

## Widespread effect of the rains - in Akrampa and all of Ghana

Dear Friends,

We concluded the letters on the effects of Covid-19, in my June letter. We saw how the Ghanaian community, and particularly, Akrampa, have not been spared from the viciousness of the pandemic. Covid has worsened the already dire financial circumstances, causing people to resort to all manner of things to make ends meet, to survive, with special reference to young people. The frustrations building up produce many reactions from the public, some being local and national demonstrations. Recently, a mass demonstration was held against the sitting government because of some killings allegedly caused by the security forces who were sent into a town in the northern part of the nation, hundreds of kilometers from the capital Accra. This demonstration, held almost two weeks ago against the government was even captured by Reuters. See the following link/website for more details:

[\(https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/hundreds-ghana-opposition-supporters-march-protest-killings-2021-07-06/\)](https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/hundreds-ghana-opposition-supporters-march-protest-killings-2021-07-06/).

This letter seeks to highlight the cycle of devastation that goes on every year due to the rains. Because the government is either slow, or on many occasions, insensitive to the plight of the citizens under the prevailing economic and social conditions, when the rains come, they make the already poor living conditions worse. Over the years Ghana has had **two rainy seasons in the country: the minor and the major**. The minor season occurs between the months of March through the first week of May, while the major season is between the months of July through October. All this has changed. In recent times little or no rain falls in the minor season and the volume of rainfall during the major season has also dropped significantly. The minor season is good for cultivation of crops and the major season is when fishermen have good and adequate catch of fish for the market. This will be the subject of a future letter: *'The fishing industry and its effect on the local people'*.

The current global weather patterns, as the news everywhere seems to report; that are causing floods in Europe, and the perennial fires that occur in California, have resulted in the changes that have brought about the worsening conditions of living in Ghana and in many parts of West Africa. First on the list of the effects of the rains is the condition of the roads. Many of the current roads that traverse the country began going bad from years of rainfall on them.

And because the roads have been left unattended to, without repair, they become nightmares for road users when the rains come every year. When the roads are bad, as they are a universal phenomenon, they cause all kinds of problems, but in reference to Akrampa the issue really worsens the already dire circumstances. The road into Akrampa becomes a real challenge for little vehicles because the running waters create gutters and gullies in the road. The traders in Akrampa, who commute to the local markets, are unable to transport their goods to the markets. In addition to that challenge, the heavy rains inundate the farms, washing away the crops, and the farm produce. The rains wreak havoc on the land and the farms of the people of Akrampa, and adjoining towns and villages.

At this juncture, may I speak passionately about what is happening on the grounds of the Akrampa School, and particularly its impact on the school buildings. The main concern is the serious erosion that is destroying the property, to the extent that the integrity of the school buildings is threatened. This year, the rains have caused more damage to the foundations of the two blocks of the Akrampa School that make up the seven classrooms containing the Kindergarten through Grade Six of our school.

The Endowment Grants from First Lutheran have allowed us to make some repairs and updates on the school. See my article from: *October 2018 - on the FLC website for the history of these repairs.* But, since 2008, there have not been any major repairs to the school's foundation. The 2008 repairs were landmark, because it was the occasion when Pastor Woody Chamberlain came down with a team of eight, who visited the Mission and helped with construction work then going on.

The legitimate question that may be asked is this: *'Is it the responsibility of First Lutheran Church and partners, friends, of Akrampa Mission to undertake repairs of the foundation?'* Technically, no ... because administratively the school is a member of the Ghana Education Service (G.E.S), which provides teaching staff and pays their salaries. In principle, therefore, any school like Akrampa is regarded as a public school and is managed by the government and its agencies. But unfortunately, the government is notorious about lack of response or poor response. Many school buildings have suffered and gotten lost because of neglect. So, in reality, this is why First Lutheran and partners have helped as much as possible with repairs and structural concerns for our Akrampa School.

Currently, parts of the roof are leaking seriously making it difficult for both teachers and students, for teaching and learning to go on. We managed to fix one classroom from the budget but that has rather caused more problems because it is like Jesus saying, new wine being wasted when put in old wine bottles (Mark 2:22). The rains come with heavy winds (storms) and sometimes find their way into the classrooms through the old windows and doors. God be praised that some Endowment Grant money has come in, to allow us to fix a couple of doors and repair seven windows on the school during the summer of 2021. Thank you to the FLC Endowment Committee for this gift of money.

I want to thank you all again for continued support. We love you so much.

Pastor Ben