

Education Changes Everything for Akrampa: Part 3

Dear Friends,

Once again, I come to you in the blessed Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the risen Lord and soon coming King. Easter is the focal point of our faith, as Paul asserts: *"And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep."*

(1 Corinthians 15:17-18, 20 NIV). Hallelujah!!!

Gathering of families:

As it is always done in Ghana - and I am sure in other places in the world - schools are scheduled to have a break so the children can be with their families to celebrate holidays such as Christmas and Easter. Schools in Ghana were on break for a week, so the children and their families can be together during the Passion Week leading to Good Friday and to Easter. Indeed, Easter is one period where you encounter the movement of people from one place to the other. For families, it is the opportunity to gather *in the family/clan head home* for renewals, marriages and celebration of the dead. For religious organizations, it is the occasion whereby the parishioners are made to move and gather at places determined and chosen by the leadership, for what is generally known as *Convention*, and would be appropriately described as *Easter Convention*. You will come across vehicles loaded with people and cargo, converging at the *Convention Place*. In recent times, since Covid, this phenomenon has ceased. Education and publicity concerning the risks and challenges of having so many people all together during high-risk times of *Covid* have almost ended these large gatherings. Now, churches are encouraged to hold Easter, and other *special meetings in their local churches*, instead of gathering at larger places elsewhere.

Good news from Akrampa:

In this understanding - of the bringing of people to the saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ - we continue to work as He enables us, even in the confines of our peculiar social and economic circumstances. But thanks be to God who continues to provide through loving people such as you, so we are able to do what we fervently believe is the work of God among the people of Akrampa and beyond. I say 'beyond', because some of the graduates of Akrampa School have moved out of the community and are living and working among other communities in Ghana.

Once again, at the end of last year, (November 30th) the school held a Graduation/Prize Giving Day Ceremony for the pupils graduating from Kindergarten into basic (1st Grade), and for those moving on from Junior High School to Senior High School. There were 52 Junior High students and 40 Kindergarten students. The Junior High School had 30 males and 22 females, while the Kindergarten had 21 males and 19 females. Of this year's number (52) of JHS Graduates we had 38 students who passed their exams and qualified to be admitted into Senior High! Of the students who qualified for Senior High - which is 10th-12th Grade - 21 are boys and 17 are girls.

Difficult Realities:

Because of the endemic poverty in the community, in spite of the availability of *fee-free* education at the secondary school level, all over the nation, many homes are never in the position to sponsor their children into secondary schools. For instance, there is one young man who was offered admission to go to college but because the family doesn't have the resources, he is at home frustrated and disappointed. Two of his classmates, however, got admission into college. These three started from the school and are now the first to go beyond secondary school and enter into university.

Those who are unable to enter the secondary school are those whose parents don't have the resources to provide clothing and other basic necessities - the responsibility of parents - which is a huge challenge. Because most of the schools are boarding facilities, the cost of upkeep of the child in the boarding house is way beyond the means of the average family. This results in more than 60% of them never benefiting from education beyond the Junior High School, 9th Grade, level. This creates societal problems for the nation and for homes. Some of them are lucky to find themselves employed as *Okada riders*, (a menace that I described in my January letter), some will also go into farming, and sadly as in all cultures a small percentage will find themselves drawn into all kinds of socially unacceptable behavior. Also, some of them - mostly the females - will work from stalls in the food markets to set up wares and farm products (fruits/vegetables, etc.) to sell.

It is our prayer that the impact of education will continue to be a guarantee for their future. And that as each new class of students graduates from our Akrampa 9th Grade Junior High School, that they will have the ability to go on to High School and possibly college.

Pastor Ben