

# LTS NEWS

Vol. 18, Issue 3 Page 1



## THE ARM OF THE LORD

*Is the Lord's arm too short?* (Num 11:23)

by Rector Dr. C. Walter Winterle

Moses was facing a huge rebellion from some of the leaders of the people. They were in the process of crossing the wilderness, and there was nothing to eat but manna. But the people were missing "the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic" from Egypt. Instead of looking forward to the Promised Land, they were looking backwards and complaining against Moses and against God. They forgot their time of slavery.

God promised to give them meat to eat. Yet even Moses doubted. From where would God get meat to give them? But God replied to Moses: "**Is the LORD's arm too short?** You will now see whether or not what I say will come true for you." (Read the whole story in Numbers 11.)

The arm of the LORD is never too short. In Christ, *all the promises of God are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us* (2 Corinthians 1:20, NKJV). Jesus taught us to pray for our daily bread, and we have it on our table by God's grace. "God gives daily bread, even without our prayer, to all wicked men; but we pray in this petition that He would lead us to know it, and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving." (Martin Luther's explanation to the 4th petition, Small Catechism).

At the LTS, in spite of the financial crises, we experience that the arm of the LORD is not short, and we have our daily bread. Sometimes it happens that we don't have exactly what we wish, but we have what God

gives us. And we receive it with thanksgiving. We thank all donors and supporters for your prayers and donations. We trust that we will make this year with God's help and with your support.

Bishop Maragelo (LCSA) and I traveled to the USA on behalf of the seminary August 2-15. We had very good contacts. We met with Pres. Matthew Harrison of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, along with Dr. Albert Collver and Rev. Kevin Robson, and received a warm welcome and good support from them. We also met members of the Saint Philip Lutheran Mission Society who support the LTS with donations. They bought all the books LTS needs for this semester – more than 200 of them! Thank you, thank you, thank you. Please take a look at our website ([www.lts.ac.za](http://www.lts.ac.za)) to see some of the places and some of the people we visited. The list of our contacts is long, and we are sorry that we cannot mention them all here. Thank you all for your love and support. Your names and partnership were all reported with gratitude to the LTS Board of Directors in the regular meeting on August 21.

We strongly believe that the arm of the Lord is not too short. The LTS is not just a theological Institution, but it is a mission project – we are preparing students from seven different countries to go back home to tell what the Lord has done for them and how God has had mercy on them (Mark 5:19).

Rector Dr. C. Walter Winterle



LUTHERAN THEOLOGICAL  
**SEMINARY**

## Contractor's Report

Dear Rector,

Welcome back to Africa! I hope everything went well with your trip.

During your absence, I had to perform a number of repairs. Firstly, I repaired a leaking tap in the double story house. There was also a problem with the way the geyser (hot water tank) had been installed. Before working on any pipes or fittings connected to the geyser, I would always have to shut off the main water supply to prevent all the water in the geyser from running out. The pipes had been installed incorrectly, and so I had to address that.

Then I had to weld the safety door of Aaron's room to repair it. When that was done, I had to repair the safety door outside the kitchen of the double story house. Since there was no key for the door, I had to replace the lock.

Then one of the tenants told me that the geyser of his house was leaking water on the roof. After confirming the leak, it

(continued on the back page)



## Trip Report

by

**Dr. John G. Nordling**, CTS Fort Wayne

For service at Lutheran Theological Seminary, Pretoria, South Africa, 13 - 27 April 2018

I had the privilege of teaching Galatians (the entire letter) for two weeks at the Lutheran Theological Seminary, Pretoria, South Africa. Instruction for the Galatians class consisted of

roughly 3 hours of instruction per morning, with time out for Chapel at 10:00–10:30. I taught 35 students in toto, from the following African nations: South Africa, Congo, Liberia, Zambia, Sudan, Uganda, and Ethiopia. Due to the transition in leadership and financial challenges, there were no incoming (year 1) students this year; however, 18 of the students were year 2 students, 8 were year 3, 9 were year 4, and 5 were deaconess students who had not studied Greek before. To accommodate the non-Greek students I was obliged to give two quizzes per day—namely, an “English Quiz” (for the deaconess students) and a “Greek Quiz” consisting of basic parsing of pertinent Greek words (mainly verbs and participles) and translation from Greek to English for the pre-ministerial students who have studied Greek. Due to the large class we met in the Chapel and I projected the Greek text of Galatians onto the screen and worked through it exegetically and theologically. I gave 7 daily quizzes on this material, had a two-page Galatians hand-out for them to complete during the first weekend I was there, and a final exam to write on the last day of the class. Deb Wolf, manager of the CTSFW Bookstore, got me a good deal on a very fine exegetical commentary geared to the needs of these students—namely, Leon Morris, Galatians: Paul’s Charter of Christian Freedom (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1996). My budget permitted me to buy this commentary for 25 of the 35 students, and I often used it in class.

In addition to teaching the two week intensive Rector Rev. Winterle requested my preaching at Chapel during the 10:00 a.m. services on 18 and 24 April. In addition, I read an academic paper (“Suggestive Someone”) for Dr. Ernest van Eck whose Pauline seminar listened attentively to my lecture on Monday 23 April. All three Sundays of my stay (15, 22, 29 April) I worshipped with the Karl Böhmer family at St. Paul’s Lutheran Church, just two blocks from the seminary on Arcadia Street (Rev. Martin Paul). The trip was significant for other activities as well: during my first weekend there I accompanied Dr. Karl Böhmer and two of his kids on a hike of the Tswaing Crater Hiking Trail (ancient meteoric impact crater). The next weekend I was the guest of Mr. and Mrs. Hugo Mayer, who is on the Board of Directors for the seminary and is a pig farmer one hour west of Pretoria. Hugo is extremely generous with his time and expertise and asked me many questions about the future course of the seminary in South Africa (he now serves on the seminary’s Board of Directors). A

highlight of the weekend—and indeed—trip was the opportunity to ascend a hot air balloon early Monday morning, there to witness the ascent of the sun from a distance of 2,700 feet. The new Rector (Rev. Carlos Winterle) was in Mozambique during almost the entirety of my stay in South Africa. However, he did take me to lunch Thursday 26 April where he shared with me the severe financial challenges the seminary faces during this time of transition. However, Dr. Karl Böhmer is a huge asset to the seminary and was handling day-to-day operations while Rev. Winterle was gone. Böhmer’s academic credentials are particularly strong, and I encouraged him to submit an abstract to an academic conference where (if accepted) he will ably represent himself, the FELSISA pastors, and the seminary.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Karl Böhmer, his wonderful wife Brigitte, and their two adorable “Kinder,” Hanna and Gabriela, with whom I attempted to speak German during my two weeks in their home. Every day I’d wake at 6 a.m., breakfast, and accompany Dr. Böhmer in rush-hour traffic to the seminary. Then when the day was over I’d retire to the Böhmer home where I’d relax: check my e-mails, drink Amstel Beer, decompress, take a long walk, and generally enjoy myself. I should also mention in this connection that I received a free and nutritious lunch every day with the students at LTS prepared by Emily Ngubeni, a local African, whose husband Aaron is the seminary driver who picked me up, and returned me, to the airport. Also, during my two weeks there, I was invited to dinner by Rev. Kurt Böhmer (a distant cousin of Dr. Karl Böhmer), his wife Erika, and their three children, now in high school. The Rev. Kurt Böhmer has just become pastor of the Afrikaner congregation associated with the German-speaking St. Paul’s Lutheran Church on Arcadia Street. Another couple that had me over to their place for wonderful German cuisine was Rev. and Mrs. Günther Hohls, who was a pastor in the FELSISA until his retirement. It is vital that the LCMS continue to support LTS with our offerings and prayers, even as we respond to dramatic requests for assistance elsewhere. I welcome this opportunity to have served the Lord and his church by teaching at LTS in April 2018 and hope, by God’s grace, to return to teach next year in April or May.

Sincerely,

Dr. John G. Nordling

Professor of Exegetical Theology, CTSFW



## Balloon Trip

During the long weekend at the end of May after classes, long-time LTS supporter and board member Mr. Hugo Meyer and his wife Rosa invited Dr. Nordling to visit them and arranged for him to take a balloon trip over the Magaliesberg mountain range.







## Trip Report

by

**Rev. Dr. Heinz Hiestermann**

For service at Lutheran Theological Seminary, Pretoria, South Africa, 13 - 27 April 2018

Most of the time, I serve as a parish pastor in a largely rural setting. The name of the congregation I serve is St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran

Church, located in the small town of Greytown in eastern South Africa. Being a parish pastor, the setting in which I usually teach students is confirmation instruction where classes are small. I have never taught more than three confirmands at the same time, and this year, I teach only one. When I received the invitation to teach at LTS, I was therefore both nervous and excited at once. I would be teaching at the LTS for the first time, with not just one, but 35 students in class!

The nervousness quickly turned into joy as I started teaching. The course was called "Introduction into the New Testament: Part 1." We looked at background information which helps us to understand the New Testament better. This includes studying the geography of the land of Jesus, the Jewish faith in the time of Jesus, and the significance of the Roman occupation of Palestine. This was followed by an overview on the gospels and the book of Acts.

It was a great privilege to meet the students and staff at the LTS. I want to thank everyone for making it such an enjoyable visit. The staff and students made me feel very welcome. Rev. John Nkambule showed me around, and he occasionally popped into class to make sure I had all I needed. He also helped me always be at the right place at the right time. I also appreciated the co-operation of students in class and am thankful that they allowed me to be part of their lives for two weeks.

It was also a great privilege to meet Prof. John Nordling, who encouraged me to continue researching and from whom I learned a lot.

I am grateful to Dr. Böhmer and Dr. Winterle for the invitation, coordination, and planning involved in my visit. May God continue to bless staff and students of the LTS, so that faithful workers may be prepared for their respective callings into His kingdom.

Rev. Dr. Heinz Hiestermann



## A Word of Thanks

We at LTS would like to express our gratitude to the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS), especially to President Matthew Harrison and his capable staff in the leadership of the LCMS, for the tremendous assistance granted to the LTS this year. The LCMS is providing financial support to LTS, which makes it possible for the LTS to cover the salaries of vital support staff - Mrs. Emily Ngubeni, Ms. Martha Mahlangu, and Mr. Aaron Mothimunya. Mrs. Ngubeni and Ms. Mahlangu serve as kitchen staff and caretakers, while Mr. Mothimunya serves as groundsman and driver. They also serve as role models and provide very important mentorship to the students living on campus. We are very grateful to note that the LTS is included in the LCMS Office of International Mission East and Southern Africa budget. May the Lord God bless the gifts and the givers according to the rich measure of His grace.

## Donation of Old and New Testaments by the South African Bible Society

Reading the Bible in the original languages is a must for serious theologians and pastors, and so the LTS is extremely grateful for the generosity of the South African Bible Society. On Monday, 20. August, a representative from the Bible Society came to pay a visit to the LTS campus. After a request was placed through Rev. Dr. Sibongiseni Eliot Sithole of the LCSA, who works with the Zulu Bible Translation Project of the Bible Society, Rev. Clive van Rooyen acceded to the request and sent Rev. Dr. Gerhard Lindeque to the LTS. Dr. Lindeque personally came to the LTS campus to give 22 Greek New Testaments (NA28) and 22 Hebrew Old Testaments (BHS) to LTS students who did not yet possess these gems.

We pray the texts will be put to good use in service of the kingdom of God.

On the right: The Hebrew OT and the Greek NT

Below: Rector Dr. Winterle and Rev. Dr. Gerhard Lindeque



# Introducing our students and their home churches

Over the next few issues of our newsletter, we plan to present portraits by our students of themselves and their home contexts and churches.

## Albert Payvah

from the

### Evangelical Lutheran Church - Liberia Synod (ELCLS)

Allow me to express my heartfelt thanks for granting me this opportunity to give a brief narrative about myself, country, and the church body from which I come.

My name is Albert Payvah. I am 41 years old and a third-year student at LTS. My parents were both Liberians by nationality. They hailed from Voinjama City, Lofa County in Northern Liberia.

Liberia is located on the west coast of Africa; its population is estimated at 4 million people. Approximately 40% of Liberia's population is Christian.

I am a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church - Liberia Synod (ELCLS). In fulfillment of the Great commission (Matt. 28:18-20), the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod in 1978 dispatched a team of missionaries with a view to establishing a strong and vibrant Gospel-centered Evangelical Lutheran Church in Liberia. The team started in Lofa County and planted a number of congregations. Subsequently, Liberian Lutherans started planting congregations across the country themselves. Today, the ELCLS has more than 15,000 members nationwide. Given that Liberia has multiple local languages, our liturgy varies from one location to another, although the English Liturgy is most commonly used.

The ELCLS is challenged by a shortage of trained men to nourish, guide, and protect the flock of Jesus Christ. Our congregations need

solid confessional and biblical pastors and other church workers to continue the proclamation of the gospel in Liberia. We do not have enough opportunities for men desiring to serve in the ministry to receive theological training or studies. Many deserving students are constrained by their inability to afford higher theological education. This deprives the Lutheran church of the contributions these individuals could make if they were provided with the opportunity to access and complete their theological studies.

In view of the above, and being fully aware of the Lutheran tradition of solid education for anyone who aspires to the Pastoral Office, the ELCLS recommended me to the LTS to be trained, evaluated, and subsequently ordained and installed. Having accepted the call to be trained, my goals are centered on various aspects of this vocation: a) being a faithful and devout father and husband, because family is very important in the ministry, being with you each day; b) being humble as I learn the Word of God and by His grace to baptize and forgive sins in His stead and by His commands in Jesus Christ; c) teaching and preaching the Gospel to the glory of His Holy name. In light of the increasing needs of the church of Liberia in

the area of education, I have set these goals as my priority so that, if it be the Lord's will, I will return to serve the church of Liberia upon completion of my studies.

The greatest responsibility we owe to the church is to make ourselves available to be trained! It would be a crying shame if we sat and saw the church fail to provide the needed spiritual care for God's people due to the lack of trained theologians.

To conclude, my time at LTS is aimed at growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is especially necessary for called pastors who are to nourish, guide, and protect the flock of Christ. This will enable me to make significant contributions to the work of the church in Liberia and beyond. There can be no doubt that my studies at LTS are a tremendous gain for my church body in the areas of preaching the Gospel in its purity and administering the Holy Sacraments. It is my sincere desire to be trained and sent to serve in the ministry. (Romans 10:14-15b) *"How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in Him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent?"*



Below: Albert Payvah (on the right), pictured with compatriot Patience Gbotoe, deaconess student (on the left)





# Eva Chernet Arifecho Fitebo and Desta Gebre Sinamo

from the

## Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY)

The ETHIOPIAN EVANGELICAL CHURCH MEKANE YESUS (EECMY) is a Lutheran denomination in Ethiopia and the largest member of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF). The EECMY was founded by missionaries from Northern Europe in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These operated in Southern Ethiopia since the strong Ethiopian Orthodox Church prohibited Christian missionaries elsewhere.

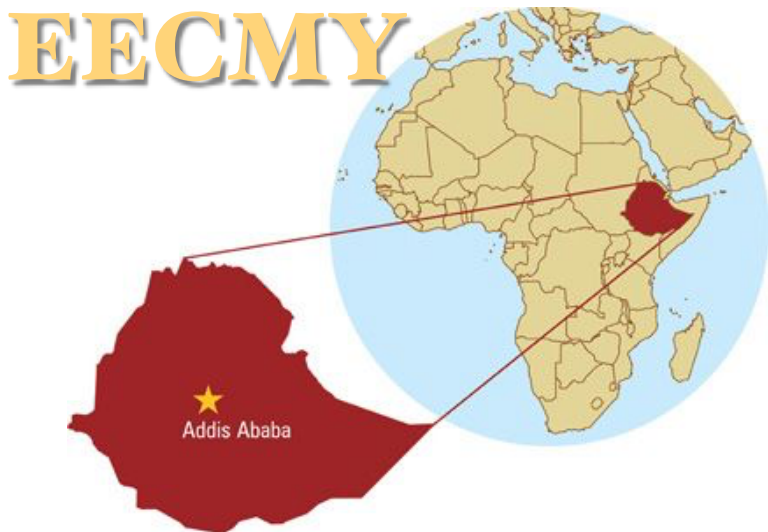
The EECMY was formed as a national Lutheran church body in 1959, taking its name from the first congregation in Addis Ababa, "Mekane Yesus" or "place of Jesus." The EECMY initially operated in the Amharic language. Former Ethiopian ambassador to Britain Dr. Emmanuel Abraham became the first president of the EECMY. Evangelists such as Onesimos Nesib spread the gospel to other areas of Ethiopia and translated the Bible into the language of the Oromo, the largest ethnic group in Ethiopia. In the 1970s, the rapidly growing church body experienced persecution at the hands of the military government of Ethiopia, with General Secretary Rev. Gudina Tumsa being killed by government forces in 1979. Even so, the church kept growing in leaps and bounds.

Today, the EECMY numbers over 8 million members, spread across 8,500 congregations and 4,000 preaching stations. It is served by almost 4,000 pastors and has more than 24 synods (districts) and seminaries in different synods operating in English and Amharic. The EECMY is challenged especially by a lack of resources and a shortage of pastors. Nevertheless, the EECMY aims to continue growing by the help of the Holy Spirit and to proclaim the gospel worldwide. For that reason, we would like to request prayer from our sister churches around the world.

## Eva Chernet Arifecho Fitebo

I grew up in Hosanna in Southern Ethiopia. My father was the first Christian in his family, while the others were all idol worshipers. My father was a strong Christian and helped established the EECMY where we lived. After his death, my mother taught us to the faith. Two of my brothers are ordained pastors, with one serving in Ethiopia and the other here in South Africa.

From a young age, I served in our church in Hosanna in Sunday school as bible reader and started composing very early on. Later, I would sing and spread God's word whenever I traveled. After high school I was chosen to become an evangelist and sent to Woliso Mobile Bible School. After being ordained as an evangelist, I graduated with a Diploma of Theology from an



Above: Desta Gebre (left), Chernet Arifecho (right)

EECMY seminary. I have served as an evangelist for over 12 years. Although I worked hard to pursue another theology degree at an EECMY seminary, I struggled with finances. But God heard my prayer, and I received a scholarship to the LTS in South Africa, together with my family. I would like to thank the LTS for giving me this opportunity.

After completing my studies at the LTS, I would like to pursue graduate studies at the University of Pretoria, if possible. It is my desire to be a fulltime pastor or teacher (or both). I am ready to serve anywhere, either in South Africa or in Ethiopia in the EECMY.

## Desta Gebre Sinamo

I grew up in the Haddya zone in southern Ethiopia, where the south central synod of the EECMY is based. I am the second of 7 children. While I went to school in the town of Hossan, I played music in church and also sang in the church choir. My father is a lay church planter who still serves as an itinerant leader of 28 EECMY churches today. He encouraged me to go to seminary, but we did not have the money for me to do so.

Eventually, I came to South Africa to serve in the Ethiopian diaspora here. A group of Ethiopians living in Mpumalanga, South Africa requested that I come and serve

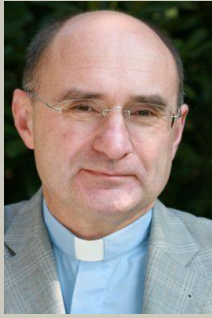
them. At first, I thought that they were Lutheran, but after I arrived, I found out they are part of an interdenominational group. As a result, I felt that I could not serve them, and so I left.

I was still hoping to pursue theological studies. I was tempted when I was offered a scholarship to a Reformed seminary here in South Africa, but I could not agree with their theology, and so I refused the offer.

Later on, I met a fellow Ethiopian, Rev. Tefera Muzien of the EECMY, who was based at the LTS for a while. He told me that there is a Lutheran seminary in Pretoria. After I applied to the LTS, I was accepted and granted a scholarship. I have been studying here at the LTS ever since. Praise be to God.

After completing my studies, I will be open to God's plan. Only He knows where He wants me to serve. I pray He would send me wherever the harvest is plentiful, either here in southern Africa or elsewhere. The Ethiopian Lutheran church here in South Africa is small and ageing, and so they have much room to grow. But I do not have any fixed plans for my later area of service. As a confessional Lutheran, I appreciate what I am learning here, and so I would not want to serve in a liberal church. I would much prefer to serve in a confessional Lutheran church body as well.

## Current Intensives by Guest Lecturers



Prof. em. Dr. Werner Klän



Rev. Dr. Daniel Schmidt

# Contractor's Report

*(continued from front page)*

turns out that I will need to replace the geyser. A 150 litre unit would cost R 2,564 and a 100 litre unit would cost R 2,663. So the 100 litre unit is more expensive but will consume less electricity on the long run. Let me know how to proceed.

The next phone call was about a leaking tap in the bathroom where the kindergarten ladies stay. I had to replace the complete fixture which had collapsed internally.

Then there was a pipe which first started leaking and then burst, so I replaced it last Thursday. Afterwards, Aaron showed me a place outside Luther house where water was

seeping out of the ground. I started to dig it up to investigate, but I had to stop when the tree roots got as thick as my arm and I didn't have a saw or an axe to remove them. I had to return later with the necessary tools to fix the water leak.

Now for the bad news. I had to install a new oven in the kitchen. I will send you an email with the cost of all the work I did.

Best regards.

Wilhelm Meyer.

**NOTE:** We publish this report for readers to get an idea of the challenges and costs of maintaining old buildings on a day-to-day basis.

## STUDENT REPORT

1. The new student council was appointed at a time when a lot of change was about to take place. It was a time with its own challenges, a time when there was a lot of ethnic division between the students of the institution. A time when students were not sure of what to expect with the arrival of a new rector and the departure of the old one. A time when students were not certain about how their studies would continue. This presented the newly appointed student council with a difficult task. With the help of God, we were able to overcome. Working together with both the rector and the students, we became a bridge between the two parties and were able to fulfil our duty of representing the students and also bringing peace and concord in times of despair.

2. Dr. Weber was rector for more than two decades, so we were very familiar with how he operated. When he left, the students had many questions about the new rector. Would he chase students away? Would he be stricter? Would he understand us? Would he introduce a different way of teaching and learning? Would he improve the financial situation of the institution? Would he bring a different doctrine? The new rector proved to be a better leader than we had anticipated. He was able to lead us from a devastating situation into a more bearable one. Of course, there have been challenges, but he still ensures that things run smoothly here in the institution.

3. With sorrowing hearts, we lost one of our own earlier this year, a dear father and brother to us, Mr. Ben Mokopanele. His passing was hard for all of us. As students of this institution, we were pierced through the heart with a large spear. Brother Ben was more than a student, he was a friend when you needed a friend, a

father when you needed a father, a counselor when you were in despair, and a great chairperson of the student body. When the current chairperson, Safari Chomachoma, was appointed, he knew he had to fill big shoes. May Ben's soul rest in peace.

4. When 2018 was about to begin, the student had a lot of questions, especially with regards to the financial situation. Would the institution receive the necessary money? Would it have to shut down due to a lack of money? These questions urgently needed answers. God says, I will not leave you nor forsake you, and that's exactly what happened. In an incomprehensible way, all things worked for the good. The seminary was able to go forward even in that dry situation. The seminary still needs funds; we are not out of the woods yet, we are still limping like Jacob after fighting with the angel. As such we still ask for help, so that the institution doesn't have to close.

5. With regards to accreditation, the seminary officials and the board of the directors are hard at work trying to get the situation addressed. We believe it is only a matter of time until the institution is accredited as a college.

We hope that this report was insightful and helped you to see the situation at the LTS from a student perspective. Thank you.

Yours Truly

The student council of the LTS

Safari Chomachoma (Chairperson)

Dumisani Mokobedi (Secretary)

Patience Gbotoe (Treasurer)

## Coming up@LTS

### September

- 10-21 Intensive Course for Deaconess Students with Dcs. Grace Rao (LCMS)
- 13-15 FELSISA Synodical Convention
- 27 Michaelmas recess begins

### October

- 9 Lectures commence for Quarter 4

### November

- 12 Final examinations begin
- 22 Prizegiving Day
- 23 2018 Academic Year ends

*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. Donations are also possible via check or Paypal. Please see our website for details ([www.lts.ac.za](http://www.lts.ac.za)).

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Branch Code: 632005

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