

Handling the Word of Truth

Supporting Theological Education in Togo and West Africa

Missionary Rev. Jacob W. Gaugert

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Participant Church Bodies at Nov. Liturgy Workshop

- Lutheran Church of Togo (ELT) in North of Togo

- Evangelical Confessional Lutheran Church of Togo (EELCT) in South of Togo

- Evangelical Lutheran Church of Togo (EELT) in South of Togo

- Evangelical Lutheran Church of Burkina Faso (EELBF)

- Lutheran Church in Africa – Benin Synod (Ela-sbe)



Cantor Phillip Magness instructs two workshop participants on using local instruments with new musical settings.

In the Courts of the Lord

Enter His gates with thanksgiving, and His courts with praise! Give thanks to Him; bless His name! - Psalm 100:4

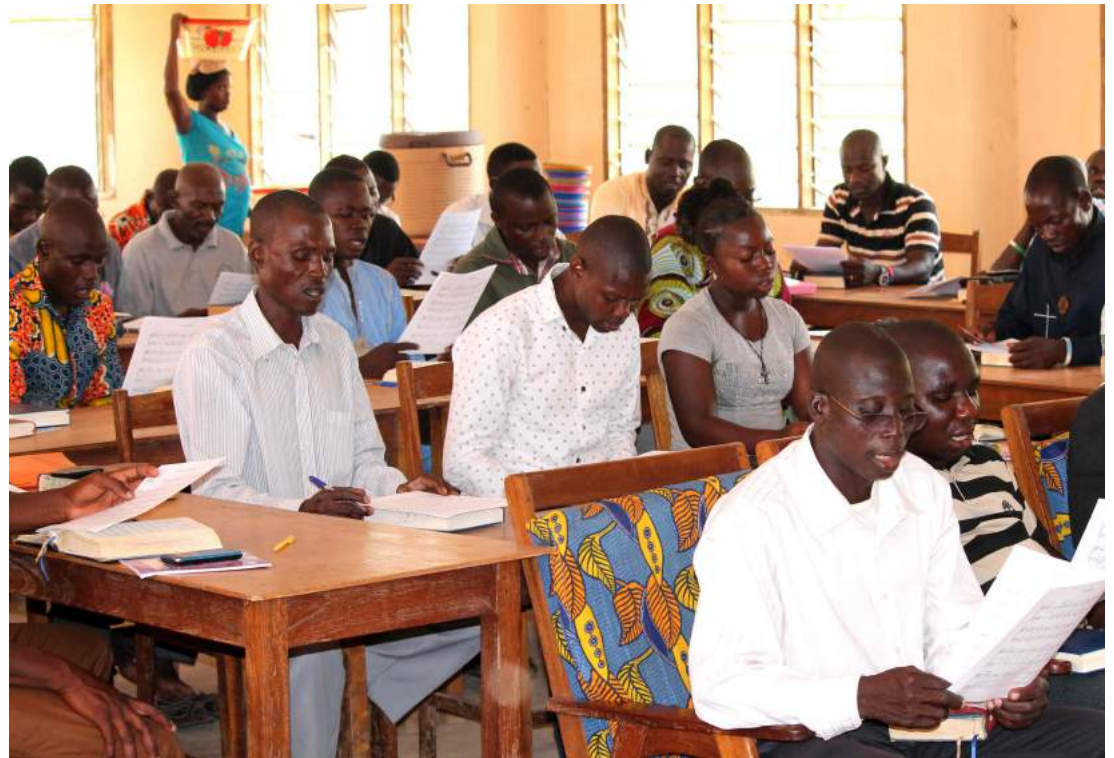
Dear friends and supporters in Christ,

This December was a milestone in my work in Togo. It marks one complete year that I have been on the ground in Togo. It has been a time of transitions and great blessings - meeting new friends and working alongside new colleagues at CLET and our sister Lutheran churches in west and central Africa. It is rewarding to be engaged in this calling to teach in the classroom, to travel to offer conferences and assistance to these new church bodies and their leadership. This past November I was pleased to organize a liturgy and music workshop for pastors and leaders from five different Lutheran Church bodies in West Africa. Three of the participating church bodies are sister churches of the LCMS that were the result of LCMS mission work in the region over the past few decades. These are the churches in Burkina Faso and Benin, and our sister church body located in the far north of Togo.



How can I help?

Would you, your parish, or church organization like to purchase hymnals in French for Lutheran parishes and church leaders in West and Central Africa? Would you like to contribute financially to help cover costs associated with travel and participation for liturgy and music workshops in the future? If so, please contact me at my email listed on the final page of the newsletter.



Workshop participants follow along and sing new musical settings

The other two groups are synods that are concentrated in the south of Togo in Lomé, the capital. These two churches were the fruits of mission work from the Lutheran World Federation and a small conservative, confessional church body in the United States. Although not officially our LCMS partners, these church bodies have an interest in faithful, Biblical teaching and confessional Lutheran practice and thus, they enthusiastically accepted our invitation to our liturgy and music workshop.

The main goal of our workshop was to familiarize the pastors and other church leaders with the content and musical settings of the French Lutheran hymnal, the *Liturgies et Cantiques Luthériennes* (2009). I have mentioned this resource in previous newsletters. It is not a direct translation of our Lutheran Service Book (LSB), but it contains many translations and similar musical settings to the LSB, alongside pieces that are specific to the French musical tradition.

The vast majority of our African Lutheran partners primarily worship and teach in their numerous local languages. Why, then, will a French hymnal be useful? First, when visiting the parishes of our partner churches, one notices the large amount of children. They usually comprise more than half of the congregation. These young people are the future of the church. When they go to school, they are not taught in their local languages, but in French. Sadly, many of them do not know how to read and write in their own local languages because there are no materials to read in this language or they are too expensive to acquire. Thus, for teaching children and young adults, French materials are preferred. In addition to this, these children may go on to university studies and be blessed to find professional leadership positions far from the place where they were born. In such a case, they may find it difficult to find a Lutheran church that

has services in their own language. But they could assist with starting bilingual or French worship services in urban, multicultural settings. Familiarity with and appreciation of the Lutheran hymnal will help and guide them with faithful practice and to avoid false teachings as they make this transition.

Another reason why the hymnal in French is useful is to give a quick and rich resource to the pastors and evangelists as they give pastoral care and plan their worship services and preaching. Most of the Lutheran partner churches choose to follow the lectionary, the assigned readings for the Sunday services. Alongside the readings themselves, there are Psalms, verses, prayers, and hymns that are assigned or suggested for use each Sunday that correspond with the teachings and themes of those readings. Faithful pastors will examine these elements of the service and also do diligent study to prepare their sermons. This is why pastors have such large libraries. In Africa, very few pastors have any libraries, Books of Concord, or even a single Lutheran study Bible or a Lutheran commentary to use in study and sermon preparation. The best resource they have to prepare for Sunday - alongside prayer and the Bible - is the hymnal. Even though it may be the case that French will not be spoken at all in the entire service, the pastor or evangelist can read the prayers and hymns in French for that Sunday. In this way, they can use the contents of the hymnal as a base upon which they can plan a service that speaks to their flock in their life and context, but that is also well-informed with biblical content and solid Lutheran teaching. One simply cannot overemphasize the importance of the *Liturgies et Cantiques Luthériens* to the continued faithful practice and proclamation of our brothers and sisters in Christ in Africa.

Our liturgy and music workshop took place on the campus of the CLET in Dapaong from November 9th-14th. There was a turnout of fifty-five participants - pastors, vicars, evangelists, theological students, and choirmasters. A generous gift allowed us to provide each participant with a hymnal, assist with transportation costs, serve a large meal and a light breakfast each day, and to have a celebration dinner the last day. Each participant was responsible for any other meals and for their own lodging while they attended the five day conference. Cantor Phillip Magness, who serves at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, was kind enough to travel to Togo to lead us in this workshop.



The children of a small Lutheran congregation outside of Dapaong, Togo

Cantor Magness has a true gift of bringing the Lutheran liturgical tradition into contexts where instruments besides the organ are used in worship. He has served as a worship leader and planner for many conferences and conventions over the years, including the last synodical convention. He will be playing for the daily devotions at the next LCMS synodical convention in Milwaukee this summer.


We began each morning of the workshop by watching and discussing a segment of the study series, *Liturgy, Yesterday, Today, and Forever*, narrated by Dr. Arthur A. Just of Concordia Theological Seminary in Ft. Wayne, Indiana.

This series (which has been dubbed into French and edited by Lutheran Heritage Foundation) speaks of the historical development of the liturgy and the theological significance of each part of the Divine Service where we receive Christ and His forgiveness among us in Word and Sacrament. Most of the day was spent practicing the parts of the liturgy, psalms, and hymns with drums and electric piano (when the power was working). It was wonderful to hear the participants sing with gusto and enthusiastically volunteer to lead with the drums and intonation. Furthermore, we entertained questions and held discussions with the participants on practical matters. We emphasized the significance and wonderful blessing of our liturgical heritage while at the same time being sensitive to local customs and limitations - the freedom that we have in the gospel to have appropriate variation in worship. Our faithful Lutheran practice of worship seeks that sinners may be comforted with the Good News of Jesus - no matter where they live, what language they speak, or what instruments they use in their worship services. It was a priority of ours that this message of gospel freedom be kept in the forefront of each participant's mind during the workshop and as they return to serve in their communities.

On the final day we gave out certificates of participation to each person who attended the workshop, and had a great feast prepared by the CLET women's school. All of the participants expressed their appreciation and requested that such a course be offered each year for the pastors and other church leaders. We hope and pray that we will be blessed with the resources to do so again in Dapaong, Togo and perhaps in other parts of francophone Africa.

Thank you all for your prayers and support of this ministry!

In Christ,



Participants of the Liturgy and Music Workshop in Dapaong, Togo



Madame Koutia, the directress of the women's school, serves the presidents of the Lutheran Churches in Togo, Burkina Faso, and Benin on the final day of the workshop.



Cantor Phillip Magness guides the group in singing.

Pray:

Thanksgiving for the safe travel of Cantor Phil Magness to teach at the Liturgy and Worship Workshop.

Thanksgiving for the generous corn harvest of the farmers in the Dapaong, Togo area.

That the member churches of the francophone Lutheran Union would continue to prepare more students to study at CLET in upcoming years.

Guidance for Rev. Gary Schulte, a returning missionary in West Africa who has accepted the position of Area Director for West Africa.

That the Lord would guide the discussions of the CLET Board of Directors Meeting from March 9th-12th.

For continued, generous support of this and other ministries of our Synod with gifts and prayer.



On November 28th I had the privilege to participate in the ordination of three new candidates to serve in the Pastoral Ministry in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Togo.



MEET

Cantor Phillip Magness



One of the important auxiliary offices of church professionals in the Lutheran church is that of cantor, one who assists with the planning and preparation of the music for the worship services of the church. Cantor Phillip Magness has served in numerous parishes and capacities in the Lutheran community. He and his family currently live in Oklahoma. It was a blessing to have him assist us with our workshop this year. You can find some of Cantor's published pieces at www.liturgysolutions.com

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We thank the saints of St. Mark Lutheran Church of Rhinelander, Wisconsin for their generous gift of computers and a new printer, which will help the faculty of the CLET prepare for classes, conduct research, and communicate with mission partners in Africa and the US.



AT HOME

It has been said that the success of the Reformation can be largely attributed to the music of the church. Luther and the other Reformers wrote many hymns to preach and teach the forgiving Christ to repentant sinners. The faithful did not only sing these hymns in the church services, but also in schools and in the home. They repeated and committed to memory the faithful texts to nourish and guide them in the Christian faith. In the West we are familiar with memorizing the Small Catechism, but we often overlook the benefit of memorizing hymns. Why not consider adding a hymn to sing with your prayers at mealtime, or at bedtime? If you have a Lutheran school at your parish or homeschool, consider adding more hymns to chapel services or to lesson plans. Clearly, children and adults are quite capable of learning the words to many modern, secular songs – only after having heard them a few times. Why not also fill our minds and hearts with the wholesome words of the church's confession of our Savior?

*I will sing my Maker's praises and in him most joyful be,
For in all things I see traces of his tender love to me.
- Lutheran Worship 439:1*



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