

GRADUATION CEREMONY AT AKRAMPA SCHOOL

Dear Friends,

This article, as I mentioned in the August Lectern, is about the first ever Graduation Ceremony that took place in the Akrampa School, for the Junior High School students and pupils of Kindergarten 2 who are progressing into Primary One (1st Grade) in the 2017/2018 academic year. This graduation ceremony was for the total of twenty-eight (28) students - 21 in Kindergarten 2, and 7 in Junior High School.

We held this event on July 25th, and it was such a great day for the school and the people of Akrampa, and for the entire community. Let me first describe the feeling among the people of Akrampa before coming to how it affected the students and the school. The people of Akrampa know about such events because the trend is all around them, and for the few whose children attend other schools, they have participated in the graduation ceremonies in those other schools. The joy and pride of now having the school in their town also holding a graduation ceremony had a profound effect on them. Their participation, attendance and excitement were akin to ceremonies of the past. Two previous and memorable ceremonies: when Pastor Jimmy Madsen (1995) came to formally inaugurate the mission on behalf of First Lutheran Church, and in 2004, when Pastor Woody Chamberlain came to dedicate the school with the Anglican Bishop of the Diocese of Cape Coast.

July 25, 2017 will be remembered for a long time as a landmark event for everyone, particularly me. It ranks as high in importance as the following events: Pastor Jimmy commissioning the Mission (1995); when clean water, from a kilometer and a half long pipe flowed into the town (1999) and when Pastor Woody dedicated the complete six-room block for the Primary school (2004).

At the ceremony were people from all walks of life, who came to witness the day when children were graduated from the same cluster of schools (primary and junior high), on the Akrampa compound. Among the people who came were parents from in and around the community, representatives from the Anglican Church (the government-recognized administrators of the school), representatives from the District Office of the Education Service, other teachers from neighboring schools, elders of the community who represented the chiefs, and last but not the least, the people of Akrampa who were the dominant group.

The twenty-eight students were clothed in distinguishing gowns and were acknowledged by the education authorities present. The Kindergarten 2 children were presented with certificates that we designed for them. The Junior High School pupils, those who pass the national BECE, will be awarded certificates by the Ghana Education Service. It was a day of fun and joy making, as we celebrated these children, with the Schools' own Cultural Troupe performing to the admiration of the crowd who applauded them appreciatively. The presentation of certificates was done by the District Education Officer, with me giving support.

This trend, graduating students in Kindergarten and Primary schools, is now catching on in Ghana. It used to be common in the tertiary institutions (colleges & universities) but is now being done in secondary schools and primary schools, and Akrampa didn't want to be left out of this. The significance of all this is the fact that the Junior High School (JHS) established on the Akrampa compound by the government three years ago, processed its FIRST batch of Grade Nine pupils to participate in the National Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE). Successful students of this examination, continue on to be admitted into government-sponsored Day/Boarding secondary (Senior High Schools) for another three years of secondary school education.

Sadly, those who are unfortunate and do not pass the BECE will not continue to the higher grades. Some of whom end up on the streets of the big towns as part of the phenomenon known as 'Street Children', while some engage themselves in local businesses (fishing, farming, petty trading, etc.) We pray that all 7 of our students this year will pass the exam.

This Graduation Ceremony is an indication that the Akrampa School has come of age; has now joined the community of children who receive the recognition of completing particular levels of education in their lifetime.

I sent 3 short videos of the Graduation Ceremony, which Pastor Rosy has posted on First Lutheran's Facebook page. I hope you will go online to see this wonderful event!

Blessings, Pastor Ben