

“And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ...” -- Ephesians 4:11—12a

Mission Field Snapshot: Ghana, West Africa: 1973--1994

Extending the Office of Ministry:

Equipping Disciples, Teaching Elders, and Evangelists to Proclaim the Good News

Submitted by: Dan Kunkel, Evangelistic Missionary, Church Planter, Leadership Trainer, Missionary Counselor--Emeritus

In 1973 I was called by the LCMS-BFMS as a new seminary graduate to serve as evangelistic missionary pastor with Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Kumasi, Ghana. Holy Trinity was one of five small congregations that had formed the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ghana (ELCG) after 1960. From 1974 to 1977 I also served the ELCG as general secretary and recording secretary.

As senior missionary on the field I served as vacancy missionary pastor at times for Tema and the Bimoba area. Then in 1979 I was asked by the LCMS-BFMS to serve as the first Director for ELCG Leadership Training. This required me to utilize TEE (Theological Education by Extension) or ETE (Expanding Theological Education) methods in establishing and overseeing extension centers where the ELCG had its congregations and missions. I continued in that position and as missionary counselor until 1987; thereafter I was asked to concentrate in the Ashanti and Brong Ahafo regions.

After supervising mission area surveys in 1982—1984 I then helped provide field-based orientation and training for the new LCMS missionary teams called to serve in the Bimoba, Wassa, Konkomba, and Kusasi areas. As missionary counselor I also assisted them in developing annual goals and objectives for each mission area. These focused on local language learning, evangelistic outreach, baptizing new believers, equipping disciples, training teaching elders and evangelists, and releasing them to multiply teaching posts/preaching stations, community service projects, and congregations.

The TEE/ETE leadership program utilized satellite training centers in central cities, market towns and strategic villages in each new mission area. Initially these centers were staffed by LCMS missionaries who later were joined by ELCG pastors, trained at the Lutheran Seminary in Nigeria. The Lord of the harvest greatly blessed and multiplied the Office of Ministry through this team ministry of missionaries and pastors serving together with local languages-proficient disciples, teaching elders, and evangelists.

Within the TEE leadership program we needed to develop resources for evangelistic outreach, church planting, and leadership multiplication. They included (1) guidelines for opening teaching posts and preaching stations; (2) introductory Old Testament and New Testament lessons in simplified English and local languages; (3) lesson series and teaching services for Holy Baptism and Holy Communion preparation; (4) translations of Luther's Small Catechism and 100 Bible stories book into local languages; (5) handbooks and lessons to assist in the extension training of new leaders, teaching elders, and local evangelists, as well as community service and development project management.

The mission areas I served most directly were Kumasi, the Ashanti Region, the Brong Ahafo Region, and also ministries with the deaf and the blind. The Holy Spirit greatly blessed us. To the best of my knowledge the increases can be summarized as follows: from 1 to 13 congregations; from 0 to 19 teaching posts/ preaching stations; from 1 to 6 worship languages; from 25 to 610 baptized members; from 45 to 770 pre-baptism learners; from 7 to 49 new leaders-in-training; from 3 to 23 teaching elders; from 4 to 23 women leaders; from 0 to 6 evangelists; from 0 to 4 seminary students; and from 0 to 2 pastors.

“May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, that your way may be known on earth, your saving power among all nations. Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you!” -- Psalm 67:1--3