Christmas in Akrampa, Ghana

Dear Friends,

Christmas in Akrampa is Christmas as it is all over the world. Universally, it is the day set aside to remember the birth of the Savior of the world, Jesus. I'd like to tell you how our mission village remembers the day Jesus was born.

In Akrampa, there are no Christmas trees put up, nor any cards from friends displayed, and it is very rare that gifts would be exchanged. Right before the mission school lets out for vacation, I allocate some funds for the children to be entertained in school before they go home. This year I intend to give each child a balloon and candy, in addition to the Christmas meal that the students and teachers share. I will also hold a Christmas church service with the students that day.

On Christmas Day, poverty will prevent most of the families from sharing a Christmas meal together as many other people around the world do. Only a few of the Akrampa families will have reserved one of their own chickens for the occasion.

In Akrampa, Christmas is centered around church and family. Christmas is one of 5 yearly celebrations where the people turn out in their best "Sunday" clothes. These are the only times during the year where new clothes may be bought and worn. Or when previous well kept attire is brought out and re-used by the families unable to buy new clothes. The other days of celebration are Good Friday, Easter, and their own traditional, cultural festivals.

On Christmas Day, church attendance is the center of the day's celebrations. After church, friends and family spend the day visiting with one another. Everyone greets each other with the phrase: "Have a good year. May this good year come again. We pray that we will be alive at this time next year." This replaces other greetings for about a week after Christmas because the Joy of Christmas lingers. It is strengthened with a firm handshake. On behalf of the people of Akampa, and my own family, I'd like to wish all of you a very MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Blessings,

Pastor Ben and family