

LTS NEWS

Vol. 17, Issue 3 Page 1



LUTHERAN THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY



Teaching at LTS: A report by Rev. Dr. Carl C. Fickenscher II

Teaching an intensive on Law and Gospel: July 27 - August 2

Thanking his generous sponsors, Dr. Fickenscher reports on his time at the LTS:

Greetings, dear Saints of God!

The flight to South Africa was reeeeeeeeeeeally long—fifteen hours. It's a six hour time difference from Fort Wayne to South Africa. I slept maybe four interrupted hours on the flight, so I was seriously jet lagged for about a day. Fortunately, I arrived late Tuesday night local time and didn't begin teaching until Thursday morning, by which time I felt pretty normal.

The temperatures were just what we were told to expect for their midwinter—perhaps dipping into the upper 30s at night but warming to nearly 70 in the daytime. That's certainly not Massachusetts or Indiana winter, but the buildings aren't that well insulated, so it does feel pretty chilly. I'm proudly wearing a Reformation 500th Anniversary hoody when I'm casual, so we're really quite fine.

I delivered twenty copies of Walther's Law and Gospel to Dr. Wilhelm Weber, my host, the director of the seminary, to distribute to the students (one whole checked suitcase full). They were supplied by our seminary and Concordia Publishing House. Bringing books as luggage, I've learned, is the cheapest and best way to deliver much-needed theological resources—though getting around the airports with an extra REALLY HEAVY bag was a little clumsy! This is the book that I taught these two weeks, so it was quite necessary for the students to have them, and they were very appreciative! As you might guess, money for purchases like that is in very short supply for nearly all of the students.

I began Thursday morning by preaching for chapel at 10:00. It's really very much like the chapel services at the seminary in Fort Wayne . . . but on a much smaller scale. It's a pleasant, nicely appointed chapel, with perhaps a total student body of forty

Open Day

On Saturday, **September 2**, the LTS will be hosting its customary Open Day. All interested parties and members of the public are invited to attend. This is a marvellous opportunity especially for those considering seminary education to pay a visit and be introduced to the sights and sounds of seminary life.



(including deaconess students), plus other faculty and support staff—and nearly everybody’s in worship. We use LSB, Matins and other orders, led by a student liturgist with a faculty (or other pastor) preacher. Most of the services are sung a cappella, and the folks really sing quite well. My sermon text (assigned to me as part of their regular schedule) was II Timothy 4:1-8, which just happens to include our CTS-Fort Wayne motto, “Preach the Word” (II Timothy 4:2). Great text for future pastors!

After chapel, my class went from 11:00 to 1:00 each day in a very nicely appointed classroom—tables in a square, whiteboard, chalkboard—just the right size for our number of students. My students were the “seniors”—in the last three years of their program. It’s a good, solid academic program, and I can tell from the class discussions that these guys are well prepared to be faithful, confessional, and skilled Lutheran pastors.

The students really are appreciative and eager to learn. A couple of them are pastors doing graduate work; most of them are preparing for ordination in their home countries. “Home countries” is significant, because the seminary in Pretoria has been the primary advanced theological education for confessional

Lutherans for most of Africa. All the students are black African, but they come from many countries: South Africa, of course, but also Namibia, Zambia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Liberia, Uganda, Sudan, and others.

It’s been remarkable to hear the stories of all these students! Each day after class a talented cook, assisted by some of the deaconess students, provides a really delicious lunch for everybody. (Most of the students live on campus, a few with families, so this is like the dining hall, except it’s always outside in the beautiful weather.) Well, one day I was sitting around the table with six students (one of them a deaconess student), and I asked how many different countries they came from. Counting myself, the seven of us came from five different countries. Then I asked how many different first languages we all had. Counting myself: seven! Every one of us had a different first language! Even the two from Zambia had different first languages, as did the two from Congo. We were speaking English, of course, and I teach totally in English without a translator, but English is (at least!) a second language for almost all the students. This tells you how sharp these guys and women are! Most of them know many languages! Think of what that means for theological studies: these folks are way better at learning the biblical languages than we are! They—including the deaconess students—take their Greek and Hebrew at the same time! The deaconess student at the table, a delightful young lady from Zambia named Hope, said her first year of Greek was hard, but by the second year she got it fine. Oh, how we all wish we could say that!

Then to hear their stories! Some come from cities, some from very small villages. One student’s grandfather was a witch doctor . . . who became a Christian shortly before he died. That student asked me if we had witch doctors in the U.S. The student from Uganda, Humphrey, really has a remarkable story, only bits and pieces of which I’ve heard so far. Tiny village, as primitive as we sometimes picture. Very oppressive government—even now, almost forty years after Idi Amin. No way he or anyone would have foreseen him studying confessional Lutheran theology at a very high level to become a pastor. (By the way, most of the students—like Hope and Humphrey—have helped out guys like me by happily inviting us to use their Christian names that we can pronounce. But I also have Dumisani and

Nkosikhona, and Stanley grinned and told me he prefers to be called Mokone. I was pretty good on these by the second day.)

The students processed Walther’s Law and Gospel very well and did a great job on the daily quizzes. Asking excellent (hard!) questions, always right on point. Answering my lines of inquiry so that they invariably finished my thought at just about the moment I expected them to get it. Really very much the same types of Q and A as my students in Fort Wayne. Again, it’s amazing to me that these guys can read a difficult text and engage in discussion so well in a language that isn’t their first. Hmm. I think I need to let my American students know they ought to appreciate how easy they’ve got it. (Occasionally they do think I’m a little tough, you know!)

Once more, thanks so much to all who made this possible. Yes, it’s been a lot of fun, but the best part has been helping to equip future pastors of Christ’s church to preach His Gospel to all of us who fall so far short of keeping God’s Law. The students were wonderfully appreciative.

Yours in Christ Jesus!

Dr. Fickenscher

Concordia Theological Seminary

Fort Wayne, IN, USA



Items requested

Rector Dr. Wilhelm Weber writes:

Dear friends and supporters of the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Tshwane. We're still looking for more cupboards, tables, sideboards and beds for our growing student numbers in Arcadia and Farenden Streets. Perhaps you've also got a fridge to donate, a microwave or a hot plate. Please consider giving to the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Tshwane. Our Seminarians are a very grateful group of mainly foreigners, who are dependent on appropriate accommodation and facilities here. These things they only use while studying theology here. It's not for personal enrichment, but to enable our Seminarians a suitable place to study, learn and live during their years at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Tshwane.





Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

It was a privilege for me to travel from my home in Saint Louis, Missouri to the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Pretoria, South Africa again this year. I am a Pastor in the Southern Illinois District of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. I serve two congregations in the District; at one I am the Pastor, and at the other I am the Pastor and the organist. I teach Confirmation and Music to upper grade students at a Lutheran elementary school near my churches. I am also one of the organists at Concordia Seminary in Saint Louis.

While I was at the seminary in Pretoria, I played the keyboard for 15 chapel services and for the Sunday morning Divine Service of the English speaking congregation that meets on the seminary campus. I also preached at two chapel services and gave one private music lesson.

The Southern Illinois District continues to support the seminary on a regular basis. We were pleased to purchase a new

"Planting & growth of Churches" was taught by Dr. Detlev Schulz. It was both theoretical and practical. Examples of church planting in an American setting as well in the LCSA especially Botswana were mentioned. It was a good class with a lot of learning materials. I am still waiting for result of the class.

We also took "Old Testament Paradigms for Mission" with Professor Dr. Walther Maier III. He was so patient in showing students mission paradigms from the Old Testament. He showed us examples of God where He uses Israel as instrument for His mission to other nations. There are examples of Gentile nations which were converted and had faith in God of Israel. Other examples are

keyboard for the seminary after my visit last year, and during my visit this year I was able to set up the keyboard and use it to accompany worship services.

I wish to thank the seminary administration and the students for their hospitality. I stayed in the guest quarters on the seminary campus and ate the same meals that the students receive (breakfast and lunch). One day I also enjoyed a special lunch off campus with members of the faculty. I look forward to visiting again as the Lord wills. Until then you will remain in my prayers and the prayers of my congregations.

"But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it, and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ." (2 Timothy 3:14-15)

God bless you as you serve Him in your lives and in your various ministries!

Rev. Dr. Arthur Eichhorn, Ed. D.

of individual converts who were converted to the God of Israel e.g. Rahab, Melchizedek, Esther etc. A very positive experience.

I now have only two classes left: History of mission and Missiology Today. I will be doing one independently, and I plan go to Fort Wayne in June next year for the other.



Time off in Fort Wayne:

Rev. Nkambule reports: "Professor Pless invited four of us international students over to his house for a barbecue. The three others were from Madagascar, Papua New Guinea, and Brazil. We had a nice time with Rev. Pless in his house. It was a good time together.

Every afternoon, we took half hour bicycle rides around Fort Wayne. That helped us to relax and improved our concentration and class participation. We were also given a weekend out by the church that we normally attend when in Fort Wayne (Prince of Peace at the Stroh). The whole congregation gave a farewell dinner as we were about to go back home. One family even let us use their guest house by a lake and took us boating. It was a very nice experience indeed!

Experiencing the LTS

by

Rev. Dr. Arthur Eichhorn, Ed. D.

PhD studies

by

Rev. M.J. Nkambule

This time I took three classes instead of the usual four. There were only three which matched requirements for my Ph. D.

I took "Worldviews and Living Religions" with Professor Robert Bennett. The course was about different kinds of worldviews in such religions as Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Animism especially in Madagascar and in Africa as a whole. It was a good class. We covered a lot of books including some by the lecturer himself.

Rev. Mbongeni John Nkambule serves as a pastor in the Lutheran Church of Southern Africa, as husband to his wife, as father to his children, and as lecturer at the LTS.

Rev. Nkambule is also enrolled in

the Ph.D. course at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, IN, USA. He attends intensives classes there regularly and has almost completed his postgraduate coursework.





Student interview

with

Emmanuel Tengbeh

Tell us about yourself – describe your home country, your hometown, and your home church.

My name is Emmanuel S. Tengbeh, born 1983. I am from Liberia, situated on the West African coast, bordered by Sierra Leone to the northwest, Guinea to the north, and the Côte d'Ivoire to the east. Approximately 40% of the Liberian population is Christian. I have four sisters and one brother, and our family belongs to the Kissi speaking tribe. I grew up in a small town called Boyah, close to the Liberia-Sierra Leone border. There are three churches in Boyah – two are Pentecostal, the other, a Lutheran church, also has a preschool. After completing high school in Sierra Leone, I received a Diploma in Theology from the *Lutheran Coordinating Center for Theological Studies (CCTS)*, Baoma Chiefdom, Bo District, Sierra Leone in 2008.

I am a member and an ordained pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church Liberia Synod. It has an estimated membership of between 10 and 15,000, with about 3-400 congregations around the country. We have about 150 trained pastors, and St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran church, Wood camp, Reed light, Monrovia is our headquarters. In my home district, Foya, Lofa County, Liberia, we have a total of 3,600 members in 24 congregations. We also have two primary schools.

Briefly describe your experience at the LTS

This is my second year at LTS. I came here in 2012 with 10 other Liberian brothers and sisters. Seminary life in that year was not too difficult for me. We had students from 8

different countries and we were all friendly and could share with one another, even though our monthly stipend was not much. That year I also received help from my late father, in whose care I left my wife and children. At the LTS prize giving that year, I received the award for best student. Unfortunately, due to a lack of funds, we Liberian students could not return to the seminary the following year. But in 2016, my senior pastor told me that Dr. Weber had found a sponsor for me. I do not know his name, but I thank God for his help. May the Almighty God richly continue to bless him for his kind gesture in my life!

I am very motivated by the love and privilege God has shown to me and want to follow my calling to be trained and serve His people in the Christian church, beginning in Liberia.

I enjoy meeting new friends, professors, and lecturers, being introduced to so many theological experiences and the like. But I know that seminary life will not always be smooth sailing. We have to deal with many challenges.

Please share some of your challenges and joys with us.

Some of my many challenges of studying here are: (A). Finances: In our country, pastors are not paid as they are in Western countries, so I found it difficult to obtain the passport, visa, and other documents that pertain to visa application, and to come up with travel expenses. (B). Family: As a pastor wanting to live a faithful life with my wife, who is still back home, is very challenging, especially since I will be away for another four years in total. Some families cannot take such a strain, resulting in separation or divorce. I pray the Lord would grant strength. Also, one of my sons took ill. He needed blood transfusions on three different occasions that cost more than \$1,000 USD. I couldn't afford a single dollar. (C). Food: Sometimes the food is very different to what we are used to!

Joys? My greatest joy is that November is coming, when I can go home and be with my family, but I do wonder: "How am I going to meet my family as a husband and father?"

What are you hoping to gain from your seminary studies, and how do you plan to use what you learn here?

This is an interesting question. As I mentioned above, I am a high school graduate, and I hold a diploma in theology, so, my hope and expectation for my studies here is to graduate with a degree or equivalent.

I have already begun to use the knowledge acquired from LTS. Drawing on the knowledge from my first year and my previous studies, I became the theological training director for our district of 24 local congregations with a total membership of 3600. I serve on the ordination committee of our national church body and on its board for theological training. I am a presenter on the Lutheran Radio Ministry under the support of African Radio Ministry (ARM). I was able to start a primary school in one of our district parishes. I also organized weekly training for pastors and lay preachers to make sure the ministry of the word and sacraments is properly conducted, using Luther's Small Catechism. When I graduate from the LTS, I look forward to doing even more with the help of God

What would you say to those considering coming here – what role does the LTS play in the kingdom of God?

If any of my friends from Liberia should wish to come here, and if sponsors are found for them, I would offer to facilitate interviews with them to determine their level of education, their financial and family background, and their expectations. I will be able to tell them what life is like at the seminary, and help them to work together and consult with the seminary rector. That would help people to have realistic expectations before coming.

In closing, I would like to express my thanks and appreciation to the Rector, Dr. Wilhelm Weber, whose good leadership experience, connections, humanitarian efforts and above all, godly love in keeping with the great commission got me where I am today. I will never stop praying for God's favor, protections and wisdom to be bestowed on him. Thank you for selecting me for this interview.



LUTHERAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Training Christ's followers as pastors, teachers, evangelists, missionaries, bishops and deaconesses for faithful service in the Lutheran Church of Africa.

The Lutheran Theological Seminary in Tshwane is a registered Public Benefits Organization. Donations to LTS can be deducted according to Section 18(a) in the South African tax laws.