M.D.C.C. Church, Busua

Rev Amoa-Mensah, Methodist Church, Busua

David Kwofie, Ahanta Project Manager (Ex-officio)

The Ahanta process offers a lesson, and template, that would be formalised to ensure continuity in the administration of our projects. It is one of the foundations that could prove critical to the ownership, and sustainability, of our projects at the local level.

B) Strengthening the Administration

The second pillar of Vision 2016 involves building a robust and professional Administration capable of effectively coordinating and managing the activities of GILLBT. This was to be done at two levels, namely i) Recruiting an Administrator/HR Manager, and ii) Recruiting New blood into the Administration.

i) Recruiting an Administrator/HR Manager: The need for an Administrator/HR Manager has been a critical and longstanding gap in GILLBT's quest for effective Administration since the late 1980s. I am happy to report to the AGM that, at long last, a substantive HR Manager, Mrs Judith Nutsugah, has been selected for GILLBT by an external panel. The interview panel, led by leading Ghanaian HR expert and attorney, Mr R. G. Adu-Mante, provided this justification for its choice:

A very affable, fluent and courteous lady with clarity of thought and a confident posture. She holds a Master's Degree in Business Administration (HR Option). She has a sound knowledge of HR strategy and operations and has also had a good experience in HR operations as well as administrative duties. She is analytical, sounds results-oriented and can achieve through people. She gave practical examples of what makes her a good supervisor and she will be able to take tough decisions. She has a sound reason for wanting this job and she is well equipped for it.

Mrs Nutsugah, who is currently the Human Resource Manager In Charge of Greater Accra Region at the headquarters of Ghana Posts, is expected to start work at GILLBT on October 1, 2013.

ii) Recruiting New Blood into the Administration: A major challenge facing the organization is the predominantly high age of staff, both in the Administration and in the projects. With the number of staff having reached, or about to reach, retirement age increasing, the challenge is how to bring in new and young blood into the organization. To address this, the Board in a decision on December 14, 2012 proposed that:

“Staff reaching retirement age should NOT be given more than two years post-retirement contracts. This would allow for the recruitment of new and younger staff into the organisation. In addition, retirements would also serve as a motivation for the younger ones already in the organisation as it enables them to take up leadership positions occupied by retirees.”

Non-paid positions, and consultants, would not be affected by this policy. The lack of a substantive HR Manager has delayed this process of ending post-retirement contracts over two years. A decision has, however, been taken to implement this by ending all paid post-retirement contracts over two years by the end of September 2013. In addition, conscious efforts have been made to recruit young blood into the organization. For instance Stephen Ayuuni is the new Head of the IT Department; similarly a recent and young graduate with a Masters in the Hospitality industry from Sheffield University in the UK, Ms Karen Quaisie, has been appointed as the Manager for the Accra Guest House; and a recent young graduate in Business Administration from Ashesi University has just been appointed to replace the Accounts officer in Accra, who is leaving GILLBT beginning August 1, 2013.

Finally we are also discussing an international institutional development initiative for GILLBT. If successful, this will provide us with the resources to substantively strengthen GILLBT’s administration.

In talking about the recruitment of new Blood into GILLBT, and particularly the new leadership at the IT Department, I want to pay particular tribute to our IT Manager, Mr Paul Federwitz. Paul was seconded to us by the Lutheran Bible Translators in a collaborative agreement to help with our IT Department and also develop the capacity for IT department. Paul literally transformed our IT department, and ensured that there was capacity to continue the work after he ends his role. And he will be staying on in a consultant capacity to ensure that the changes are consolidated. On behalf of GILLBT, I want to express our appreciation for the excellent work done for us by Paul Federwitz.

IV) Planning for the Future

The third element in this process of internal restructuring relates to concrete planning for the future, and involves two major planning activities: the CP process and Consultant development.

IV(a) CP Process: After nearly two years of preparatory work during which we sought to develop the national ownership and credibility, the CP process passed a critical milestone this year. Specifically after series of meetings of both the GILLBT Committee and the National CP Planning Committee, a concept paper has been developed, approved by the

Board, and submitted to the SIL and Wycliffe leadership on April 25th 2013. Dubbed “*Seizing the Moment: Operation Access, Sustainability, Outreach*” and developed both as a national aspiration and response to what is a global challenge of Bible Translation, the concept paper builds around three pillars:

- **Pillar 1:** *Access*, meaning making the whole Bible available in readily accessible forms
 - **Pillar 2:** *Sustainability*, which entails making the translation process, language development, and transformations resulting from these an enduring feature of Ghanaian society
 - **Pillar 3:** *Outreach*, meaning extending both access and sustainability beyond Ghana
- Each pillar will contain new, innovative elements and will be developed by a set of Ghanaian institutions with shared commitment to the issues.

Ghana’s CP concept paper has been well received at the international level, and the go ahead given for the process to continue. With this approval of the Concept Paper, all is ready for us to begin the development of concrete project proposals for funding the various elements of the plan. Indeed for the 2014 project funding cycle our project proposals would be developed and submitted within the CP format. The remaining challenge is to engage potential funders for the various elements of the CP.

IV(b) Developing National Consultants: Planning for GILLBT’s future also means developing the national competence and capacity for the work in the country, as well as for our “Beyond Ghana” agenda. This is critical because after fifty years, we still remain dependent on missionaries for almost all of our technical expertise, not least in translation. Given the fact that the missionary pool is dwindling, and the majority of the remaining ones have gone past retirement age, our continuous reliance on missionaries puts us in a precarious situation. A crisis has been averted because retired missionaries graciously come back periodically to do consultant checking. But in the context of seeking to expand the work, we do need more consultants. But perhaps more important, while the dedication of the retired missionaries is commendable, it cannot take the place of a conscious strategy for Ghanaian consultant development.

To address this, the Board approved a proposal to fast track the development of national consultants in the various domains of our work. To ensure the development of this program, a working group, led by Rev Prof Gilbert Ansre, is being put together to develop the national template for this program of consultant development. While the program will build on current consultant development initiatives in GILLBT, the planned program will nevertheless differ, significantly, from these other initiatives. Indeed what is being planned is a consultant development program that produces technically competent consultants, who are organically embedded in the Ghanaian/African context. In practice what this means is that, in addition to the technical competence, this should be a training program that ensures that the consultants understand the broader Ghanaian/African context within which Bible translation takes, and the challenges of this context. It also means that they are exposed to some of the leading minds on the African Bible translation landscape, and their work(s). And preferably, these leading minds should also know about these consultants. And finally they should be purposefully and strategically

linked to the churches and theological institutions in Ghana/Africa.

Discussions with, and funding from the Seed Company has enabled us secure the services of the former UBS Senior consultant for the Bible Society of Ghana, Dr Fabian Dapila to help in the establishment of this programme. A draft template for the program will be submitted to the Board for its approval at its next meeting.

IV(c) Developing the JBS Center in Accra: The development of the JBS Center on the Accra property fulfills a long term dream of the founding fathers for a museum and library to highlight our work; a training centre for the work in Ghana and Africa, and a mobilizing centre to mobilize the broader Ghanaian public, in particular the rising Christian middle class, around the objective of Bible Translation and Language Development. Plans for the Centre are fast developing. Indeed a recent—July 6-19, 2013-- visit to GILLBT by Gregg Bartholomew, the Africa Regional Construction Coordinator of Wycliffe Associates, has served to substantively move the process forward. During the visit he re-affirmed the commitment of the Wycliffe Associates international leadership to the supervision the building of the Centre.

Similarly we visited a Ghanaian architect, Prof Wellington who has agreed, in principle, to develop further the initial concept and designs of the centre, and link it to the Ghanaian cultural and architectural heritage. A final contract for this design is expected to be signed with Prof Wellington by the end of August, after which serious fundraising for the project will begin.

V) Institutionalizing Domestic Resource Mobilization

The final, but critical pillar of Vision 2016 is Domestic Resource Mobilization. The vagaries of the Project funding system in which we have operated the past fifty years, makes domestic resource mobilization a must for organizations like GILLBT. In an email to me on November 28, 2012 one of the veteran leaders of the Wycliffe organizations in Africa, and the founding Director of the Bible Translation and Literacy (BTL) in Kenya, Micah Amukobole, captures the problem:

“...the recent cut in the funding from SIL is another reminder that I started to think about in relation to GILLBT... God must be speaking to us through the drop of the SIL and Wycliffe funding. We depended on this support too long to the detriment of innovative thinking of our people. It was motivating to listen to the keynote speaker at the GILLBT@50 celebration of how God has supplied for their needs entirely depending on the giving from the churches and Christians in Ghana. This is a good lesson, but starting to implement it, when for so many years we have depended on SIL is not easy.

May be God is showing us that we must get our innovation to work. It will not be easy for GILLBT but we must trust the LORD who is speaking to us at this time. Very often the members have thought that SIL and Wycliffe will send the money. Now that there is not much coming we must tell our people clear and loud that we have been missing blessings.

The reductions in funding from the international system is going to be a permanent feature of our work, hence the critical need for to develop a sound financial base through domestic resource mobilization. A number of initiatives are currently underway on this regard, including:

V(a) Establishing a Communications and Fundraising unit in GILLBT. A grant received from Wycliffe UK and Wycliffe USA has enabled us to establish a Communication and Fundraising unit which will institutionalize our domestic fundraising efforts. The objective of this project is a major reorientation in the nature of GILLBT by establishing the infrastructure and capacity for domestic resource mobilization. At the heart of this strategy is the transformation and repositioning of the Accra office into a resource mobilization centre for GILLBT, and the integration of this office into the Project Funding System. Operationally the project would redefine and extend the Director's role into Fundraising & Communications for GILLBT. It seeks to also strengthen the position of the Project Funding Office, by expanding the role of the office to include domestic project development and reporting to GILLBT's domestic constituency.

This grant has enabled the appointment of a Church Engagement and Fundraising consultant, Mr Stephen Anyankor. As an Insurance and Real Estates salesman, with extensive international and national experience and networks, he brings to GILLBT much-needed fundraising competence. And he has hit the ground running. Through his efforts, we have begun to engage with churches and Christian groups which hitherto, we have not been able to reach. He has also extended our fundraising outreach outside Accra to churches and individual Christians in Kumasi, in particular. Indeed within the past three months, he has had productive engagement with Middle Class Christians and institutional leaders in Accra, Kumasi, Bolgatanga and Tamale with promising results. Some of the inroads made include meeting the leadership of the Light House Chapel in Accra resulting in Bishop E.A.T Sackey as the Church's liaison to GILLBT; Rev. Eastwood Anaba of Desert Pastures (Fountain Gate Chapel) gave his church platform to share the work of GILLBT and has appointed the Church Administrator, Rev. Solomon Dabuao as liaison between the Church and GILLBT to discuss critical areas of collaboration between the two institutions. A link has also been developed with the leadership of the Women's Aglow Ghana with GILLBT with prospects for an MOU between the two institutions. In the media landscape, Mr. Anyankor's meeting with leaders of media houses has made it possible for TV3 to agree to sponsor free of charge the airing of GILLBT programs on their TV station. The first of such was the telecast of the send off for Tom and Mary Holman on their Network on 22nd June. K-FM, a radio station in Kumasi has also given its platform to advocate the work of GILLBT to its audience. Other businesses that have agreed to sponsor the work of GILLBT include Darko Farms, Amponsah Effah Pharmacy, among others.

While this is the beginning, with financial results still modest, we nevertheless can see the establishment of a good foundation for our domestic resource mobilization efforts.

V(b) Modernizing the IGAs and transforming them into Businesses: The second leg of our domestic resource mobilization efforts is the modernization of the IGAs. While the process has begun, with the Tamale Guest House in particular beginning to make profits, significant challenges still remain particularly at the Press. To ensure that the IGAs contribute substantively to our domestic fundraising efforts, the Board has approved proposals to: i) decouple the IGAs from the Administration and register them as “For-Profit” businesses owned by GILLBT. Administratively the IGAs would have their own Management, and would report directly to the GILLBT Board; ii) secure a grant to modernize the existing facilities, and bring in new equipment.

Discussions are still continuing to develop a Business Plan for this purpose.

There are also plans to restructure the existing management and staffing at the IGAs to make them more professional and service oriented. For this purpose the role of the Fundraising consultant, Mr Stephen Anyankor, would be expanded to also include the profitable operations and management of the IGAs, in particular the Press.

V(c) Other Initiatives: The Board has approved the establishment of an Investment Advisory group for GILLBT. The group led by Ghanaian Christian investment banker, Ken Ofori-Atta, will examine our assets and advise us on investment options. Other initiatives aimed at domestic fundraising include the establishment of a Typesetting Unit in GILLBT under the leadership of John Sidsaya. This unit, when fully operational, will not only serve the typesetting needs of GILLBT. In addition, we have indicated a willingness to serve the African region and beyond.

Finally we have begun a process, involving institutional collaboration involving Amy and Terry Ruff, and LBT that seeks to revamp and further develop the Vernacular Media Services to make it critical component of our work, as well as for our domestic fundraising.

We have also negotiated for GILLBT to own the **copyright** of our translations—which hitherto had been with others. Thus beginning with the Gonja ad Sisaala Bibles, GILLBT will be the copyright owner enabling us to publish future copies for sale. We will also explore the possibility of getting back the copyright of all the previous translations.

The Board Chairman, all these are aimed to ensure that we develop a solid financial basis to enable us develop into a viable national organization that makes its contributions to Vision 2025—the ultimate goal of Vision 2016.

VI) CONCLUSION

To conclude my report, I am reminded of a recent article titled “Issues in Mission: Wine, Wineskins and Paradigms”, in which the current Director of Wycliffe UK, Eddie Arthur, calls for a fundamental paradigm shift in the ways mission is done in the UK and the Western world, in general. As he argues:

“Fixing the things that have gone wrong in order to go back to what we were doing so successfully before, is not an option; we need a new way of thinking about

mission for a very different new world.. I don't believe that we can fit the wine of cross-cultural mission into the old wineskins of our attitudes, structures and approaches. Or, in other words, we need a paradigm shift"

And for this, he proposes a paradigm shift made up of three elements: i) the need for structural reforms, ii) the necessity of relationship changes, and iii) the Need To Learn to Think Theologically. As the Director of our mother organization, Eddie Arthur knows exactly what he is saying as he has presided over perhaps the most far reaching change since the establishment of Wycliffe UK. That is, the sale of the Wycliffe UK Centre at Horseleys Green. The sale of this "institution" not only in the UK but in the global Wycliffe family is certainly a paradigm changing event. And it is a response to the changed and changing world in which the work of Wycliffe UK takes place.

Essentially GILLBT faces the same radically changed world, in which we simply cannot continue doing the same things we have done in the past and expect to survive. Just as our Mother organization has had to go through, and is still going through these radical reforms, we also have to undergo our own structural reforms to reposition us. And this is what the changes we are advocating are all about. In other words, the quest for new foundations is not a nostalgic return to the "good old days." To the contrary it is a call for a fundamental rethinking and redefinition of our work, including that of depending on external transfers.

While change always does involve uncertainty, we are confident that it will be well with GILLBT. Our confidence, however, does not rest in material and tangible things. Rather it rests on the same source that aided the building of the walls of Jerusalem in the days Nehemiah centuries ago. That is, it is the God of heaven who will prosper us, just as HE did in the days of Nehemiah. Fortunately for us, this truth was part of the foundation blocks upon which we were established. Specifically, EXACTLY fifty years ago, on 29th May 1963, our founding Director, Dr John Bendor-Samuel in his first report to the first Branch Conference—or AGM---articulated this founding truth for GILLBT:

"Our confidence isn't in our organisation, it isn't in our discussions this week, it isn't in our Executive Committee when we get one next year, it isn't in our Directorate, it isn't even in our Board – it is in the Lord."

The past fifty years shows that the confidence of our founding Director was well placed. It is this same confidence that we draw upon as we think about the future of GILLBT!

May the same "God of Heaven" of Nehemiah and John Bendor-Samuel, continue to shine his face upon GILLBT, and prosper us!

Dr. Paul Opoku-Mensah
GILLBT Director