

THE CHALLENGE BEFORE US

For the Sake of the Gospel

Three summers ago, this congregation began a relationship with the Lutheran Church of Ghana that has become an important part of our work. In some ways the accomplishments are invisible to you. Your faithfulness has compelled you to give \$5,000 each summer to send your pastor to a place you cannot afford to go and probably have no desire to see. You have not sent him to do social work or build medical clinics. You have sent me to preach. I cannot bring back pictures of a completed project and measure new triumphs. In fact, there is no measure of success. There is only the joy of knowing that the Gospel is being preached and new "Timothies" are being raised up to be the next generation of pastors. Yes, there are pictures of congregations worship and the men who are being taught, but there is no measure of the Law that can determine what has been accomplished.

I can pass on my own personal observance. Thanks be to God who has raised up a generation of pastors and laymen who desire to be faithful to the Lutheran Confessions. In the midst of what Pastor Kumi often calls African Christianity, a blend of tribal spiritist religions with American style success Christianity, the men and women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ghana (ELCG) are seeking something solid and more Biblical. In many congregations and on many occasions the people have asked me to thank the members of Our Father's for sending their pastor to teach their future pastors. This is a Lutheran church that did not have a seminary for a long time and some men were taught at a Methodist seminary.

What we take for granted is all new. Many were never taught the Small Catechism

before coming to seminary. I spend time talking about how to do it, but more importantly actually teaching it in the classroom. I learned about teaching the Catechism by observing those who taught it to me and through my parents' emphasis on memorizing the text. While they have often memorized Biblical passages, they have little exposure to hymns of the church and the liturgy. I not only teach about the importance of hymns, I sing hymns with them and talk about their meaning. They are often unaware of the liturgy and the Christian Church year. I am teaching them about that year and helping them to think in terms of the order it provides to teach the faithful. They have not had regular celebration of the Sacrament and thus need to be taught the Words of Institution, not as an academic fact, but as the ground of faith for whoever believes these Words has exactly what they say: forgiveness of sins.



It is like teaching them a foreign language. We have a different language than the world around us. We do not focus on entertainment or personal comfort and pleasure because we are always proclaiming repentance and the forgiveness of sins. Teaching this language has a financial cost, but it is far less than it would cost the Synod. The

CLEF has a good working relationship with President Harrison who is pleased with your efforts in Ghana. With a cost of only \$5,000 you have paid for the plane flight, insurance, food and lodging, and any excess is applied to the International Lutheran Hymnal Project. You have looked beyond your own congregation as the Church of the Lord's Word always does. I will be leaving for Ghana on August 27 and return home again to preach on September 11. Keep my family and me in your prayers as you send me out for the

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sake of proclaiming the Gospel to the ends of
the earth.

Pastor Fabrizious