

The Glories of God in Ghana

Psalm 87

News from the Kastars, Serving the Lord in Ghana

Email us: dale.kaster@lcmsintl.org



Son of God, Love's Pure Light

Each year, throughout our congregations, we enjoy and even tear-up as our congregations lower the lights, we light our candles, and we sing "Silent Night." It is a beautiful moment. But, in truth, it is a moment. Sooner or later the lights come back on, we walk outside of our congregations, and the flood of darkness seems to come pouring back into our lives – hatred, war, disputes, etc. But does it really?

The Apostle John wrote these celebrated words: *The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it* (John 1:5). Clearly John wants us to understand that the darkness is incapable of winning the war against the Light. That is because the true Light is none other than the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. Light wins! – the bumper stickers might say. But it wins because it shines the light of love.

We live in a world that says love should always overlook anything. Love has been equated with always saying, "Yes," and never, ever, EVER, saying, "No." To the world, the light of love never points out the darkness of error.

Such an understanding of our holy and gracious God could not be further from the truth. God says, "No" to us because not everything is good and not everything proclaimed as love is love. If God did such, His light would not be pure and His goodness would be impossible. If God overlooked what He knows (and proclaims) to be evil, then what sort of God would He be? He would be the worst of all gods, confusing us with the evil. If God's light was mixed with darkness, then it would not be pure and by it we could not be sure if we see aright.

But God does shine His pure, love-filled Light. He does this in Christ. On the Second Sunday of Christmas (January 3), we heard about the twelve-year-old Jesus coming to the temple of His Father. There, among the teachers and experts of the Law of Moses, Jesus sat giving testimony to His light. His questions and answers amazed them so much that they were beside themselves. He was the Light that had come. And there He was shining it to the amazement of all who heard Him.

Even His parents marveled at what they witnessed. Though they didn't understand when Jesus said that He "must be in His Father's house." Those words pointed to the cross. They were a testimony that Jesus had come to fulfill the Father's will and that will was to conquer the darkness once and for all. And fulfill it He did. There in the darkness of that first Good Friday there was a light shining. It was the Light of God's redeeming love.

This is the message we have been sent to Ghana to share. And this is the message of all Christians no matter where God has placed them. We are hoping to return very soon (see the next article). There is much to be accomplished there. And there is much to be accomplished here. It is as we sing, "Love's pure light" has come. And we are all sent outside of the doors of our churches to shine that Light. Shine it in acts of mercy, witness, and in our life together. Shine it and may all the people of the world be drawn to that Light.

Blessings on your witness!





Prayer Requests, Praises, and Thanks

- Praise God for the work already done in West Africa.
- Pray for the new leadership structure in West Africa.
- Pray for the McDermott, Moss, and Thompson families, raising funds for their work in West Africa.
- Pray for our Area Director, Rev. Gary Schulte, that he would heal.
- Pray for Bishop Fynn, head of the ELCG.
- Praise God for the work being done by our co-workers Rev. Gaugert, Rev. and Mrs. Wildauer (Togo) and Rev. and Mrs. Schumacher in Accra.
- Ask God to help the ELCG seminary's new leadership team.
- Pray for Pastor Konbat's healing.
- Ask God to bless our Tamale congregation with a spirit of outreach.

You can write us in the US at:
Rev. Dale and Suzanne Kaster
11952 Blue Spruce Ct.
Jacksonville, FL 32223

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."

Getting Cleared to Return

As we have reported before, we have been told by doctors that I am able to return to Africa. But there are still requirements that we need to meet in order to satisfy the Missouri Synod's Office of International Missions (OIM). This week Dale is meeting with an infectious diseases doctor whose specialty is tropical diseases. Hopefully he can give us some help with malaria and with fulfilling OIM's concerns for us. Please be patient with us as we try to be patient with our clearance needs!

Changes in Our West African Mission

Two weeks ago we were able to participate in a phone conference about the LCMS's work in West Africa. There have been some changes. First, Rev. Dr. David Erber, who has served as Area Director, has changed to working with the seminary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ghana (ELCG). It is the ELCG's desire to have their seminary accredited; Dr. Erber will be a big help with that. Also, Rev. Steve Schumacher has been asked to head the academic program of the seminary that will lead to its accreditation.

Also, we are welcoming Rev. Greg Schulte as our new Area Director. Rev and Mrs. Schulte are still stateside, working on funding and also healing. Please, keep him in prayers as he is still healing from a bad leg break. We also rejoice to report that OIM is working on sending us some help in Tamale. This person, not definite yet, will work with us in training in the north and with the congregation in Tamale. And it might also lead to allowing Dale to do some work at the seminary in Accra.

Pastor Konbat Update

We spoke with Pastor Konbat recently. He is in good spirits and is slowly healing. After his August motorcycle wreck, he needed surgery on three breaks on his right leg. Finally, he is now able to put some light weight on the leg. We are praying for his recovery to hasten so that when we get back he will be able to help us with our training.

Support Raising

We are making the most of our time here in the USA. Dale will be preaching and sharing with two congregations that have supported us in the past. On January 10th, we will be at Peace Lutheran Church in McMurray, PA (a suburb of Pittsburgh). And on January 24th, he will be doing the same at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Jacksonville Beach, FL. We thank God for those who will pray and donate to keep us on the field!

We often are asked, "Are you really going back to Africa?" We believe that is where the Lord has called us and still wants us. We think of Paul who was jailed, beaten, stoned, and plotted against. And yet he kept going to do the work. While we don't want to be foolish with our health (we are keeping a network of doctors in the loop), we also want to trust the God of grace who has called us. Please pray for us!

Rev. Dale and Suzanne Kaster

Your *Missionaries in Ghana, West Africa and Here in the USA*

To support the LCMS through the work of the Kasteters, you may send a tax-deductible gift to:

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod **OR** Mission Central
P.O. Box 66861 40718 Hwy E16

St. Louis, MO 63166-6861 Mapleton, IA 51034

Make checks payable to The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod or LCMS. Include "Kaster – Ghana," in the memo line. Gifts can also be given securely online through the LCMS website at www.lcms.org/kaster.

Visit us at www.facebook.com/kastersinghana - no FB membership needed!