

Handling the Word of Truth

Supporting Theological Education in Togo and West Africa

Missionary Rev. Jacob W. Gaugert

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Prayer

- Thanksgiving for the ordination of Pr. DJEKOAB

- That the Lokpano parish would be motivated to share their first-fruits in good stewardship to support the Ministry of their parish and pastor in their community

- For guidance for the Lutheran Church of Togo (ELT) as they plan for more ordinations in the near future

- For commitment and good preparation for two pastors of the ELT who will serve as part-time faculty at CLET this upcoming academic trimester

- For healing for Director SOUK of the CLET who is recovering from a motorcycle accident



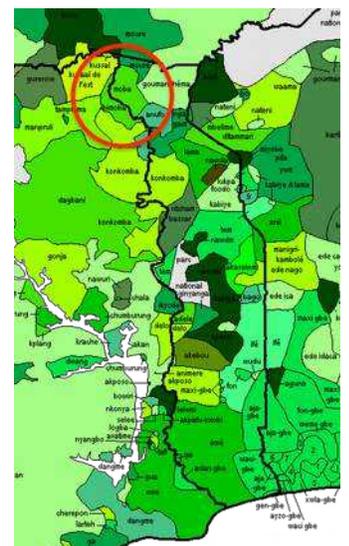
Pronouncing a blessing over the candidate during the rite of Holy Ordination.

Ordination in Lokpano

This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful. - 1 Corinthians 4:1-2

On a very hot Saturday morning in November the people of the village of Lokpano, Togo began to make their way to the local school to attend a special church service that marks an important day in the history of the Lutheran church in this community.

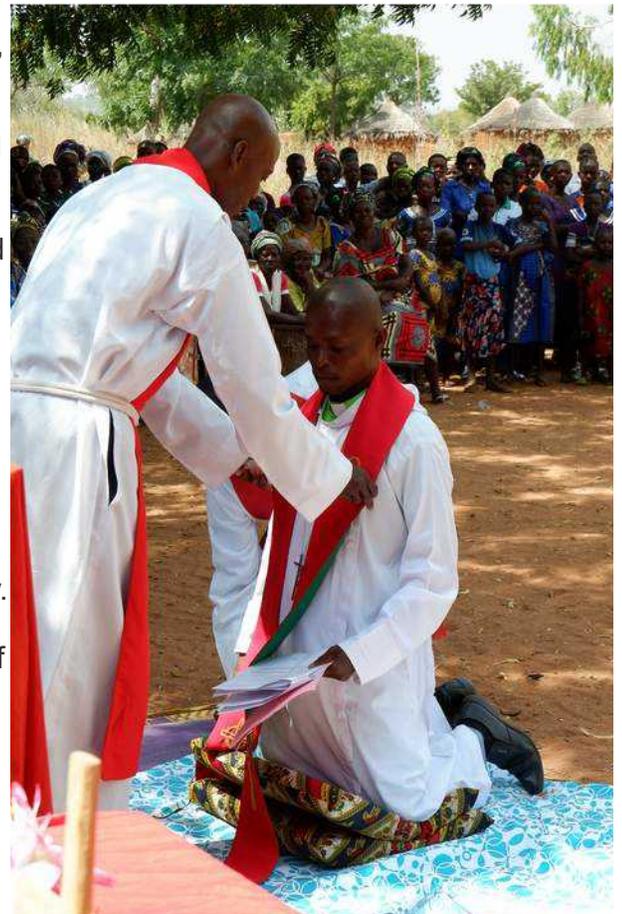
In 1980 the late Rev. Walt DeMoss, crossed from Ghana into Togo to share the gospel and offer pastoral care and mercy to Bi-Moba refugees fleeing from a tribal conflict that they lost with the neighboring Konkomba. When one looks at a modern map today, one could say that Rev. DeMoss switched mission fields; but actually, he stayed with the same people group. The Bi-Moba have lived in the same general northern area of modern day Ghana and Togo for generations - since well before colonial borders cut through the middle of their lands. Rev. DeMoss trained evangelists, initiated agricultural projects, established a school and a clinic, and served as the supervisor and spiritual father for numerous Bi-Moba who are still in the Lutheran church today. The geo-geographical center of this work was in the village of Lokpano. From here missionaries were sent out to plant other Lutheran parishes and mentor local evangelists in the northern part of Togo.



A map of the local languages in Ghana and Togo. The area of the Bi-Moba is shown in the red circle.

After the departure of Rev. DeMoss and the sizable team of LCMS World Mission American missionaries in the early 2000's, the task of pastoral care and evangelism was left to the Togolese. The CLET was formed to help prepare local pastors for this task. Although new parishes continued to be established and more pastors were trained and ordained for this Ministry, the village of Lokpano was left without a full-time, called pastor. The little Lokpano flock was served by evangelists and ordained pastors from other villages who came on intermittent visits. But on November 16th of this year, the prayers of the Lutherans in Lokpano and the missionaries who served here for many years were finally answered: the Lokpano parish was getting their first ordained pastor!

As the sun began to heat up the morning air, village chiefs and elders, local authorities, church choirs, and pastors from the Lutheran parishes and pastors from other protestant congregations, began to assemble and take their seats. The Togolese authorities also sent armed soldiers to ensure security. The music began and more and more people came to experience this important day. The service of the Word and the rite of ordination lasted for more than three hours. Rev. President Lambon LARÉ of the Lutheran Church of Togo conducted the rite of ordination. Alongside scripture readings, preaching, and prayers, were also dances, offerings of gifts for the parish and for the new pastor and his family, and official greetings from local authorities and pastors. A special greeting was shared by the pastor and church leaders from the sister Lutheran congregation from just across the border in Bunkpurugu, Ghana. This was a wonderful sign of direct, inter-Africa church support from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ghana toward their



Receiving a stole in the rite of Holy Ordination – a symbol of the yoke of Christ's Ministry



The various choirs begin their dances during the offering. The pastors and other local leaders are seated under the tarp while members of the parish and the community crowd into the shade of the nim trees.

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If you would like to acquire several sheets of fabric from the Togo church and would be willing to organize pick up in Madison, WI or shipping, please contact Rev. Ryan McDermott 608-473-3473 ryan.mcdermott@lcms.org

brethren in the Lutheran Church of Togo. After the service, guests were invited to share a meal of rice, fufu (pounded sweet potato), green sauce, pork, and chokpah (the local millet beer).

Vicar DJEKOAB Yantchénaen and his wife Aïcha had left Lokpano back in 2012 to begin studies at CLET. I had the privilege to teach DJEKOAB in some of the first classes I taught just after arriving in the mission field. He successfully completed the three years of study at CLET in June of 2015 and then worked faithfully to complete his vicarage by June of 2017. It had taken over two years for the local parish and the national church to plan the ordination. By Western standards that may seem a bit strange. Why the delay? In Africa there are many dynamics in play with status, resources, and decision-making processes. Generally speaking, the manner in which you pursue a goal with others, how you speak with and work with others in their relation to you and other authorities, is even more important than the goal itself. We are thankful that the ordination was planned and that it was done in a way that had all pastors and levels of authority of the national church and local parish involved. It was a true joy to be present for this day with the ELT pastors and members, along with fellow missionaries Rev. Micah Wildauer and Valerie Stonebreaker.

Although this special day and celebration have passed, we rejoice that now the Lokpano parish has their pastor and can continue to celebrate the blessing we all have in faith in Jesus Christ that prepares us for the celebration and feast before the Lamb in His kingdom which has no end. We pray that the Lord guard and keep Pastor DJEKOAB in his Ministry in Lokpano for many years to come.

In Christ,



A gift of communion ware and hosts – given by a donor through Rev. Micah Wildauer to encourage dignified and frequent celebration of the Lord's Supper.



In Africa people like to have shirts or fabric printed to commemorate a special celebrations or to identify with a particular group. It encourages community identity and solidarity.

Here are two examples of such fabric. To the left is one of the visitors from Ghana that attended the ordination. She is wearing the fabric that the Lutheran Church of Ghana printed for their recent 60th anniversary celebrations. To the right is a Togolese woman and her children wearing the fabric for the Lutheran Church of Togo.





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