



LUTHERAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY IN TSHWANE

Trip Reports

In this newsletter, you will find trip reports by Prof. John T. Pless and Pastor Michael J. Roth, who were teaching intensive courses at LTS from 3-14 March 2025.

Please keep on praying for our seminary, its staff and students, and also for the work our graduates are doing!



Prof. John Pless (left),
Pastor Michael Roth (right),
and SRC chair K. Motsemme

The 1st report is from Prof. Pless:

Although I arrived in South Africa two days late due to needing to be in St. Louis for a CTCR meeting and then a cancelled flight stateside, I did arrive in Johannesburg on Tuesday evening, March 4. The next day, I commenced teaching Catechetics I for 25 students (including a few pastors who audited the class).

Catechetics I covered the historical background of Luther's Catechisms and the first three chief parts. Students received copies of my Luther's Small Catechism: A Manual for Discipleship and Luther's Large Catechism with Annotations and Contemporary Applications.



Prof. Pless teaching his class on Luther's Catechisms

Along with the Small Catechism, these books served as primary texts for the class. The lectures covered the central theological motifs in the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer and the key biblical texts that Luther used in what has been called "the Bible of the laity." A major portion of the class was a teaching practicum where each student taught a catechetical topic in the presence of their peers and received feedback. The course aimed to give students a good grasp of the doctrinal content of the Catechism and help them develop pedagogical skills to teach it in the congregation. God willing it, I will return to the seminary to teach Catechetics II (Baptism, Absolution/Office of the Keys, Sacrament of the Altar, Daily Prayers and the Table of Duties in August.

In addition to teaching, I preached at Matins twice (March 6 and 11). As always, I enjoyed the hospitality of faculty colleagues and students (especially the trips to the Ethiopian restaurant in Sunnyside).



I appreciated the opportunity to consult with Rev. Ntse Shuttleworth on his use of the work of Oswald Bayer in a doctoral dissertation in ethics at the University of Pretoria. I am pleased that Rev. Shuttleworth's doctoral work is building on his studies in previous intensive courses.



Left: Students presenting during class.



More students giving presentations in the class of Prof. Pless.

In addition to books brought for the students to use in class, I was able to bring the remainder of my collection of the journal, Lutheran Quarterly for the library. The seminary now has a set of this journal. We are still working to complete the library's set of the American Edition of Luther's Works and the Concordia Commentary series. With continued contributions from donors, this will come to fruition in the near future.

As is our custom, we ended the two-week intensive course with a celebratory braai on March 14. We continue to pray that two of our graduates who have been accepted into the MA program at Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne will soon receive their visas so that they may continue their studies in Lutheran theology.

I conclude by offering my sincere thanks to the individuals and congregations in the USA who continue to support these teaching trips, which have been going on since 2009. I am also grateful to Rector Dr. Heinz Hiestermann, the faculty, and staff at LTS for their gracious welcome.

Rev. Roth and Prof. Pless enjoying a meal at the house of LCMS allegiance missionary Rev. Fernando Huf, along with LTS faculty members





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LTS RECEIVES MANY REQUESTS FROM VARIOUS AFRICAN CHURCH BODIES TO SENT STUDENTS TO OUR SEMINARY. BUT TAKING IN STUDENTS FROM OTHER AFRICAN COUNTRIES IS EXPENSIVE, AS EXPENSES FOR TRAVEL, ACCOMMODATION, TUITION, MEDICAL AID, AND A STIPEND MUST BE INCLUDED. PLEASE SUPPORT LTS TO BE ABLE TO GRADUATE MORE MULTIPLIERS FOR THE LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AFRICA.

Mission: "The LTS is a mission agency seeking to graduate multipliers for the Lutheran Church in Africa."

Vision: "To provide quality confessional Lutheran formation."

Trip Report Rev. Michael Roth



Rev. Roth (Senior Pastor at Trinity, St. Joseph) teaching the LTS students in the chapel

I am happy to report on a successful intensive course on the history and theology of Martin Luther. Our class consisted of 21 theological students who were in their first, second, or third year of studies to become Lutheran pastors. I was pleased with the active participation and discussion that took place daily. The students' questions and comments were thoughtful and demonstrated good comprehension of the course materials. They also consistently were well prepared for each class period, having accomplished the daily reading and writing assignments. Performance on the final exam also demonstrated sufficient mastery of the course content.

It was clear to me that these students were seeking to find the relevant application of the course material to pastoral ministry. Although history and systematic theology can seem a bit academic at times, our class discussions focused on parish ministry and the power of God's Word to impact people's lives. Appreciation for the course and its relevance to ministry was also evident in conversations outside the classroom.

Personally, I enjoyed the time at TLS immensely. The hospitality of the staff, students, and supporters of the seminary was first-rate. The engagement with students who are committed to the Word, are eager followers of Jesus, and have a heart for people made the trip a joy. I would welcome the opportunity to return with the Lord's blessings. Truly, I benefited as much as the students, as together we shared in the Lord's work.



Rev. Roth and Prof. Pless with the Ethiopian students and staff at an Ethiopian Restaurant

Rector Hiestermann and Prof. Pless with the Lutheran Quarterly Journal copies Prof. Pless brought along. Thank you!



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