

OUR FATHER GOES TO GHANA

For the Sake of the Gospel

During the past few years we have had the Rev. John Fehrmann come as a guest preacher to discuss confessional Lutheran mission efforts around the globe. He has helped us to understand our efforts in countries like Sri Lanka and Madagascar. The Confessional Lutheran Education Foundation is devoted to translating Lutheran theological materials, offering theological seminars, and providing experienced confessional Lutheran pastors to teach these new Lutheran pastors. The CLEF relies on individual congregations like Our Father's to provide financial support and also release their pastors to teach in these fledgling Lutheran areas.

This summer the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ghana (ELCG) has asked the CLEF to send a teacher to train their pastors at the seminary. This led them to request that I travel to Ghana in July to teach. I will be going on behalf of you, the members of Our Father's. Through bake sales, a talent show, and other efforts the funds have been raised to send me there to assist our fellow Lutherans in Ghana West Africa.

The Republic of Ghana is about the size of the state of Indiana and is located between the Ivory Coast and Togo on the Gulf of Guinea. The population of 20 million consists of 100 ethnic groups. While English is the "official" language, there are 72 distinct language groups. According to figures from the year 2000, about 64 percent of the population claims to be Christian. Another 21 percent are Muslim. Of the 72 languages, only 8 have the Bible in their language.

Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod missionaries established the ELCG in 1958. It has grown to 200 congregations, 29,000

baptized members, and 21 ordained pastors. A brief look at the ratio of pastors to congregations and members should make it clear that there is a need for training more pastors in Ghana. Pastor Wiest lived in Ghana while he served as a missionary there.

The CLEF is actively supporting the training of pastors financially, but is also providing pastors like me to expand their ability to train pastors. As a young church body, they do not have Ghanaian pastors who have pursued advanced theological training to teach at the seminary and cannot release pastors from their responsibilities so that they can pursue advanced training.

The CLEF has supplied teachers such as Rev. Fehrmann and the Rev. Daniel Preus to the Lutherans of West Africa. They were received enthusiastically, but there is a need for even more instruction.

I will be leaving for Ghana on July 4 and arrive at the seminary in Accra on the evening of July 5. My teaching

responsibilities begin on Monday July 7. Each day I will spend the entire day teaching in the classroom. On the weekend I will serve as a guest preacher in some of the local congregations. This is not a vacation, but a mission trip as I teach pastors how to preach the Gospel of Christ. The class will end on July 18 and I should be back in church on July 20. While we often talk about the need for the Gospel to be preached to the ends of the earth, this will be a very direct involvement of our congregation in extending the Gospel to all nations. Much as Antioch saw the need for sending Paul and Barnabas, you are sending me to teach the Gospel of Christ to those in need. Keep me in your prayers as I prepare for this journey and the challenge of teaching in a different cultural environment.



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Pastor Fabrizious