

A Day in the Life ... January 2016 - letter #67

Dear Friends,

In the beginning of this new year, a typical Ghanaian greeting is "AFE HYIA PA", meaning both 'the year has gone round and come in a good way' and also 'may this New Year be a good one!' From my family to yours, this greeting means that even though an arsonist destroyed our beloved church building, years of memories, cherished items, and our historic organ, the good thing is that the congregation has remained strong and focused. We'll work together now to build a new church to the Glory of God! This Ghanaian greeting is meant to encourage all of you.

The Mission in Ghana has been alive and well now for 21 years since it's inception. In all that time it has been completely supported by the generous gifts of the members of the congregation, and not included in the normal church budget. Your gifts have brought a thriving school, fresh water, healthy breakfast, and the teachings of Jesus Christ to Akrampa.

Your gifts and the FLC Endowment Grants have kept the school in a good state of repair: plastering, re-doing the floors of the classrooms, re-roofing and painting of the building. This has been praised by the local education authorities, as they compared the government-built schools that have been left without repairs. The 2015 addition of a Kindergarten classroom, the 2014 gift of computers for the classrooms, school books, uniforms, and the sponsorship of some children by congregation members are some of the other amazing gifts to the Akrampa school.

The computers have made Akrampa one of only two schools in the whole district that have computers as a curricula requirement! And currently Akrampa is the only school in the District that has school feeding still going on. The government school feeding has been suspended in all public schools for lack of funds. Akrampa School is like a beacon of progress in the community. It is my prayer and hope that we will continue in 2016 to help Akrampa thrive.

2016 will bring new goals and challenges to the Akrampa Mission. On my last medical trip to the USA, in Texas, I came across a neat way of raising vegetables. A raised garden/garden on wheels and round garden optimize the use of space, water, and protect against rummaging wild and domestic animals.

It has been my goal since then to import this type of garden to Akrampa. These techniques, even though economical in use of space, are so very high yielding that they could be of great benefit to the people. I specifically wanted to do this for the school, both as a curricula tool, since they are taught basic agriculture and as a source of earning income for the school. The school does need to be able to raise some funds for day to day needs, and also the children could learn this technique to benefit them later in life, as some will grow up to be farmers. I estimate that this project may take about \$1,700 to get started, built and running. Our current monthly mission budget will not cover this. It is my prayer that someone may be led by God to help the children in this way. If you would like to help, please ask Pastor Jimmy how you could do so. Thank you.

A huge challenge for me in 2016 is the condition of my Jeep. Many of you may remember that the Jeep was a Love Gift from the Congregation of FLC in 2003. The Jeep is a 1999 year model, and as I'm writing this to you, has 348,522 miles on it! Were it not for this gift of a Jeep, my work in Akrampa would not happen. I average about 350 miles a week, between Akrampa, home, and helping the villagers with their needs. It has come to a point where it now breaks down for several days at a time. On a few occasions it was off the road for more than two weeks, and I had to take a taxi to the village. I pray every day that I will make it to work and home. The issues are becoming more frequent and expensive to sustain.

It is my prayer that this new year will be a blessed year for all of you, especially as you endeavor to restore the church, and that God will be glorified in all that you do!

Blessings, Pastor Ben