

Handling the Word of Truth

Supporting Theological Education in Togo and West Africa

Missionary Rev. Jacob W. Gaugert

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**Donations
sought for
shipping container
to West Africa in
fall 2017**

- Communion ware

- Pastor Stoles

- Instruments

* Electric and
Acoustic Guitars

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Keyboards

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- Sheet Music

- Theology Books

- Books in French

- Church Bells

**For more
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how to prepare
and arrange for
the transport of
your donations,
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jacob.gaugert@lcmsintl.org



Participants of the Luther Academy conference in Kinshasa pose with their certificates. To the left of me is the Bishop Keya and Rev. Gui is at my right.

Update

And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him. - Colossians 3:17

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

The past few months have been full of blessings and activities. I thank the Lord for safe travels, productive trips, and generous support to encourage faithful theological formation in Francophone Africa. Here are a few of the highlights:

Kinshasa and Brazzaville – the Congos.

As it's now becoming an annual custom, I made a trip to visit the city of Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to present at a pastoral conference in July. This conference was supported by the International Luther Academy in conjunction with several generous congregations in the South Wisconsin District. I accompanied and presented with Rev. Gui Kasongo from Milwaukee. The topic of our presentation was "Justification by Faith Alone" and was based on the book of Romans. We presented the Lutheran view of justification in the means of grace and compared and contrasted this biblical view to views of justification in Roman Catholic and

Interest in our CLET seminary continues to grow. Two more church bodies in the Democratic Republic of the Congo have requested to join the Francophone Confessional Lutheran Church Union in Africa. Two Lutheran church bodies in the south of Togo will also be sending students to CLET in 2017 for the first time. We thank the Lord for guiding the leaders of these church bodies to seek to have well-formed pastors who will rightly handle the Word of Truth.



Being served lunch alongside Pastor Gui in Kinshasa.

Reformed traditions. The DRC is largely populated by Christians. It has a long history of Roman Catholic presence from her colonial past. Over the past few decades, waves of evangelists and mission organizations have inundated the country with Pentecostal and other Protestant sects that gain a following by criticizing anything “Catholic.” This context makes it especially difficult for a confessional Lutheran to communicate clearly the teachings of the church, which are expressed in the Creeds and Liturgy to uphold biblical teaching of the means of grace and justification. The conference aimed to give pastors and other church leaders the biblical and confessional basis for our teaching and practice in the Lutheran Church.

After presenting in Kinshasa, I accepted an invitation to cross the Congo River to present for another Lutheran church body in the city of Brazzaville in the Republic of the Congo. This is also an area where the Roman Catholic Church has a long history. In fact, in the recent past, Protestant church leaders were placed in prison for their faith, which was not “approved” by the government. Thankfully, those days are past. There is religious freedom in the country. The same Protestant leaders who were once imprisoned were influential in fostering a peaceful transition after a regime change. As a result, the Lutheran church is well-respected by local and national leaders in government and politics. This Lutheran Church is quickly growing. Most of their current pastors have been trained at CLET.



New Academic Year at CLET

The end of August brought about our CLET community's beginning another academic year. This year we received 14 new students, bringing our total student body to 19 students. Along with their wives and families, the CLET community is now comprised of over 80 individuals – young and old. Our new students hail from Togo, Guinea, the Republic of the Congo, the Democratic



Participants of the theological seminar at St. Athanasius Lutheran Church in Brazzaville.

Republic of the Congo, and Burundi. The group of new students seems very promising. They are hard workers and they do not shy away from asking difficult and uncomfortable questions in class. They are also quickly learning new hymns and liturgies.

CLET Chapel

This academic year at CLET we introduced a more rigorous chapel schedule to our daily routine. In the past, there was one chapel service each morning that followed a general order of Sunday service without Holy Communion – much like *The Lutheran Hymnal* page 5. Every Wednesday we would celebrate the Lord's Supper. This year we have added two more services to each school day. Matins (Morning Prayer) has been added at 6:30 every morning and Vespers (Evening Prayer) is scheduled for 4:30 every afternoon. These two services give the students more exposure to the Psalms and other biblical texts that correspond to the church year. They also afford more opportunities for our community to sing faithful hymns that have only recently been made available in French. Our Vespers includes a catechetical character that includes recitation of Luther's Small Catechism, singing Luther's catechetical hymns, and readings from the Large Catechism and other excerpts from the Book of Concord. We have also made a change with the addition of the observance of Feast and Saint days in the liturgical calendar. If such a day falls during the week, the celebration of the Lord's Supper is transferred to that day. This change permits the students to learn more about the key figures in the Bible and in the history of the church. Also, along with the frequent practice of the Lord's Supper we emphasize the right reception and preparation to receive the Sacrament. On the evening before the celebration of the Lord's Supper a service of Corporate Confession and Absolution is held including Luther's Questions for those desiring to receive the Sacrament and a Mirror of Confession – much like the one found on pages 1458-1462 of the *Treasury of Daily Prayer*. We also added a crucifix to our chapel that has heretofore been hanging in the CLET library. We too have added a large flat-screen TV to use in our worship services. One may ask: "With all of the proper liturgical additions to the chapel, why add a screen? Isn't that a move in the



Rev. Micah Wildauer, fellow LCMS missionary and theological educator at CLET, makes use of a picture on our chapel screen during his sermon on the Epiphany of our Lord.

wrong direction toward Evangelicalism?” In our situation, the answer is “no.” As our CLET seminary and our African partners move toward using more liturgical texts in worship services, we are confronted with the challenge that there is a lack of hymnals across the continent. Even as we plan on bringing several thousand more copies of the French hymnal here, with the incredible expansion of the Lutheran church and the variety of songs in local languages, it is unreasonable to expect each congregation to have enough hymnal copies for everyone. Parents usually do not have any free hands to hold a hymnal during the service. And visitors, who are often times exposed to the chaotic services of Protestant sects, are unable to easily navigate the liturgical order and contents of a hymnal. Thus, to have the liturgical texts on a screen that everyone in the congregation can follow is much more practical, economical, and comfortable for visitors. Also, those with limited literacy skills or fluency in French can greatly benefit from a reserved use of reverent images during the Scripture readings and the sermon to better understand the content.

Certainly, these are many new things for our students and our African partners. As a seminary, we have the luxury of being able to make quick changes because we are a community of theologians from diverse backgrounds. The goal of worship in our chapel is to form pastors and future leaders of the church and to do so by prayer and by demonstration of our Lutheran worship tradition. One goes to a seminary to be faithfully formed, and to have false, preconceived notions of theology and God challenged. All theology is relevant to parish practice and pastoral care. At the same time we form and challenge our students, we always emphasize the pastoral care and patience one must exemplify in the parish. Our students must exercise concern and sensitivity to the attitudes and mentality of the parishioners. In

proposing changes, sensitivity is employed, lest parishioners become confused or scandalized. Even the best of practice, if it is presented legalistically and brashly, can contradict the Gospel.

Official OIM Visit

In October, we were visited by several other team members of the Office of International mission (OIM). For our new West Africa Area Director, Rev. Gary Schulte and his wife, Steph, this was a “homecoming” of sorts as they returned to Dapaong where they had lived and worked over 14 years ago. They were accompanied by Rev. Daniel McMiller, Associate Executive Director for the OIM, and Rev. Frederick Reinhardt, Area Facilitator for Francophone Africa. The whole team wanted to get a firsthand look at what has been going on at CLET with our new students and our collaboration with our African colleagues and church partners. As a result of this visit, a communication team from the LCMS will be visiting again in February to take pictures and collect media for articles in official Synod publications.

Outreach to the Deaf

In 2016, I was in Dallas to study culture and anthropology. While I was there I attended classes alongside fellow LCMS missionaries, Rev. Ryan and Emily McDermott. The McDermotts moved to Ghana in the fall of 2017. Rev. McDermott has gradually begun his involvement with training evangelists and pastors to serve the deaf communities in Ghana and other parts of West Africa. Being that Ghana borders Togo, the McDermott family took a few days over Christmas break to visit fellow missionaries in northern Ghana and Togo. It was a joy to host their family and to celebrate the birth of our Lord on Christmas Day. During their stay Rev. McDermott offered a presentation on the topics of deaf culture and ministry to the deaf for the students and faculty of the CLET seminary and for several pastors and leaders of the Lutheran Church of Togo. Up to this point there has not been much involvement of the Lutheran churches in Francophone Africa in deaf ministry. The participants expressed interest in training in sign language so that they might too reach the deaf populations in their respective countries.

CLET dormitories

The construction of our student dormitories at CLET continues. Currently there are 8 buildings made up of 12 units. These can house 24 single students or 12 families. In light of the prospect of having up to 47 total students in the fall of 2017, this project is rather pressing. We hope that with continued support we can drill a well, install latrines,



Rev. Ryan McDermott and I entertaining participant questions during the presentation on ministry to the deaf.

Pray:

Thanksgiving for a successful beginning of the academic year at CLET.

Thanksgiving for the generosity of many faithful donors to the budget of CLET, the dorm construction project, the shipping container project, and for my work.

Thanksgiving for students who are eager to learn and exemplify Christian living and witness in their families and daily lives.

That the members of our partner churches in Francophone Africa would exercise faithfulness and diligence as they minister in local contexts.

That the Lord would bless and guide the African Christians to pray for and encourage evangelism among Muslims and pagans.

That the Lord would continue to grant theological unity and respect among our multinational CLET faculty.

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



A CLET student dorm that will house a family or two single students

and connect electricity in the next few months. Each dorm unit costs around \$6,500 to complete. If you would like to support this project, you can make a donation by check with “#61035 CLET dorms” in the memo line and send it to the LCMS address on the last page of this newsletter.

Shipping Container Project

Due to the generosity of Old Missionary Gary Thies and the supporters of Mission Central in Mapleton, Iowa, we have been blessed with support for a substantial project in the 2017 year. We have received funding to print and acquire textbooks and library books for three theological libraries to benefit training centers (seminaries) in Dapaong (CLET), Brazzaville, and Kinshasa. A portion of this project will also be directed to the printing of Rev. Tim Heiney's *Word Illustrated* materials, which were developed for teaching the Small Catechism and basic Christian doctrine in picture form to communities with limited literacy. We will also be sending a shipping container filled with books and other donations from Milwaukee to Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso in the fall of 2017. We will be collecting donations of various church items, including church and school bells. Why bells? The religion of Islam is quickly expanding in Africa. Rich, middle-eastern countries and businessmen build impressive mosques throughout Africa. The Muslims acquire large, loud speaker systems that call the Muslims to prayer several times a day. It is quite imposing to hear dozens of mosques call to prayer throughout the day. This gives the impression that Islam is powerful and in the majority – when in many places, it is not. Christians do not wait a call to prayer over



An example of a church bell we hope to bring to Africa

Ministry Information:



Rev. Jacob W. Gaugert
W 701 Herr Rd.
Sullivan, WI 53178

Or

CLET
B.P. 53
Dapaong
TOGO

To support this ministry of our Synod:

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speakers. Traditionally, we have bells. However, new brass and cast bells are extremely expensive and no one produces them in Africa. So, Christians are constrained to improvise bells with old tire rims or oxygen tanks. The sound from these does not carry far and they give a weak and pathetic impression to the community when compared with the wailing from the mosques. What to do?

Many Christian congregations in the US have replaced their real bells with electronic systems. Here in Africa, the electrical power grid is unstable – which would cause an electronic bell system to burn out quickly. We want to respond to this need so that our brothers and sisters in Christ can ring real bells with clear sound that will communicate the bold and confident presence of the Christian church in their communities. We need your help. There must be hundreds – if not thousands – of old unused bells in church and school buildings or stored away in barns across the Midwest and the US at large. If you know of any large, old brass or cast iron school or church bells that are in storage or that could be removed from a building or tower, please help us get them to our container to send to Africa.

I thank you all sincerely for your continued support and patience as I do find it difficult to regularly publish my newsletter bimonthly. The Lord is doing marvelous things for our CLET seminary and Francophone Lutheran partners. Thank you for being an essential part of this outreach with your prayers and gifts.

In Christ,



A shipping container



A tire-rim church bell



Missionary Pastor Jacob W. Gaugert
Theological Educator in Togo and West Africa
W 701 Herr Road
Sullivan, WI 53178
USA