Our Struggle, Our Joy

We spend a lot of time here teaching. Dale teaches pastoral candidates in four different villages, teaches Greek at the seminary in Accra, and even teaches some catechetical instruction in our base of operations at Tamale. And that doesn’t include the impromptu teaching that happens in the most unexpected moments! While witnessing to the traditionalist and the Muslim has its definite challenges, we have found that witnessing to improperly-taught Christians is filled with many challenges. Pentecostalism is widespread here. And it has lured all our students in every area we teach. We cannot break free of it.

“That isn’t so bad,” many may reflect, “at least it is Christianity.” But it is a Christianity that downplays the Spirit’s work through the Word and, when you do that, you downplay Christ (John 16:13-15; Romans 10:17; Isaiah 55:10-13; Psalm 138:2). And when you leave the Word, what are you left with? A burden to place on people that “if they were true Christians they would manifest the fullness of the Spirit” (tongues, healings, etc.). Then the disciple struggles to show that he is an authentic Christian. That is followed only by despair.

Next month, the world marks the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran reformation. And what was its message? God has shown the world His love and salvation through Jesus Christ, who is found in the Holy Scriptures.

“But,” they accuse us, “you are limiting God!” To which we respond, “No, it God who has limited Himself for us!” We cannot even look at God (Exodus 33:20; Isaiah 6:5). But, yet this same God limited Himself that the elders of Israel saw him and lived (Exodus 24:11). And the greatest place God limited Himself is in Christ, especially Christ on the cross. There God revealed the depth of His love for His broken creations. There He subjected Himself to death that we might have life. There He subjected Himself to the curse of hell so that we might have the blessing of eternal life. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, in his thesis Act and Being, put it this way: God is present, that is, not in eternal non-objectivity but ... “haveable,” graspmable in the Word within the church.

This message, which is the essence of the Gospel, alone comforts sinners. It turns their eyes away from themselves and their works, to focus on Jesus Christ, who fills the Scriptures with Himself. Anything less is a way to doubt and despair. But when we are overwhelmed by our sins, then we reach out to God who is as near as the Scriptures and then we have Christ, then we have peace. So, we say with the psalmist: Forever, O LORD, your word is firmly fixed in the heavens. (Ps. 119:89) Come, O Lord, and fill us with the word of joy that proclaims our salvation!
Word + Water = Life!

I hate the devil. He tempts me and whispers words of doubt in my ears. But it goes much more than that. By his unholy work, he has marred this creation and made it subject to death. Even a cute little baby is not exempt from this. But I love baptisms! There with God’s water and word, a finger is stuck in the devil’s eye and he hates it. When the divine washing of Holy Baptism occurs, the reign of Christ’s kingdom, a kingdom of life, spreads further and the devil’s kingdom is shortened. So, we give thanks that on Sunday, September 17, Emmanuel Juntende Kpamomm, infant grandson of Rev. John Konbat, was received into life through Christ. Thanks be to God!

Visiting a Lutheran School

While Dale was teaching in Bakpaba, he had a chance to visit the school of the local Lutheran parish. The congregation there is quite small, not even totaling 30 people. But they have established a Lutheran school in that village that has 53 students. They don’t even have a building! They meet in a classroom formed by reed mats and some are instructed under the shade of a cashew tree. We thank God for all the lessons offered there, especially their religion classes that share Christ with these precious children.

What’s Happening in October?

Dale will take the training we have done so far on to the village of Gbintiri. It will be 12 days with the students there, passing on the Word of Life. Afterwards, Dale will get a welcome break as he flies home to the United States of America to officiate at Gretchen’s wedding. Suzanne has already gone ahead so that she can be at the wedding shower. But we will come back at full speed, going immediately to Accra to teach more Greek and then we go to one more village, Bunkpurugu, before Christmas.

We encourage you to hold on to the Word of salvation. It alone conquers all evil. It alone fills us with eternal joy. It alone empowers us for the life that is found in Christ. As St. Paul wrote to young Pastor Timothy: All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

You can write us at:
Rev. Dale and Suzanne Kaster
TL 375
Tamale, Ghana
West Africa

Praise God For:

The many congregations and individuals who pray for us, encourage, and support us.

This month we specifically thank:

• Our Savior’s Way Lutheran, Ashburn, VA
• Redeemer Lutheran, Nashville, TN
• St. John’s Lutheran, Seward, NE

Thanks for your prayers and support!

Please pray for:

• The spread of the Word of God and the Kingdom of Christ
• The students of Gbintiri and for our teaching there.
• For our family as we gather to celebrate Gretchen’s wedding.
• The teaching that will happen at the seminary in November.

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There are many opportunities to serve as short-term or GEO missionaries. Check out the current list and download an application at www.lcms.org/service. Click on “Service Opportunities.”

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We commend you to the Word made flesh, our Lord Jesus Christ, Rev. Dale and Suzanne Kaster

Your Missionaries in Ghana, West Africa