

July 2013

Spiritual Beliefs and Practices of Akrampa

Dear Friends,

This article is our first request from the congregation. The topic requested is the spiritual beliefs and practices of Akrampa prior to the mission—and now. Thank you for taking part in our “story request event”! I hope to receive more requests from the congregation soon! Some background information on the “religion” of Akrampa before our mission started can be found in the [April](#) and [May](#) articles about the founder of Akrampa, Nai Kwao.

The village of Akrampa, Ghana has been in existence since the 1930's when Nai Kwao founded it. From then until the late 1990's Akrampa had a religion that was based on belief in spirit beings, idol worship, ancestor worship and magic. Their belief was that the invisible world of spirit beings must be acknowledged with sacrifices and in the pouring of libation (wine or oil poured in honor of a 'god'). This kind of veneration and recognition is sometimes offered to images (idols) that have been made out of wood or clay, or any other tangible material. These idols represent the invisible spirit beings, resulting in what is generally known as idol worship. Ancestor worship was the belief that when a good and charitable adult dies, they enter the spirit world. Then by being a part of the spirit world, the ancestor can provide safety, prosperity and health for their living descendants. The pouring of libation and sacrifices of live animals were made to please the departed ancestors so that they would ensure the continuity of the family and community.

The villagers lived their lives in a constant fear of offending the spirit beings, idols and even the ancestors. They believed that they or their families would be hurt by these idols, if they were offended. Some 'gave' their children to the idols as devotees. The pouring of libation on the idols and slaughtering of animals as sacrifice made the village prone to epidemics such as cholera, tuberculosis and other infectious diseases.

In the mid 1990's, as First Lutheran and I began our mission in Akrampa, the people slowly began to be impacted by the message of Christianity and the hope of eternal salvation through Jesus Christ. The people began to see their enslavement to the vanity of idol worship. The Gospel of Jesus brought to bear upon them the need to be freed from those old beliefs so that they could develop spiritually and as a culture. These changes did not happen quickly. Next month I will continue to tell you more about the challenges we faced in teaching the village about Jesus and some of the wonderful things that have started to happen as their beliefs changed and faith grew in Jesus! Watch for my next article to hear more of this exciting journey.

Please fill out and turn in your story request forms from the Ghana board, so that I can answer your questions or write about the topics you are interested in. Thank you!

Thank you!
Pastor Ben