

WHAT WILL PASTOR DO IN GHANA?

For the Sake of the Gospel

It is only about a month before I return to Ghana and I have much to do in preparation for teaching the class. We currently have about \$ 3,000 of the \$ 5,000 needed for the trip. My plane ticket has been purchased by the CLEF and Gordon is eagerly anticipating my arrival. I hope you are all keeping my trip in your prayers and frequently remembering our fellow saints in Ghana.

While I have written about my upcoming trip there are still some surprised that I am going back. Some thought my first trip was like an investigative trip to the mission field or a fact-finding tour. In fact, this trip is pure work and requires some intensive preparation for teaching in a different culture and academic climate. This is an active and engaged missionary approach that allows our congregation to support the teaching of the faith among those who need our help to grow in the Gospel.

The question I often hear is about the material I will be teaching. My primary assignment is to deal with teaching the proper approach to preaching in a Lutheran context. I confess that last year was a learning experience as I learned what the seminarians knew and did not know. I was totally unprepared to deal with the level of education and communication skills that I found as well as the African mindset toward discipline. I learned that I would need a very disciplined approach that challenges them to grow, but also gives them a firm foundation to move forward without my presence.

I have had a year to think about where to begin and I now know that I will spend a big chunk of time in the first week teaching them the significance of time in the Church year. There is a flow to the Church's calendar that sets a rhythm for the Christian life. Within that calendar the Church has appointed a cycle of readings that directs the attention of the whole Church to various aspects of the

Church's doctrine and life. That cycle of Christian life includes supporting the readings for the day with appropriate hymns and placing it within the context of the Divine Service. Most of us who have lived in this cycle of Church life for so long that we take it for granted. As a young Christian Church, they are still learning about the language of the Church and the patterns of the Church's life that are an important aspect of strengthening Christian faith in Christ.

A second important topic will be helping them incorporate the Catechism and catechetical instruction into their preaching. Since childhood many of you have been instructed in the Catechism and have learned that it is an important reference point for the Christian faith and life. Some of you became Lutherans as adults and did not learn the text of the Catechism by heart and realize what you have missed when you hear your children recite it. You are instructed in the Catechism, but adult converts do not get the full immersion that your children do. As a young Church body, some of these Lutheran adult seminarians are still struggling to learn the Catechism by heart, which weakens their ability to preach these truths.

A third major goal of this class will be to help them understand the importance of the liturgy and its Biblical language as the context for preaching. While the liturgy is used in the more English speaking areas, the translations of the liturgy are part of the hymnal project for CLEF that will allow a consistent Church language throughout their Church body. I will be discussing the way the liturgy teaches us to see that faith is the highest worship of God for we hear His Word spoken and sung to us and confess that His Word is true by speaking it back to Him. Lutheran worship does not speak about "me" all the time, but talks about what God has done for me in Christ. This is the way of Christian faith.

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Pastor Fabrizio