

## **Announcing the new WestRock Head Pastor!**

Drissa Kone  
August 28, 2015

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Over the past two months, the WestRock Pastor Search Committee and Westrock Council have spent a considerable amount of time and made a great, prayerful effort to select the best candidate for our new pastor. We had three excellent applicants, each with great strengths and unique qualities. It was a difficult decision, but we are excited about the future of the WestRock community.

It is our pleasure to introduce you to the new WestRock Head Pastor, Pastor Drissa Kone. There will be a special Sunday service to officially install him as our pastor on Sunday, September 6th at Belvedere . Rev. Compton will be there to welcome Pastor Kone. A little info about our new Head Pastor:

Pastor Kone was born and raised in the Ivory Coast. In 2002 during the instability of a harsh civil war he was thrown into a brutal jail due to ethnic discrimination. While he was in jail he had a dramatic encounter with Jesus and soon after, met and joined the church. We hope at some point he can share his dramatic story personally.

Kone is well educated with a BA in Education earned in his home country, a Masters in Divinity in Pastoral Counseling from Unification Theological Seminary (UTS) and a Master of Diplomacy in Conflict Management and Negotiation from Norwich College. At the end of this year he will be receiving his Doctor of Ministry in Peace and Justice from UTS.

Pastor Kone is a man of faith and has great gratitude for True Parents and the depth of Divine Principle. He has strong skills in counseling, and as chaplain of Barrytown College he has worked with young adults in many capacities and regularly gave sermons. In his studies he has been interested in how to nurture personal spiritual development. He stated that "pastoral work is more about transformation than inspiration". Kone has taught one day Divine Principle workshops, recently was assigned to introduce Divine Principle to guests during witnessing in Manhattan and taught 21 day workshops. At Barrytown College he created his own Family Values curricula and stated that family values are most important to him. Kone has much experience in interfaith relations and is working with many religious leaders in New York City for his dissertation. He has a lot of good ideas and much energy to put into pastoring, and there is so much more!

Pastor Kone came to the United States in 2009 and was blessed in February 2010 to Tsedvee Suren Batsuren who is from Mongolia. They have two daughters, Miae Maliaka, 4 years old and Yah-Michelle, 1 year old. They will be living at our "White House" parsonage.

Together with Pastor Kone, the Council is drawing up a plan for a pastor team. We would like to include the other pastoral candidates on this team if they are interested. We know great things will be happening at WestRock, so please jump in -- we need you!

Sincerely,

The Westrock Council