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FEATURES

AFRICAN SPIRITUALITY

DID AFRICANS KNOW GOD BEFORE THE COMING OF **CHRISTIANITY?**

Ghanaian-born Rev. Dr. Charles Mantey is the founder and Senior Pastor of Disciple Revival Church, Toronto



THESE GODS WERE WORSHIPPED BY OUR ANCESTORS AND IT IS OUR TIME TO WORSHIP AND KEEP THEM. THEY TAKE GOOD CARE OF US: THEY MAKE OUR LAND YEILD GOOD CROPS; THEY BRING GOODLUCK TO ALL OF US; THEY HELP OUR WOMEN GIVE BIRTH TO BEAUTIFUL BABIES; THEY HELP OUR CHILDREN PASS THEIR EXAMS; THEY GIVE PROMOTION TO OUR SCHOLARS WORKING..."

n our February issue, we read of two missionaries who have travelled from their native country to a village called Asiwa in Ghana – West Africa. Upon meeting the village chief and his people, they introduced a new God to them. This God, according to the missionaries is the True God, the Creator, the One who forgives sins etc. This new teaching has created tension among the villagers and all those living in the nearby villages. Dadzie and his friend Dialo who are surprised as everyone else are helping to spread the news to some of their friends who they met at the Asiwa market. The next two paragraphs remind us of the strategy put in place at the last planning session by the chiefs of the

... News has quickly spread to all the surrounding villages. This has brought tension between the fetish priests, the villagers, and the missionaries

The chiefs in the area are planning what to do to stop the missionaries from convincing people to abandon their ancestral gods and traditional religion to follow their God. A big meeting has been scheduled. Some of the brilliant scholars from the village have been summoned from Accra to come to that meeting.

THE BIG MEETING AND THE DEFENSE FOR ANCESTRAL GODS

The meeting was scheduled for Thursday, a day of rest for residents of Asiwa and the neighboring villages. Everyone has come to the straw and palm branches shed which has been enlarged to accommodate many people. All the chiefs are seated on their stools under their kingly umbrellas –the stools and umbrellas are symbols

of authority and power. The powerful fetish priests are also present wearing their costume with their charms and amulets dangling all over their dress -these charms and amulets are meant to ward off evil spirits and bad omen; they are also meant to bring protection and victory to worshippers of the ancestral gods when their enemies are trying to invade their territories. The brilliant scholars, noble sons and daughters in an around Asiwa have also taken their seat. Dadzie, Dialo, and their girl friends with other friends from the area are all present. The weather is perfect - blue sky, the sun not as hot as other days with nice beach-like rose fragrance breeze wafting through the shed.

The chief of Asiwa being the head of the chiefs in the area is the chairman at this meeting. He asked the head linguist to pray (pouring of libation) as custom demands. The linguist took whisky (part of the gifts the scholars from Accra brought to the chief). As he tions are welcome. Thank you." poured the drink to the ground to pray, the tone of his voice was one of anger and admoniturned to Dialo and said: "As the linguist was tion to the gods to rise up to defend their names, the people, and the land from any foreign God who has come down to invade the area. The prayer was followed by the welcome ceremony - shaking of hands and hugging. The chief linguist then proceeded to tell the gathering the reason for the meeting (which was obvious to everyone present). "Nananom and all distinguished sons and daughters of Aiwa Traditional Area; today is a day of war! For

three weeks now, we have in our midst some white people - a man and a woman in our village. Their names are Jack Stewart and Mara Stewart. They told us they are missionaries from Britain; and they have come to teach us about a foreign God - their God. According to them, this God is the true God a better God who can help us more than our own traditional gods. Nananom and their elders therefore decided to call this great gathering because the issue at hand is beyond them. All of us know that we have our gods already. These gods were worshipped by our ancestors; and it is our time to worship and keep them. They take good care of us; they make our land yield good crops; they bring good luck to all of us; they help our women give birth to beautiful babies; they help our children pass their exams; they give promotion to our scholars working outside this area...what these gods do for us, we cannot enumerate them today. Nana and his subchiefs want to hear from you. Your sugges-

Dadzie breathed a sigh of relief; counting all the helps we get from our ancestral gods, my heart was pounding. I am afraid if we don't do something to stop the missionaries, our gods will curse us and this land. We all have to speak and tell our chiefs and elders what they should do."

"Yea, we can do that, but nobody wants to hear from you and me today. Everybody in this village knows that both of us are ordinary farmers and hunters of rats and grass-cutters. ...continued on page 12

FUSION

NEWS, PEOPLE, EVENTS

SUCCESS:

CONGOLESE-BORN TAKI E'BWENZE, THE CONSUMATE ARTIST, TEACHER





Now, 39 years after his arrival in Canada, Professor E'Bwenze is an internationally recognized artist and a revered French teacher. His classes are engaging, personal, passionate and rewarding. As a teacher, he now works almost exclusively with new immigrants who need French..."

n 1973. Taki E'Bwenze left his home in the Congo. He travelled to Quebec as an exchange student. His background was in engineering, but he studied economics at the University of Sherbrooke and urban and science education at the University of Quebec in Montreal. He received a Master's degree in planning and environmental studies from the University of Montreal. As he taught computer graphics, Professor E'Bwenze developed a technique for teaching French and

eventually began teaching French exclusively. His life evolved as he became a husband and father, as well as an artist and teacher.

Now, 39 years after his arrival in Canada, Professor E'Bwenze is an internationally recognized artist and a revered French teacher. His classes are engaging, personal, passionate and rewarding. As a teacher, he now works almost exclusively with new immigrants who need fluency in French to succeed in the workplace. Professor E'Bwenze teaches at the Centre for Adult Education in Outremont, Quebec, and works in his art studio in Montreal. His art is based on his profound knowledge of expressions of traditional African art. From this base, using digital arts and painting, Professor Taki creates variations of African art for new audiences. His commitment to everything he does, and to everyone he touches, makes him a great contributor to our country. (CBC News)





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Nigerian Star Actress Nse Etim Ikpe, Life After Marriage

ne of the many changes it. Nse kept the whole thing Clifford Sule is the change of name. surprised that the actress got Nollywood Now can authoritatively married at all after she had said confirm that the actress will not be publicly and privately that maradding 'Sule' or 'Clifford' to her riage was not in her plan. Her already compounded name on stance changed after Mr. screen. Another change that will Clifford proposed. Clifford Sule not happen is that of career. The lectures at Middlesex University Akwa Ibom-born actress will contin- in the UK and is very much sinue to act as she has always done. gle. His single status is another Nse, we reliably gathered, will be source of joy for the actress as shuttling between the United King- many of her colleagues in the dom where her husband lives and industry have settled down with Nigeria where she does most of her married men, divorcee or men acting. Mr. Clifford is childhood love with many children. "Nse is of the actress but broke up with her super happy. Her joy radiated on and moved on for several years; the day of the wedding. She's only for the two to reconnect and happy that she is getting marrekindle the romance few years ried, especially when she had ago. The wedding came as a sur- given up on marriage at 38," a prise to many as they didn't expect close source said.

that will not occur in the secret that only family members life of Nse Ikpe-Etim and a handful of friends knew after her marriage to Mr. about it. And many were also

African Movies:

East End Video Store in Scarborough **Boast of Widest Selections**

tressed? Here is a free tip to help reduce your condition. Visit the father and son team of New East End Video who can prescribe a cure or therapy that works. As unconventional as it may sound African movies with their unique appeal, exotic background, and shocking story lines is probably the diversion you need to escape your stress induced slumber. Have you heard of the mother in law who slept with her own daughter's husband?

What about the sibling who killed her own sister so that she could marry her husband? Such themes and situations abound in the world of African movies. However there are stories of love and good relationships that will tempt you to fall in love again even if you have been hurt, emotionally. A good example is the movie "Look into my eves"

That is not all. There is also the African version of the 'little rascals' called Aki and Pawpaw who will crack you up with laughter either by playing the role of reggae boys or just being plain trouble makers. Last but not the least you need to view the episode about an African immigrant, invited to London, England to inherit his brother's wealth who started harvesting the pigeons in Times square to prepare his favorite African dish; Osuofia in London. The speed of production of African movies beats one's imagination but it does not take away their uniqueness to evoke such strong feelings in the fan as to get them hooked; literally.

New East End located inside Atwima Marfo Enterprise (African grocery store) at 287 Morningside Ave./ intersection Kingsley Road in Scarborough has



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BARRIERS FOR NEW AFRICAN FAMILIES & YOUTH

Of the 280,636 people who choose to migrate to Canada, a proportion are from Africa (CIC, 2011). West and East Africans from Nigeria, Ghana, Ethiopia, Somalia, Eretria, Congo, Uganda, Mozambique, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Cameroon, as well as people from other countries, are often faced with a number of challenges as newcomers to Canada, such as housing, language, credential recognition, health care, and education. Addressing these challenges in a comprehensive way would allow New Canadians to maximize their potential. For this reason, it is important for them to have immediate access to practical settlement services so they can successfully integrate and participate in their new community (Perry, 2011).

Newcomers from Africa are faced with language barriers. Many newcomers may choose to remain silent to avoid embarrassment and discrimination because of their accent (Blog at Word press, 2008, February). Offering assessment of language skills and having English speaking classes in communities would assist in transitioning new Canadians into their communities and may have the additional benefits of removing barriers to better employment opportunities (CIC, 2012). In addition, providing information in various languages, offering single points of contact, expanding services by French school boards, extending opportunities for immigrants to achieve a higher degree of language proficiency, including programs such as ESL (CIC, 2012), would support the arrival of francophone African immigrant families and youth.

Health Care

On average, newly arrived African immigrants tend to be healthier than native-born Canadians, although these levels may decline with time (CIC, 2012). This occurs because many immigrants face long waiting periods for a health care plan and some services are not accessible due to language barriers. This is especially the case when trying to find a family doctor who speaks the same language. A wordpress.com blog (February 2008) outlined a study designed to understand problems related to the medical system. It concluded that 48% of doctors had interpreters, and that 70% of immigrants fully understood what their doctor's said. In addition, the cost of healthcare plans can be prohibitive for newcomers (CIC, 2012). Given this, policies and practices supporting a more accessible medical system would be beneficial for integrating newcomers.

Education

Academic, economic, and psychological challenges affect children's resiliency and ability to cope as students (Kanu, 2008). A significant barrier facing black immigrant students in Canada is the systematic discrimination and differential treatment by administrators, teachers, and students who may inadvertently contribute to their lack of achievement (Codjoe, 2001). In a 2006 census, the educational outcomes of new African immigrant children were examined highlighting a distinct pattern related to school completion rates associated with age of arrival (Statistics Canada, 2011). Children who migrated faced different challenges in attaining high school credentials stemming from sensitive periods in the acquisition of a second language and structure of the education system. The absence of an informed and targeted educational support system for immigrant children, together with forms of racism, appeared to contribute to social alienation and dramatic dropout rates in schools (Kanu, 2008). These challenges deprive children and youth from economic and social opportunities available to most Canadians..(Kanu, 2008).





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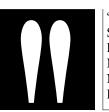
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HANNAH

Godefa



PENCIL MOUNTAIN PROJECT" HAS DELIVERED 25,000 TO RURAL SCHOOLS IN ETHIOPIA....HANNAH HAS CONTINUED TO SOURCE FOR MORE PENCILS AND BASIC SCHOOLS SUPPLIES THROUGH NU-MEROUS FUND RAISING EVENTS AND FROM CORPORATIONS, BUSI-NESSES AND EVEN SCHOOLS. THESE EFFORTS YEILDED BIGGER DIVIDENDS WITH THE RECENT DELIVERY OF 400,000 PENCILS ...

her youthful age, 15 year old Hannah Godefa, a tenth grade secondary school student in Vaughan, Ontario has already accomplished what most adults would accomplish in two life times. In an exclusive interview with African Immigrant Magazine in her home in Vaughan, the personable, amicable and pioneering teenager noted that it all started with a visit to her parents' native country of Ethiopia several years ago as an elementary school student. Fascinated by the culture and a land she knew little about at that time, being born in Canada, she immediately struck a friendship with a little girl her age who lived with her grandmother and decided to be her pen pal.

However, she was surprised to learn that this was not possible because the little girl didn't have a pencil with which to write letters. For Hannah, that was all the motivation that was needed to initiate a monumental effort that has to date yielded dividends to no small measure. Sad and heartbroken upon arrival in Canada, but equally motivated, Hannah became the founder of the "Pencil Mountain Project" where she solicited pencils from businesses and corporations in Canada as well as funds to buy basic school supplies to send to the rural schools in Ethiopia.

"Even though I was happy to see my extended family, I was also very sad to see children my age that do not get much food, medicine, quality education and orphaned due to HIV and AIDS," said Hannah. Since that initial visit to Ethiopia almost eight years ago, the "Pencil Mountain Project" has delivered 25,000 pencils to rural schools in Ethiopia. Hannah made a trip to Ethiopia to personally deliver the pencils to schools that were in urgent need of such supplies. As though that were not enough, she continued to source for more pencils and basic schools supplies through numerous fund raising events and from corporations, businesses and even schools. These efforts yielded bigger dividends with the recent delivery of 400,000 pencils along with basic school supplies. Given the large consignment, the

delivery of these school supplies that were airlifted by Ethiopian Airlines cargo services was undertaken by the Ministry of Education which delivered them across the vast east African country.

In December 2012, Hannah visited Ethiopia where she delivered 600 books to Debremarkos University and wheelchairs to physically challenged children. The books were donated by the University of Ottawa and Carlton University. During this visit, Hannah was appointed by UNICEF Ethiopia as its ambassador for her humanitarian efforts and incredible work with the "Pencil Mountain Project." Present at the colourful signing event were Shadrack Omol, Officer in Charge of UNICEF Ethiopia, Mrs. Emy Baker, Chargé d'Affaires of Canada Embassy, Hannah's father Ato Godefa Asegahegn, members of the media and UNICEF staff.

Shortly after her appointment as UNICEF Ambassador, Hannah said, "It has always been my dream to help children who do not have the opportunities to reach their highest potential. The most important message I want to give to Ethiopian children is the value of education. Children are imaginative, intelligent and valuable and they truly can change the world if given the opportunities to learn." Speaking further, "Working with UNICEF as an Ambassador will allow me to contribute to defend the rights of children, including the right to education, health, nutrition, water, sanitation, equality, protection and participation and ensure compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child because that's what

The UN scribe in charge of UNICEF Ethiopia, Sharack Omol, lauded Hannah for efforts with the children of Ethiopia and her desire to build capacity among the youth. Mr. Omol noted, "Hannah is a role model for children, her peers and especially girls. Her outspoken personality together with her strong presence in public domain sends powerful messages that reach the hearts and minds of children and youth all over the world. She demonstrates what is possible if one is determined. We are confident that she will make a positive contribution especially in the area of girl's education during her ambassadorship". Soon after her appointment, Hannah visited UNICEF-assisted projects and interacted with children, the youth and local authorities.

In recognition of the dire need for young girls to pursue education instead of getting into early marriages, Hannah has taken on yet another task of setting up an awareness program for children and their parents in the rural areas to advise them of the importance of education and the benefits therein. The young philanthropist stated to African Immigrant Magazine, "These young girls are just married off without the opportunity to pursue education. They need education to have a bright future." In 2012, in what appeared to be a crowning of her enormous and exemplary humanitarian efforts, Hannah was awarded the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal for the incredible "Pencil Mountain Project" and for her many humanitarian efforts. In December 2012, in a meeting brokered by the Minister of International Cooperation and Vaughan MP, Julian Fantino, Hannah had a unique opportunity to meet with Prime Minister Stephen Harper to discuss her humanitarian







efforts in Ethiopia and to learn about his plans for education in Canada and abroad. In an email statement to the media, Minister Fantino noted, "Hannah exemplifies the meaning of community spirit and dedication. She continues to accomplish so much in support of those in need half way across the world. It was a delight to arrange a meeting between Hannah and the prime minister; someone who works so hard on behalf of others deserves the recognition."

While addressing students enrolled in global citizenship course on February 16th, 2013 at Ontario's oldest college, Centennial College of Applied Arts and Technology in Toronto on the need for grassroots community involvement, Hannah, accompanied by her father, Mr. Ato Godefa Asegahegn, acknowledged the supportive role her parents have played in her campaign to assist the children of Ethiopia. "I thank my parents for their support and encouragement, without them I would not have achieved any of these," noted the humanitarian. Hannah was also full of thanks and appreciation for Ethiopian Airlines which she noted has been instrumental in her ability to deliver the tons of school supplies gathered from Canada to Ethiopia. "Ethiopian Airlines has been great and supportive of my course and I thank the people at the airlines for being part of this initiative to assist the children of Ethiopia," she stated. To learn more about Hannah's projects or foundation, visit www.hannahgodefa.org.

Continued from page 8

I think we have to listen to what the big people from Accra have to say. You know these are learned people - doctors, engineers, teachers, lawyers and so on." Dialo replied. He continued: "My sister told me that the missionaries have started making friends among the villagers. They are eager to learn our language the Akan; and have picked up some few words like 'Ete sen?' (How are you?); 'Bra' (Come) etc.

"Hmmm!" Dadzie groaned and said, "I have also heard similar stories about them too. To be honest with you, I think these missionaries want to trick us by pretending to be good, loving and kind to us. They have to leave our village and go back to their country. That is the only way to bring peace between the gods and this place.'

"Let's listen to the meeting." Dialo suggested. A respected teacher and a professor well known in Asiwa and the entire area who teaches at the University of Ghana (Legon) at the religious department stood up to speak. There was dead silence; as people wanted to listen with rapt attention. After going through the normal protocol, he said: "Please, allow me to read few words from two books I have with me. Both books talk about the traditional gods we worship in Africa. The first book is about Yoruba's God in Nigeria and the second is about the Akan's God in Ghana; after the reading, I will add my comments":

In a commonly held view, [among the Yorubas] the unseen head of the spiritual architect is Oludumare, a name that translates into "God" with many attributes, some resembling those of the Islamic Allah and the Christian God. Oludumare lives in heaven, he is the greatest of all the kings. He is immortal, creative, helpful, rewarding, revengeful, all knowing, and indefinable. As a myth explains... Oludumare sent the orisas to the world. Part of the orisa's job is to maintain order and assist human beings in solving many of their personal problems. To obtain favor in the right proportion, one is expected to "serve" the gods, be devout, and make regular sacrifices.

The first qualitative act of Nana Nyame, the Akan monotheistic God, is God's creativity. That is, in the beginning Nana Nyame alone created heaven or the sky (osor), the earth (asase), and order instantaneously...The foreknowledge of Nana Nyame means that God has advance knowledge of how things will turn out for everyone. This is possible because God is the originator of what everyone would accomplish even before one is born. "From these two books, we see that worshipping traditional gods is not

limited only to those of us who live in and around Asiwa. There are many parts of Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa, and other African countries who also worship traditional gods. Our gods are just like any other God of any religion; be it Islam, Christianity. Hindu, etc. Our traditional gods are creators of the heavens and earth; they are powerful, all knowing, loving, revengeful, and ready to help those who serve them. I don't see the reason why we should be alarmed because some missionaries are here to tell us about their God. We can also travel somewhere and tell others about our Gods too. Personally, I am not going to stop worshipping the gods I have known all my life. I will continue to worship them till I die." There was a thunderous applause and laughter in affirmation of the from the gathering. He told them that one of their professor's speech.

Dialo turned to Dadzie and said: "I didn't know there are books written about our traditional gods. Last time the missionaries read from their book called 'Bible'. After the meeting I will ask our great professor if he can go with us to meet the missionaries. This will give him the opportunity to read from his book to show the missionaries that we also have a book for our gods."

"I agree with you: Dialo" retorted Dadzie. "But I don't think that will change their minds. These missionaries are just determined to change us to follow the God they believe in. Why will they travel all the way from Britain to this village? They have an agenda and none of us can change that. I was very thrilled when our beloved professor said; 'Personally, I am not going to stop worshipping the gods I have known all my life. I will continue to worship them till I die.' That is what we all have to do. Just take a stand to continue serving our traditional gods." One of the elders at the meeting told all the youth and those who are talking to keep quiet and listen to the

He began by addressing the chiefs and the elders: "Nananom, and all those present at this meeting today! For the past three weeks since the arrival of the missionaries, our ancestral gods are very, very angry. Now when we invoke them it takes long time before they come and listen to our petitions. For instance, yesterday when I invoked them they asked for two bottles of local gin to drink before they will talk to me. If Nananom will give us (the fetish priests) permission, my colleagues and I will petition the god of thunder to strike these missionaries dead in just seven (7) days. All I need is for somebody to collect the dust of their footprint and bring it to my shrine. I say, seven (7) days and they will be struck dead. That is the only way to bring peace between our gods and this area."

"Dadzie! Is that a good idea?" Asked

Dialo. He continued: "If the missionaries die, it can create so many problems for us in this village and the whole area. The police or even soldiers could come and arrest all of us."

"Arrest who?" Exclaimed Dadzie. "We didn't have any trouble until their arrival. If not because of them, we could be playing oware and dame today at the market square. Look, because of them, we are all at this meeting since morning. I am even hungry; and I think you are too?"

There was some uneasiness among the gathering as people were debating the chief fetish priest's suggestion. This went on for about five

The chief linguist asked for attention respected beloved judges in Ghana who is also from the village and sits on the Supreme Court in Accra wants to speak. All eyes were turned towards him as he stands.

He started by saying: "My beloved Nananom, my dear brothers and sisters. Anytime I am in Accra, I do remember this village. I was born here, raised here, but I had to travel to another town to go to school. I was given scholarship by the British government to go to their country to study law. While I was in Britain I was introduced to the Bible. I know the Bible and what it stands for. What is happening here today, there is a similar incident that happened in the Bible where a man named Gideon destroyed the altar of a god called Baal. As a judge, we back our words by quoting, so I want to quote what the Bible says about that incident:

That same night the Lord said to him, "Take the second bull from your father's herd, the one seven years old." Tear down your father's altar to Baal and cut down the Asherah pole beside it. Then build a proper kind of altar to the Lord your God on the top of this height, Using the wood of the Asherah pole that you cut down, offer the second bull as a burnt offering" So Gideon took ten of his servants and did as the Lord told him. But because he was afraid of his family and the men of the town, he did it at night rather than in the daytime.

In the morning when the men of the town got up, there was Baal's altar, demolished, with the Asherah pole beside it cut down and the second bull sacrificed on the newly built altar? They asked each other, "Who did this?" when they carefully investigated, they were told, "Gideon son of Joash, did it." The men of the town demanded of Joash, "Bring out your son, he must die, because he has broken down Ball's altar and cut down the Asherah pole beside it." But Joash replied to the hostile crowd around him, "Are you going to plead Baal's cause? Continued on page 15



PAY CLOSE ATTENTION TO HOW ENGLISH SPEAKERS FORM THEIR WORDS WHEN YOU INTERACT WITH THEM. WATCH THE MOTIONS OF THEIR MOUTH AND LIPS AND PRACTICE THE IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS THEY USE WHEN THEY SPEAK.

The invention of the Internet and rapid technological advances have brought our entire world into a global village which has had significant impacts on business to business relations throughout various parts of the world. Numerous call centers and the virtual assistants have been established to connect merchants from diverse parts of the world allowing them to interact daily. The main obstacle has proven to be communication. Most of these jobs require a level of proficiency in English to prove successful. The workforce has a high demand for workers who they can easily communicate with so their businesses can remain running smoothly without any loss of time or money due to miscommunication. There is little doubt that those language students who work on their accent training will to have more job opportunities and



higher salaries. If you are an English speaker seeking to improve your accent quickly, here are five proven techniques to help you achieve your language goal.

- 1) Pay close attention to how English speakers form their words when you communicate with them. Watch the motions of their mouth and lips and practice the idiomatic expressions they use when they speak.
- 2) Each language has a distinct rhythm and English is no exception. Find a language CD and listen to it over and over while you are driving in your car or have free time. This will get used to the rhythm of English speakers.
- 3) When you are speaking, be sure to take your time and breathe slowly. Many other languages are spoken at a much faster tempo than English and you want to be sure you are speaking in a calm and coherent manner so you are understood. Once you gain the confidence you can always speed up your tempo from that point.
- 4) Practice is very important; try to read English out loud every day for at least 30 minutes if you have the time. This will help get you used to pronouncing common expressions and phrases. If you have a recording device, try recording yourself and listen back to focus on the improvements you can make.
- 5) Perhaps the most important technique to improving your accent is to surround yourself around native English speakers and continuously receive feedback from them on how your accent training is improving. They should be able to help you focus on areas where you are having trouble and help you improve. There should be clubs and social organizations in your local area where you can meet people.

There are many different resources available to help you with your accent training. We recommend starting your search online to gain a more focused understanding of exactly what you would like to achieve, and then turn your focus on your local resources to reach your goals.



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Nigeria Wins AFCON 2013



The result ended a dream run from the Burkinabe, who reached the semifinals for only the second time in their history, before edging Ghana on penalties to book their place in the gold medal match".

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Sunday Mba struck with a leftfooted volley in the first half as Nigeria beat Burkina Faso 1-0 at the National Stadium to end a 19-year Africa Cup of Nations (Afcon) trophy drought. The Super Eagles, playing in the tournamernt finale for the seventh time, had the better chances throughout. They were rewarded when Mba scored in the 40th minute, and held on to secure their third continental crown, and their first since 1994. The result ended a dream run from the Burkina Faso, who reached the semifinals for only the second time in their history, before edging Ghana on penalties to book their place in the gold medal match. Victor Moses made a return from injury straight into the Super Eagles' starting lineup, while Emmanuel Emenike did not recover from injury in time for the match and was replaced by Ikechukwu Uche. Burkina Faso were relieved to have the services of Jonathan Pitroipa after his semifinal red card was rescinded, and they retained an unchanged run-on side. Nigeria held on to the ball from the first whistle and Brown Ideye made a run down the middle releasing Efe Ambrose,

but his shot from in the box was directed straight at goalkeeper Daouda Diakite. An eighth minute free kick from

Victor Moses, who recovered from injury in time for the match, found the head of Efe Ambrose but the shot was off target. From the ensuing corner, Moses went long and the ball was headed towards goal, without Diakite able to gather, but Ideye sent his strike sailing just over the

Burkina Faso were nearly dealt a cruel blow through some careless defending in the 19th minute. A poor backheel by defender Paul Koulibaly on the edge of area gifted Nigeria the ball. Ideye ran sideways as the Burkinabe defence moved in to cover and Nigeria could not manage

A minute later, Moses probed again as he ran down the left, but he reeled off an average shot which was gathered by Diakite. The first shot for the Burkinabe came in the 25th minute when Aristide Bance went for goal, but his long range effort was well over target. Bance was involved again three minutes later, on this occasion with a free kick from 30 metres out. He went for a low shot left of the wall but was wide. After a bustling move down the centre shortly before the break, Mba gathered a loose ball in the box, turned past a defender and had no problem finding the back of the net to give Nigeria the lead. Three minutes after the interval, Ideye took a shot from an acute angle which had the beating of Diakite, but the ball bounced centime-

A 55th minute counter-attack by Nigeria allowed Moses to run unhindered toward the opposition area, but he took too long to shoot and a defender was able to partially block the shot. Just before the hour mark, Bance flicked on with a header from a free-kick but Vincent Enyeama was able to collect the ball comfortably. Wilfried Sanou came close to levelling the scores in the 74th minute, but his powerful shot was directed just past the far post.

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The Plight of Black Immigrants in Canada

Cause to Smile: Deported Libyan Family Allowed to Return to Canada After Online Petition

Libyan family, originally deported from Canada five years ago, will be allowed to return to Canada on humanitarian and compassionate grounds. After the Benhmuda family was deported, Canadian friends and neighbors worked together to secure the family's return. Eventually,

deportation, and an online petition started on the family's behalf raised almost 16,000 signatures from Canada and around the world. The efforts of those concerned individuals recently paid off, when a Canadian Federal Court judge ordered a review of the Benhmuda's refugee application. Upon review, it was determined that their claims were substantial pending med-

ical and Security Clearance, the family will soon be welcomed back to Canada. "All [the Benhmudas] ever wanted from the first time they came to Canada was peace and hope and safety, and now it's back in their grasp," said Ingrid Kerrigan, a teacher of the family's youngest children and organizer on their behalf. "It's a dream come true and a red letter day for sure."

TO SEND LETTERS TO THE EDITOR — EMAIL PUBLISHER@AFRICANIMMIGRANT.CA

ON THE FLY_

money was raised to contest the

IMMIGRANT FOCUS

Worthy Cause: Ghanaian Immigrant Leads Efforts Against Bullying



As Canada celebrates Pink Shirt Day, an anti-bullying campaign started by two students in support of a fellow student bullied for wearing a pink T-shirt to class, Francis Atta works tirelessly to tackle this issue. Last year's Top 25 winner, Ghanaian-born activist who founded K.E.Y.S. — Knowledge and Effort Yield Success— an organization that conducts motivational speech workshops to counter issues like bullying, gang violence and conflict resolution, says that youngsters need a motivating mentor in their lives to keep them on the right path. "I was the lowest of the lows and I'm doing great now. If I could do it, they could do

It, too!" says Atta, with passion in his tone. He has seen much tragedy in the last several years, losing many friends to gang violence. Pink Shirt Day is now celebrated across Canada on the last Wednesday in February. "When I was in schooling age ... I wish I had someone there to show me the right path," says Atta, who has volunteered his time with most of the youth organizations in the neighbourhood as a mentor, supervisor, basketball coach and, best of all, as a peer. At a young age, he has taken it upon himself to mentor youth from his neighbourhood Jane and Finch, one of the most troubled spots in the Greater Toronto Area — so they choose the right path in life. Now with K.E.Y.S, founded to inspire people of all ages to never give up, however arduous the situation may be. Atta has also started No Colour One Blood (NCOB), through which he organizes multicultural programs. "Since I'm an immigrant, it's a multicultural program that teaches kids diversity, equality and fairness," he explains. "It teaches how to appreciate different cultures and interact with each other, looking beyond cultural differences." The program hosts field trips for students in grades 8 to 12 to ethnic neighbourhoods, for example. (Canadian Immigrant)



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EDUCATION

PERMANENT RESIDENCY

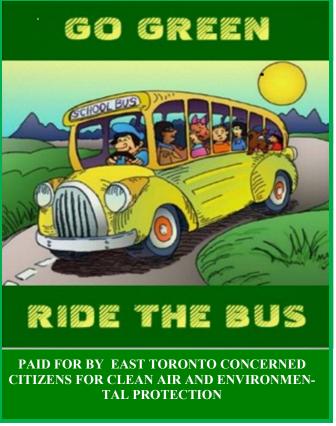
Canada to Accept 1,000 PhD graduates as permanent residents per year



anada intends to accept who have recently graduated from a Canadian PhD program up to 1,000 international will also be eligible to apply, PhD students per year as permanent residents through the provided they do so within 12 Federal Skilled Worker Program, months of their graduation. Minister of State (Science and "This initiative will provide Canadian universities with one more Technology) Gary Goodyear ancompetitive edge in attracting nounced on behalf of Citizenship, and retaining top international Immigration and Multiculturalism Minister Jason Kenney. "Doctoral talent to pursue their doctoral studies in Canada," said Paul graduates play a unique role in the economy. They drive research, Davidson, President of the Assoencourage innovation and pass on ciation of Universities and Collegtheir knowledge through teaching, es of Canada. "We welcome this "said Minister Goodyear. "And announcement."" Attracting and retaining immigrants with high quite simply, Canada needs more levels of skill will help Canada of them." Since November 5, 2011, many international PhD students compete in the knowledgebased world economy,"Minister have been eligible to submit appli-Goodyear added. "With this cations for processing as federal initiative, we are telling the innoskilled workers. To be eligible, they vators of tomorrow that Canada must have completed at least two is ready to welcome them and years of study toward the attainment of a PhD and remain in good their ideas." International students account for about oneacademic standing at a provincially recognized post-secondary educaquarter of the students enrolled in Canadian PhD programs. (CIC) tional institution in Canada. Those

graduated of program to apply, within 12 graduation. Ovide Canaone more attracting ternational ir doctoral said Paul of the Assoland Collegelcome this racting and with high elp Canada knowledgely,"Minister With this gother innonat Canada them and tional studbout one-





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UNFORTUNATELY, OUR LEADERS ABUSE THESE TRAITS OF THE NIGERIAN. THEY INTERPRET THESE RESILIENCE AS WEAKNESS, DOCILITY AND NAIVETY... BY ARNOLD A. ALALIBO

omething intrigues me about the average Nigerian, how he makes constant efforts in order to achieve a specific goal. The average Nigerian is steadfast in whatever he does so long as the intended outcome is attained. I am astonished at the manner Nigerians persist in most of their endeavours in spite of the odds that prevail. Indeed, to most Nigerians, the word "guilt" is eccentric and missing in their lexicon. The common Nigerian believes that he will succeed whenever he attempts a project. He is prepared to put in all to ensure that he is not counted a failure in the end.

Recently, I was in the company of a group of young boys. In the conversation that ensued, one of them, who had just returned from Australia, $\frac{1}{2} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \frac{1}{2} \left(\frac{1}{2} \int_{-$

narrated how in that country, graduates commit suicide for their inability to secure jobs upon graduating from school. Others perpetrate suicide for their disability to gain admission to the university. Compare the scenarios to 1 what obtains in Nigeria, where thousand and one reasons exist for one to terminate one's life. Young Nigerians make repeated attempts to succeed in the unified tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTMs) without success, but don't give up. Think about the rising spate of unemployment in the country which has caused unimaginable frustration to our youth and turns the knowledge they acquire from school into utopian ideals.

Some Nigerians leave the university or higher institutions with high grades but remain for more than ten

years without jobs. These youth are still in search of jobs without giving up. The apparent frustration faced by the jobless youth causes them to enroll in unsolicited post graduate programmes and become burden to their parents or guardians. This, nevertheless, does not alter the situation. For them life must go on unhindered, job or no job. Undoubtedly, it was this same spirit that informed Nigerians' rating as the happiest people in the world in a global survey conducted few years ago.

What weighs down people in other countries and occasion them to terminate their lives, hardly has impacted on the average Nigerian given the same variables. Die-hard spirit you would call it, you can't be wrong. However, as there are advantages, to these personality traits, so are there disadvantage. But first, the advantages, just as the adage goes: "There is always the tunnel" so are there some sure rewards for one's ability to persevere. A case that readily comes to mind is that of Elijah and Elisha as recorded in the Holy Books. Elijah was Elisha's master. When it became clear to the latter that the former would soon be transfigured, he made

sure they were in one accord. Even when Elijah repeatedly told Elisha to wait for him till his return from his journey, Elisha declined the offer and rather clung to his master, because he knew he was about to be blessed by his master, but on one condition. The condition was that he must witness Elijah's translation to heaven. His perseverance, however, paid off as he was eventually rewarded with double portion of his master's anointing in a befitting proportion. This is an example of what accompanies perseverance. Let me point out that as one perseveres, one must not lose focus. These qualities are pre-requisites to success. On the other hand, when perseverance is not regularly appraised, it could lead to hallucination. Psychologists see it as something that could make one fixated both in thought and action.

Unfortunately, our leaders abuse these traits of the Nigerian. They

interpret these resilience as weakness, docility and naivety. Is that not the reason corruption thrives as our leaders stare us in the face and stash the people's money meant for development without question. Is that not why GSM service providers could afford to render poor services to Nigerians and the heavens do not fall? Is it not for the same reason the government has failed to fix the power problem of the nation many years after the inception of democracy? But in the midst of these, I have one worry. If a global survey has rated Nigerians at 70 points for optimism and by contrast Britons deeply pessimistic 44, won't we be denied aids or grants by the industrialized nations? This is because happiness presupposes contentment

and if this logic can be sustained, won't it mean that the Nigerian is at ease at home?

For the purposes of dialectics, abject poverty in which most Nigerians live and happiness ought to be universally related. But this is Nigeria where anything goes and usually contrary to established norms. This might be why the nation is seen as a summary of a wasted potentiality and extravagant opportunity. If one looks harder, one may be tempted to conclude that a Nigerian's optimism is misplaced.

In the visage of these social ills, what in the world makes Nigerians so happy, so optimistic and undoubting in spirit? It is the spirit of entrepreneurship which fuels their optimism. A Yoruba proverb says: "Jimoh to ma l'oyin, Alamisi le yanma ti mo." It translates as: "If Friday is to be sweet, you will know by Thursday." It might not seem that Nigerians have much to be happy about, but they have already seen what Friday holds and this reinforces their resolve and ambition. This is the spirit of a true Nigerian. Let's us not give up.

The Canadian Citizenship Test Revisited



few African immigrants have stated to me that the Canadian citizenship test is bias and deliberately designed to eliminate those that are not proficient in English or French. Many of these immigrants have struggled to pass the text and some have decided that they cannot become citizens because a

family members who applied with them did not pass the test. For many, this becomes a trying moment and monumental obstacle in their Canadian journey. I remember a certain gentleman who had failed the test twice. Though from Senegal, a French speaking country, he was not fluent in French because he lived in Spain for much of his adult life and was fluent in that language. His English skills were just passable and therefore couldn't take the test in English. On his second try, he indicated that there were certain concepts and terms he could not understand and those cost him the opportunity to pass the test

In all these, Africans should realize that the Canadian citizenship test is not any different in principle. The principal motive for administering a test before one is admitted into citizenship is to ensure that the would-be citizens are conversant with the history, politics and geography of their new country. This is imperative to ensure that these new Canadians are indeed vested. Against this backdrop, we must expect such a test to have facts and figures about the country and concepts and events that are unique to Canada. It will be very useful for test takers to prepare adequately for the test utilizing the book "Discover Canada".

In addition to being familiar with the book, there are several agencies that specialize in preparing immigrants for their citizenship test. Every country has it's standards and it is imprudent to expect Canada to lower its standards because some immigrants are having difficulties understanding and passing the test—rather, those immigrants should use this as an opportunity to rise to the occasion, upgrade their language skills and improve their readiness for the test. Money spent in this regard will be well spent as such skills will be useful well after they have become citizens.

Prof. Phil Tam-Al Alalibo Founder|Publisher





18 Year old Ethiopian Immigrant, Sosina Tilahun, Wins York University Free Tuition

ork University future student Sosina Tilahun, 18, will receive one year free tuition as part of the university's *This is my time* contest jointly presented by MuchMusic. She plans to enroll in York U's film

program offered
by the Faculty of
Fine Arts. Tilahun
was chosen from
a large pool of
prospective students who crystallized in
140 characters or less how
their York U degrees will
help them to achieve their
goals and impact society.

She received a symbolic cheque for the tuition from York University's



President and Vice-Chancellor Mamdouh Shoukri, last week. As the contest winner, Tilahun spent an afternoon on York U campus co-hosting MuchMusic's Videoflow Takeover with VJ Phoebe Dykstra which was broadcast at various times on Dec. 3 and 4. "I want to study at York because it's got the best film program and I feel very lucky to get free tuition to come here," says an excited Tilahun, a resident of London, Ontario.

"At first, I really didn't think I had a chance to win because there were so many tweets. But when I was contacted, I was very, very happy!"

Tilahun, who spent most of her life in Africa — raised in Somalia, where her family had taken refuge after fleeing Ethiopia — wants to use her education at York U to create awareness about the importance of education for girls around the world. "We have the right to education," says Tilahun, who hopes to create documentary and short films to fulfill her vision.

"I felt that because I'm really passionate about it, I'll tweet about it and say it to the world," she says. The winning vision in her own words: To help make education accessible to every girl in developing countries.

CAREER WATCH he business world is as dictable as an earthquake. So it would be wise not to leave your career in the

Climbing the Corporate LADDER

Leave Your Shyness at Home— Blow Your Horn at Work, Let **Your Superiors Know Your** Worth, Announce Your **Successes and Get Noticed**

some employees are willing to leave their job for a pay raise of 20% or less, many prefer building stability by moving up the ranks within a firm. You may be the best employee on this side of the planet, but if no one acknowledges your hard work, then what's the use. Significant higher-up in your work environment must acknowledge that you are indeed all you can be. Toot your own horn regarding your reputable accomplished productivity because it is unlikely that anyone will do it on your behalf. The job market is a competitive environment and everyone is looking out for number one. Taking credit for your work is adequate. Employers should recognize the amount of time and effort involved in specific tasks. They should realize that countless coffee breaks have

hands of destiny alone; push

it along and make sure it keeps

growing. Some helpful tips can

allow young professionals to

build enduring and continuous

supremacy within the company.

Although research shows that

been spent hammering out numbers and making sure sales projections for the next two years are accurate. Remember that if you are assigned specific tasks, it is probably because you are the most proficient person for implementing them. Prove that the boss is always right and recognition will help you climb that ladder more quickly. Volunteering time will help your reputation. Don't be afraid to offer time and expertise to train new employees and hold tutorials when needed. These little exploits will not go unnoticed by supervisors who are likely to remember your last name when promotion time swings around or an important rush project needs undivided attention. This will help formulate an alliance with your superiors, which is key in moving up rapidly. Always remain visible to affluent individuals and influential personnel in your firm.

Black Immigrants Nightmare in Canada

By MICKSON ADDO

VIEWPOINT



his experiences of being black in Canada, lauding the achievements of blacks in the country whom he noted built the society with their blood, sweat and hard work. Mr. Armstrong noted that in the 1950's, the immigration Policies had a racist overtone because it was made to believe the North American weather was not suitable for blacks, but through

strong, a

black

activist

about

There were numerous professional writers in the mainstream media who earned their living by writing damaging news stories aimed at tarnishing the image of black immigrants in the Canadian society. They aimed to achieve this by priming public opinion with the publication of negative stories about blacks while neglecting the positive ones. All these were against the backdrop of many positive and enduring achievements of black immigrants some of whom fought the 1812 war in North America. There were black soldiers who served in the Canadian armed forces during the first and second world war, but this noble feat has been excluded in the Canadian History.

black union and organizations sending petition to Ottawa on this

policies, change became inevitable.

As a veteran journalist, I'm optimistic that the creation of a platform to unite both immigrants from Africa and Caribbean Islands is crucial to the average black immigrant to enable them build capacity and economic collaborations to collectively tackle the paucity of jobs and gainful employment for black immigrants which is most often compounded by the unwritten policy of "Canadian experience" being a must for employment. All of these limitations, including the sometimes difficult to understand accents of these immigrations could be responsible for the acute poverty among this segment of the population. This is what some post modernist termed as "Poverty Incorporated."

There has been an on-going brain drain of African immigrants to the West as a result of concept called the "Push and Pull." The push is where the immigrant has been pushed or displace from his or her own country as a result of war, famine and persecution, and the "Pull" is the conspicuous advertising of the west and propaganda which has attracted immigrants to these areas.

My two decades experience in Canada has taught me how the system has been designed to exclude African immigrants from getting good employment even though some are qualified professionals from their various countries. Let's be unified against this.

Are you trying to save him? Whoever fights for him shall be put to death by morning? If Baal really is a god, he can defend himself when someone breaks down his altar. So that day they called Gideon "Jerub-Baal," saying, "Let Baal contend with him," because he broke down Baal's altar." After the quote, the judge continued: "Here we see a man called Gideon destroying the altar of Baal - a powerful god who was worshipped by many. The people in the town wanted to kill Gideon because of what he has done. His father told the angry crowd to leave the two Gods - The Jewish God and Baal to fight among themselves. They are the ones who should defend their name and power. Because they are spirits they could fight for their names better than any human being. I see them same thing happening in our village today.

Some missionaries have come down to tell us about their God who is different from our traditional ancestral gods. If Nananom and this gathering will permit me, I want to suggest that we leave the missionaries alone; while we continue to petition our gods to defend their names and this place. I truly believe they will rise up to defend our sons and daughters, and this land. Let's give ourselves about three to six months and see who is the true God; whether the God of the missionaries or our traditional gods. Thank you." His speech was welcomed with thunderous applause and cheers from everyone at the gathering. At this iuncture, the chief of Asiwa who is also the chairman for the meeting asked permission to leave the meeting and confer (going to ask Aberewa - an old wise woman; according to Akan mythology, this old woman is the embodiment of all wisdom) with his sub-chiefs and elders for a final decision. Some few minutes later, they returned to the gathering. The head linguist was asked by the chairman to bring the final decision to the gathering. The head linguist asked for silence. He started by thanking all those present at the gathering on behalf of the chief of Asiwa and the sub-chiefs.

Then he continued: "Nananom, dignitaries, and all those present; Nana and his subchiefs went to consult Abrewa who has given them a final decision. Nana wants all of us to know that, Asiwa and its surrounding villages are among the best places in Ghana. These villages supply foodstuffs to many major cities in our country. According to our culture and our nature, we are friendly people. We always welcome everyone who comes to this place. We are also open minded and willing to learn new things no matter who wants to teach us. After listening to all that everyone has said, my ruling is that, we allow the missionaries to stay. We also allow them to preach and teach about their God. Lastly, if it happens that any of us want to follow their God it is not in my power or anyone else's power to stop such individuals. Thank you." The meeting was closed with sharing of local drinks and kebabs Dadzie and Dialo left the meeting place and decided to go to Dadzie's house with their friends to eat. As they were eating Dialo saw that Dadzie was very quiet and not eating well. "What is happening Dadzie? Dilo asked.

"I didn't like the way the meeting went and the ruling from our chief. As a chief, and head of all the chiefs in this area, he has the power to stop the missionaries from spreading their religion and their God in this village" Replied Dadzie.

'You see, the way the meeting went, to me I think that was the best ruling the chief brought down." Said Dialo. He went on, "There are so many things we may not know until we are taught. This is a new God, nobody knows what this God will also do for us. I know our ancestral gods have been helping us; but I don't see anything wrong with following the missionaries' God and our ancestral gods at the same time."

"Dialo, all along I didn't know that you have such a weak mind!" Exclaimed Dadzie. He continued; "You can do what you want to do; but I will never, ever stop worshipping our ancestral gods." Dadzie stopped eating; washed his hands quickly and went to his room. Dialo and the other friends continued eating in silence and later left for their homes.

In our next issue, we will see how Dialo has now become a Christian but he and Dadzie have decided not to break their friendship. Stay tuned as we explore the strategies both friends are using to win each other to his camp.

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