

WHERE HE LEADS..

FOREIGN MISSION OF THE APOSTOLIC LUTHERAN CHURCH OF AMERICA

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May the Beautiful Feet Return

BY PASTOR FRANK KODJO FAMIYEH, GHANA

How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good things!

Romans 10: 14-15

It fills my heart with joy and deep appreciation when our brothers from the Foreign Mission of the Apostolic Lutheran Church of America visit our churches in Ghana and Togo to share the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Gospel message invariably leaves many here, both believers and unbelievers, pondering over it and asking very pertinent questions, which often lead to their understanding and acceptance of the Gospel into their hearts. The end result is that every trip of our missionary friends here causes an increase in our church membership.

One example is when a couple, having been touched by the message of Pastors Bob Maki and Ansten Tretten at Abookyi, in Ghana, approached me the next Sunday,



Pastor Frank Famiyeh with the lead Pastors in Ghana.

asking to be part of our church, especially because of the salvation Gospel we preach. They confided in me that they did not believe the prosperity 'gospel' they heard so often could be of any help to them. I pray the Spirit, through our preaching of the Gospel, brings them and their children to faith in Christ for the salvation of their souls.

The women in our church, especially the Sunday school teachers, are full of gratitude for the insights they gained from the teachings of the two ladies on the mission team to Ghana, and also for the gifts of Bibles.

To my fellow teammates, Pastors Bob Maki and Ansten Tretten and Sisters Julie Matson

and Hanna Hendrickson, who share in the Heavenly calling, I send a big thank you and I look forward to your "beautiful feet" returning on another visit. The Ghana and Togo churches are extremely grateful to the Foreign Mission Board for the immense support they give to our churches through these visits.



Back row: Florence and Pastor Frank Famiyeh, Hannah Hendrickson, Julie Matson, Pastor Bob Maki and Pastor Ansten Tretten with children from a local village.

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BY JOHN RUOTSALA



Left: Examples of the 'Pastor's Shirts' and Saris worn in India. Middle: Haitians wear their best clothes to worship. Right: One tribe in Kenya washes shoes before visitors enter their church.

Cultural Dictates and Dress Codes

No matter where the Foreign Mission goes in the world, we quickly notice that the cultural norms vary greatly from place to place. Here are a just a few examples of such.

Church Attire for Pastors

We have learned that in much of Africa, a pastor MUST wear a suit and tie while preaching on Sunday in church. In India, there is no concept of suit and tie in the areas where we work. There, a dress shirt is all that is worn, or the more traditional Pastor's Shirt, which they gift us with each year we visit them. We show love and respect for both traditions.

Church Attire for Congregants

In India, the women always wear their colorful and beautiful Saris. These are each made of one piece of cloth about 3 feet wide by 15 feet long. Of course, they reserve their best ones for church. Women's legs must be covered to be considered modest. Women visitors are often gifted saris.

In Haiti, to attend church on Sunday, one must be dressed in appropriate attire. It seems men should have at least dress shirts if they do not have a full suit and tie. One young man came to church in what was considered improper clothes. He was very quickly escorted out and his lack of proper attire was discussed. When I saw what was going on, I went outside to talk with the Pastor and asked him to let the man come back into church, which he did allow. I told him I respect their desire to have people wear their best to church, but that all should be allowed to listen. I said that, over time, help can be given so that those who cannot afford the proper clothes, or for whatever other reason come without proper clothes, can be given them or be given a way to obtain what is needed. I reminded him the Word of God is too important a matter to make a person miss hearing it for reasons of attire. The Pastor understood and agreed.

In Kenya, one tribe's rule is you must NEVER let guests into the church until you wash their shoes, which are usually mud covered. (Never mind the church floor is mud anyway!) A different tribe we work with says one must never touch another person's shoes. This causes an interesting situation because when the tribe members visit between tribes, they feel disrespected by the other tribe's culture.

From these few examples, perhaps you can see one of the many reasons we want each traveler with the Foreign Mission to take the mission training course before their first trip. In addition to speaking the unchanging Word of God in Truth as the Holy Spirit allows and rightly divides it, we must also learn and respect the cultural items in each country. With love and common decency, these items never really are too much of a burden.



Finding hearts in common in Ghana.

I have wanted to go on a mission trip for years, but for many reasons nothing worked out for me until this past February when I travelled across the world with Pastor Bob Maki, Pastor Ansten Tretten, and Youth Leader Julie Matson to the countries of Ghana and Togo, in Africa. The whole experience was incredible and almost impossible to put into words; you can't explain the sticky heat of the afternoon, the feeling after an afternoon rain or the soft touch of a young girl stroking your arm until you experience it yourself.

In every way I had no idea what to expect of Ghana and Togo. I think that we all have our own ideas of what mission work is like, and even what life

in Africa is like. I know that I did! On all counts, if you haven't been there, there is a good chance that your ideas are wrong. Life in these countries is very different, but the humans are the same. One memory I have is from an evening service. Due to the fact the church does not have lights we had the service under the one streetlight in the town. It was broadcast on loud speakers in hopes that even those who did not attend the service could hear it and maybe listen from their homes. Following are a few thoughts that I wrote down about that service.

Ghana and the USA are more similar than I thought. We, Ghanaians and Americans, are all sinful people. Sitting in a village in the middle of nowhere, I anticipated witnessing an experience where everyone would be in the church, excited about these new visitors and hearing about God and His Word for us, but that is not the case. The distractions may be different, but our human hearts are the same. As the pastor preaches, there are children playing outside and animals bleating as well as TVs and music playing.

The human heart is the same all around the world. We chase after the pleasures of life instead of the hope that will truly lead us forward. We search for temporary pleasures to fill the holes in our heart. We look to possessions to fill us, when God is the only one who can do that for us. I am struck by the similarities in the way that there is a village full of people, but only a small portion of them are here with us. And ever more I see the need of these trips, to help people like Pastor Frank (the head pastor in Ghana) to reach out to these communities. We can only do so much by coming here, but hopefully we can be a part of God's plan to change the hearts of those lost in Ghana.

Seeing the work that is being done in these countries is so encouraging to me. Even in the short time that I was there, I could see that Jesus is at work in these hearts and in these communities. I pray that His work will continue to be done to reach as many people as possible!

Different Country, Common Hearts

BY HANNAH HENDRICKSON



An evening service held in Ghana, under a street light.

Training Teachers to Train Up the Children

BY JULIE MATSON

Before traveling to Ghana, Hannah Hendrickson and I were informed that there was a request for someone to teach the Sunday school teachers. We were asked to give ideas, thoughts and material to help them in teaching the children. In the United States, we have a lot of great books, wonderful lessons pre-made for each week with scripture, memory verses and questions to ask the students to get them thinking. Although it is great to have these resources, it is not possible to translate them into each language needed.

So, Hannah and I prayed, studied and prepared. Our hope was to encourage them to study the Bible, to spend time in prayer and preparation ahead of time and to teach from the Word. As we prepared, we began to write down what we had learned in Sunday school - stories from the Bible. Salvation, the birth of Christ, the life of Christ, in the beginning, Abraham, Moses, the 10 Commandments, Noah & the Ark, Jonah... oh, how much we learn when we have the blessing to grow up going to Sunday school!

Soon, we had pages of messages we have heard since we were young, messages of truth, found in God's Word for us to read and from which we can learn. We then found where each story is located in the Bible and noted it for the teachers' reference. This took a fair amount of time because we did not have internet access or a concordance, plus there was the

occasional power outage, causing us to scramble for our flashlights.

The day came to teach and we traveled to a small village, parking by the main road and walking in, as the car could not reach the church. We followed a woman carrying a large cooler on her head and a large container in her hands up the trail past the mud homes, past the cocoa trees, to the church. It was a small church made up of half walls, a tin roof and a concrete floor. After prayer and singing, Pastors Ansten Tretten and Bob Maki stayed in the church to provide pastor training while our translator, Anita, a young, vibrant, smiley woman, led us ladies out to gather under some large palm trees.

With the temperature being about 95 degrees and the humidity being high, the shade from the trees was essential. There were just a few of us at first, then, others started to join the group. Some were Sunday school teachers, some pastors' wives and other women from the local village. We indicated that we were going to be focusing on Sunday school teachings, but what we were going to share are good messages for everyone and hoped that having the knowledge would encourage the women to teach their own children at home. We provided notebooks to the women so that they could take notes.

"How does Sunday school look for you?" we asked? "We choose a story, sing songs, pray and have 'quotations,'"

was the reply. We had decided to start with Genesis. Since we had only two days to communicate the lessons, we knew we could not cover all the stories, so we picked some from our list and gave the chapters and verses where each message is found so that the women could then write it down for later reference. We briefly summarized the accounts and noted important things we can learn and a memory verse that applied to each story.

It turned into one long Bible story, sharing how Christ is spoken of throughout all scripture. We alternated the telling of the story, I shared one account then Hannah would share the next, all of the stories weaving in Christ as our Savior. We talked about how important children are to the Lord; how when we teach children the Word of God, it is planted in their hearts like a seed that deeply roots and never leaves them even when they are older.

Our chairs moved as the day progressed and the shade moved. The ladies fed their babies, and cared for their toddlers as we studied and discussed these amazing stories. The stories that are not just stories, but true events that happened to people who trusted in the one true God, messages of the sinful fallen man yet a gracious, forgiving and loving God. We pray that God, through His Holy Spirit, would apply His Word, which we studied together, to each heart that joined us.

Hannah Hendrickson (far right) with some of the Sunday school teachers, Pastors' wives, and local women and children in Ghana.





A basic medical clinic set up in La Boule, Haiti.

Who Heals All Diseases

BY JANE HANNU

For years I've thought that "someday" I would love to go on a mission trip. Then, in February, my daughter, Chauntelle, asked if I would consider joining her on a mission trip to Haiti. After some thought and prayer, everything fell into place, and we booked tickets. On March 22, we met up with John Ruotsala, Ansten Tretten and Riley Stenersen in Florida. From there we flew to Port au Prince, Haiti, where we met Arvi Aho. The six of us were picked up in two vehicles, and we drove up into the mountains, rising from sea level to approximately 3,200 feet elevation. It was beautiful. As we arrived at the church in La Boule, people lined the driveway, greeting us. We enjoyed listening to them sing "How Great Thou Art" in French. A few of us had packed medical supplies and Chauntelle and I began a medical clinic of sorts, with the help of two interpreters. We quickly recognized that high blood pressure seemed to be the overwhelming concern amongst those we saw. Because we could not bring prescription medications with us, we could only recommend that they lower

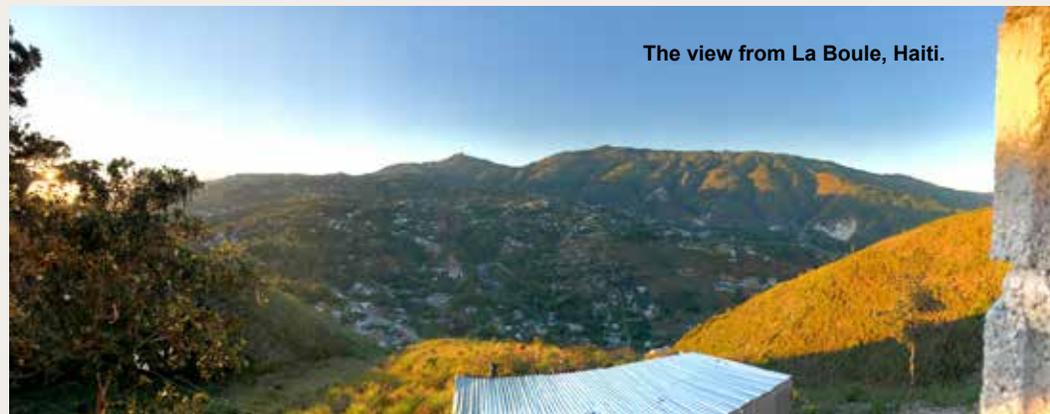
their sodium intake and suggest they see a doctor for medication. We gave out lots of vitamins, pain relievers and antacids among other things we had brought. There was a steady stream of people throughout that day, and the following day as well.

On Sunday morning, I woke up feeling a little bit melancholy. We had seen so many people with so many needs, and it seemed we had done so little to help. After Sunday school, we joined the adults in the sanctuary. They were singing joyfully. A Psalm was read – Psalm 103: "Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities: who **healeth all thy diseases...**" God is faithful. He is with us. He is with those dear people in Haiti. He cares for us much more than we can care for each other. Together, some in French and some in English,

we joined our voices in worship and praise to Him: "Let every kindred, every tribe, on this terrestrial ball; To Him all majesty ascribe, and crown Him Lord of all..." Soon after the service ended, we left La Boule. My prayer for this congregation, and all those they reach out to, is found in Ephesians 3: 14-21: *For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.*



The team that went to Haiti in March. Front: Jane and Chauntelle Hannu, Back: John Ruotsala, Ansten Tretten, Arvi Aho and Riley Stenersen.



The view from La Boule, Haiti.

Togo Pastors Seminar

BY JULIE MATSON



Pastors listen intently to the seminar while children shuffle around in their seats.

“Why did God save us?” The question is asked in the pastors training we ladies are observing in Togo. A man stands up to respond, his eyes bright and his face sincere, “He loves us. While we were in our sins and perishing - He died for us.”

A lizard scurries around on the bamboo walls, the wind blows through the church, shaking the small fabric decorations hung for color, and giving relief from the heat of the day. At times, the noise of the goats outside competes with the speaker and translator. Children sit among the crowd, moving in their seats as children do; most of them the pastors’ children that have come along with

their parents. Occasionally one goes to its father, looking to him for a quick pat on the head or a smile of acknowledgement.

Lunch arrives, carried in large pots on the heads of women, so skillfully. People, chickens and goats peer in the open door, some stopping for a moment in curiosity. I notice one of the pastors sitting near me. His Bible is in a different language. As he follows along, I see many highlighted scriptures.

One of the pastors stands for a moment against the wall to rest from sitting, still listening intently.

The teaching is from Romans now. A question is asked, “What is Paul trying to tell us in chapter three?” A man stands up. “No one is righteous by serving the law. To be righteous, you must pass through the blood of Jesus, that your sins be covered. It is a gift of God that comes through grace by faith in Christ Jesus,” is the response, spoken in broken English then translated.

These moments are special. When we are learning together, different languages, appearances and cultures don't matter - we all need the same truth.



Above: The building in Togo where the Pastors Seminar was held. Right: A question is asked during the Pastors Seminar.



South Africa Mission Trip

BY MARK SUNNABORG



Pastors Bob Maki and Mark Sunnaborg gather with Christians at an afternoon service outside a home in Magaliesburg. Many of these people followed the Pastors from home to home until the service started.

As I sat and thought about foreign missions, I pondered as to where would God have me go. There is a lot of work that can be done, even here in the USA, so I began to pray, "Where, Lord, and why?" I knew also that God's Word not only says to go and preach the gospel to all nations, but that if God would place a certain country upon my heart, then He would provide that message He wanted brought to that country and would also prepare the way and the hearts of the people to receive the message. So, when the Fall 2016 Foreign Mission Board meeting was held at the Tapiola Apostolic Lutheran Church, we decided to go and enjoy the services that would be happening along with the meeting. During the weekend, I spoke with Pastor Bob Maki about how I felt led that if I were to go on a mission trip it would be to South Africa. Bob replied that in January 2017 he was planning to go to South Africa and asked if I would be coming with him. I took this news as the reason why God had placed South Africa upon my heart some years ago. I arrived in South Africa on January 13 and learned we had a very busy schedule ahead of us. I could only pray for God to help me and He did help Pastor Bob Maki, Frank Famiyeh, from Ghana, and me.

I met a lot of God's children on the trip. I met the Bishop of the United Lutheran Church of South

Africa (ULCSA), Bishop Louis Mphahlele. He is more interested in Spirit led preaching that feeds and saves the undying soul than in having a fancy church in which to gather. In fact, a roof beam is broken in the church where we held a service! It was in the home of Bishop Louis & his wife, Maria, in Randfortien, that we stayed for the first week. It is located one hour west of Johannesburg. We spent our time preaching in area churches and sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ in area homes. I also met



Bishop Louis holding up one of the posters advertising the ULCSA Sunday services.

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Village home where we held services.

Pastor Felix of Toekomsrus Church, and it was at his home I had opportunity to visit and have lunch after holding a Sunday morning service in the school where his congregation meets.

We met more people when we visited Magaliesburg. In the morning, we visited several homes and shared the Word of God. A group of people followed us from home to home and then to the location for the afternoon service. They surely were hungering and thirsting after righteousness. My prayer is that the Word of God would feed their undying soul and they would be filled to overflowing, so that others would see and come to know of the hope that lies within them.



A roof beam is broken in this church where we held a service.

We also met Pastors at a two day seminar held at the Ikageng church. The topic for the Pastors Seminar that was conducted was "The Holy Spirit's Work in Salvation". People in all church denominations across the world are trying to understand all the Holy Spirit does for the believer. To share some of what we believe about this topic, we provided Biblical answers to questions about the names, characteristics, office, and source of the Holy Spirit. We also addressed questions regarding salvation that helped to clarify the activities and impact of the Holy Spirit in a Christian's life. There was so much wonderful information presented



Children at play in front of the home we stayed at for the seminar.

in the seminar that, if we had space, I would publish all of it here for you.

The people of the ULCSA asked that we pray for them. Let us pray! *Eternal, Almighty Father we come in the name of thy son Jesus lifting up the United Lutheran Church of South Africa. We ask for Thee to continue to bless each one, granting them strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow. Give them faith to walk each day, faith that is pleasing unto Thee. We know that Thou alone are faithful in all that Thou will and has done. We ask this in Jesus name Amen! Please continue to pray for the people of South Africa.*