



## Lutherans in Africa July 2010 Newsletter



Rev. James and Tiina,  
Maggie, Tristan, Sarai, Sofia, Jonas and Matthew May  
Serving the Lord and the Lutherans throughout Africa

[proliturgy@yahoo.com](mailto:proliturgy@yahoo.com)

[www.lutheransinafrica.com](http://www.lutheransinafrica.com)

### Thanks be to God!

We would first like to begin our newsletter with thanks to God for His great blessings! On June 21st, 2010 we were blessed with our sixth child, Matthew Justin May. When he was born he was 54 cm / 21.25 in and he weighed 3870 grams / 8.53 lbs. He was baptized on the sixth day. Since then he continues to grow and make mom smile.



### Somali Update

Many of you have been praying for Ahmed Hassan who was kidnapped by Muslim radicals and was missing for over a month. He was a convert and was training as an evangelist and was very active in teaching the Gospel, likely why he was kidnapped. He was freed from captivity and he and his family received asylum. Again, we thank God for His great mercy!

### Persecutions and Teaching

After Matthew's baptism, I returned to Kenya to host a seminar on "Eschatology" lead by Dr. Phil Giessler. Three days before the start we received a letter from a leader of the church saying that we must stop teaching the bible because we were "not authorized" to do so. To be honest I did not know how to respond to this. We are registered as a legal society in Kenya and there is freedom to assemble and freedom of religion in Kenya. The wisdom from my church fathers was to show the participants the letter and let them decide if they wanted to stay.



To my surprise they all told me they already knew about the letter. They had met with their bishop before the conference and were told that no such decree was made. They were all sent with the bishop's blessings and instruction to study and learn the Word of God in truth and purity so that they could better equip the flock. It may surprise the reader that such persecutions (or maybe church politics and accusations) happen. In

fact over the past four years I have seen more “devilish” and evil behavior than I ever saw in the USA. Unfortunately this often discourages people and some even leave the church disappointed because they were hoping to find a “holy” group of people. First of all, Jesus tells us that no one is good, “holy”, except God (Lk 18:19). And secondly we must



remember that, “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 6:12). Because the Gospel is being preached and many are coming to faith we should expect many sinister things to come. But we should be careful not to become bitter and use our energy to fight personal battles. Rather we should pray for those who persecute us (Mt 5:44) so that they may repent and be brought back to Christ.

Bishop Thomas Asiago gave very good advice and the pastors and seminary students studied with great vigor. They are the ones on the front line and they know that to fight this spiritual



battle they must know the Word of God and how to use it. “Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm” (Ephesians 6:13).

The reason “Eschatology” was the topic for the Bible study seminar was at the request of the pastors and evangelists. There are so few Lutheran books available in English (much less Kiswahili) but there

are a plethora of “Left Behind” books and dispensational teaching is abundant. There are so many topics to cover. It is not as simple as going out on the street, touching someone on the arm and saying “Jesus loves you!” The second part of the Great Commission from Jesus was “teach them everything I have commanded you.”

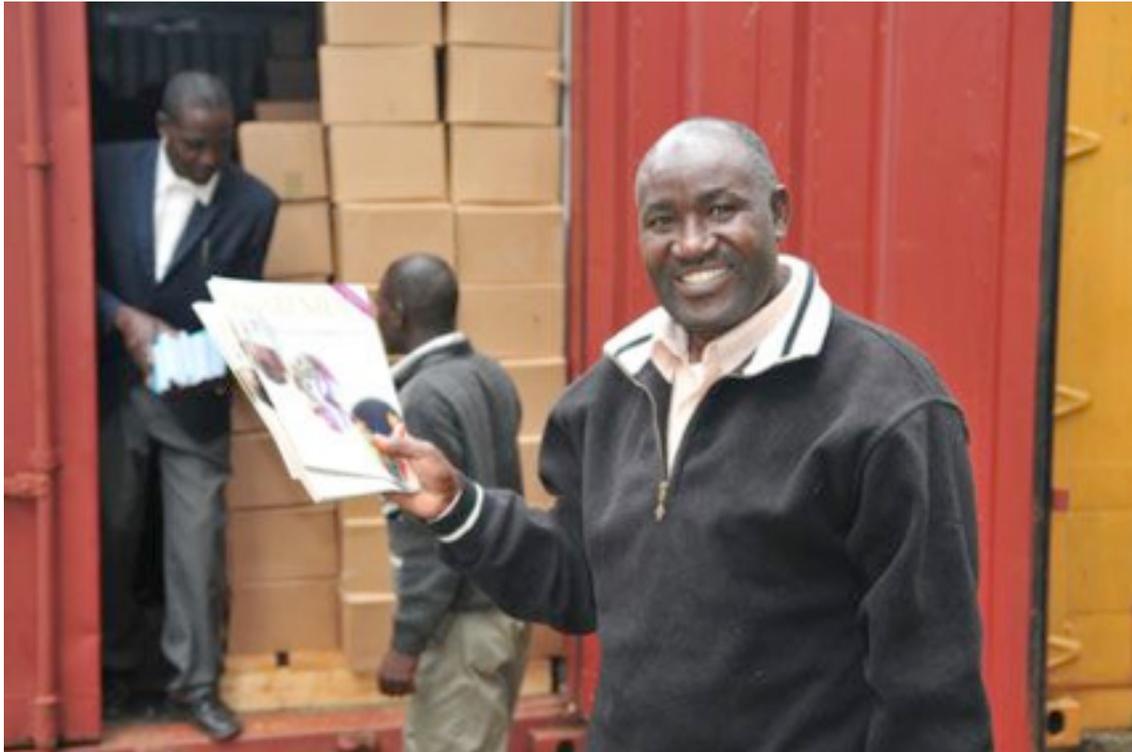
One might ask, “What is wrong with dispensation theology?” or the more normal question, “Didn’t Jesus say that He would reign on the earth for 1000 years?” (See Rev. 20) The first problem is that people mix interpretation methods in Revelation. From chapter one it is clear that it is a symbolical book. To mix literal and symbolic elements results in many false teachings. During our week long seminar we studied an even greater problem.



In dispensation theology, they teach that the temple must be rebuilt in Jerusalem and then the sacrifices will restart. As a result many people are sending millions of dollars trying to get the temple rebuilt in Jerusalem. First of all, that is a work of man. Many people believe that unless we, human beings, rebuild the temple Jesus will not come back. A bigger problem is faith and desire to have another temple for sacrifices. Jesus clearly said, “Destroy this temple and I will rebuild it in three days.” (Jn 2:19) The Jews were confused and Jesus said “He was referring to His body” (Jn 2:21). He is our eternal temple, not built by the hands of man but resurrected by the power of God. Furthermore, why in the world would we want sacrifices to restart when the the Word of God clearly teaches “But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified” (Hebrews 10:12-14). Unfortunately dispensational theology pervades and more people believe it than don’t. The end result is; Satan has tricked many people to put their trust in their own works of rebuilding a temple.

An ordained reverend in the Lutheran Church and a leader in the church who attended the conference said, “Sincerely, with my extensive theological studies at Makumira University College in Tanzania, I understood “Eschatology” to mean the day of rapture as the millennialist does. Oops! Today I can say “eureka” after listening to Dr. Philip Giessler’s passionate biblical

exegetical discourses on the subject matter... In this respect, I feel there is an urgent need of building capacity and empowering the “messengers” of the gospel.” This is what we want to do more of by distributing confessional Lutheran resources (like the Good News magazine and LHF books) but also by teaching. Below is a picture of our container of teaching materials that we distribute free to all teachers of the faith. But the urgent request to teach them also remains. This is why we need your support and this is why there is so much work to do.



### **What is in the future?**

There is a ton of work to be done and the next two months are going to be extremely busy. The first task is to inaugurate and distribute the first copies of the Ekegusii Lutheran hymnal in Western Kenya. There are 62 spoken languages in Kenya. The most common is Kiswahili but amongst the Lutherans in Kenya it is Kisii. This is because this is where the Lutheran Church started yet until this year they never had a complete hymnal with orders of worship. Bishop Thomas Asiago, who is the bishop of this diocese, the largest in Kenya, said it was the happiest day of his life when he heard that the first copies have come in from the printer. We are planning a big celebration in August.

After that I have been asked to teach Lutheran Confessions at the Lutheran Seminary in Sudan, CLIHM (Concordia Lutheran Institute for the Holy Ministry). This will be one of the very last courses before these men graduate in October.

Then later in September there is a planned conference in Brazzaville, Congo. They would very much like to offer their time to help others learn the new French Lutheran hymnal. Bethany Lutheran Church in Naperville, IL has made it possible to give them three cases of hymnals. The special talent of the Congolese people is they are excellent musicians. They are going to help

create a cd of some of the hymns so that the other French speaking countries can hear and learn Lutheran hymns!

As you can see there is much work to be done and we need your prayers and support.

### **New LCMS president means situation solved?**

Rev. Matthew Harrison was elected the new president of the LCMS. He is a great man of faith and has done much to help the church. Whilst he was director of World Relief and Human Care, he made it possible for me and five other CTSFW classmates to go to Madagascar on the first Mercy Mission Expedition. He is definitely mission minded and devoted to teaching the Lutheran faith in the USA and abroad.

Having just begun leading the translation teams and teaching courses throughout Africa, I have learned that transition takes time. Hopefully the work we are doing can also be supported by LCMS World Mission in the future but it is important to mention that things do not change overnight. Lutherans in Africa is still in need of your support. Ceasing to support the work now with the assumption that the new administration has picked up the work would not be accurate. It will take time but we do pray that greater support will come. In the mean time, please continue to pray for the work of equipping Africans pastors and church leaders who can faithfully teach the faith to many more.

### **Home front news from Tiina**

A wonderful two month period in Finland is about to end. The kids especially enjoyed swimming, fishing and the freedom to get on their bikes and go around without parental supervision. It was nice to spend time with family and old friends and make many new ones. Visiting churches on different sides of the country gave us opportunity to enjoy finnish nature all though sitting in a car with six kids for many hours at the time. It wasn't so rosy at every moment. Being able to share about our life and work in Africa and receiving enthusiastic response made it all worth while.

Our family of eight is functioning all right. It took some time to get into some sort of a routine with the little one demanding his share of attention, but we all love baby Matthew so much that we readily forgive him all the destruction he has caused in our previously so harmonious life ;). We are indeed blessed to have this family!



*Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers.*

I Timothy 4:16

### **PRAYER REQUESTS**

We always need your prayer support. At this time we ask your prayers for:

Thankfulness for the birth of Matthew Justin and the release of Ahmed Hassan.

Maggie, Tristan, and Sarai as they begin a new school year.

Rev. James May who will be traveling a lot in the next two months.

That the Ekegusii Lutheran Hymnals will be used so that the pure faith is taught.

The seminary students in Sudan who will soon graduate that they will be prepared to serve Christ's church by purely teaching the Gospel, rightly administering the sacraments, and be strengthened when persecution comes.

The Lutheran Church in Congo and their work in helping to produce a cd so that others may learn Christ centered hymns.

If you would like to support us you can send a check to our home congregation, Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Road, Parma, OH 44134-6102 (indicate "support Lutherans in Africa").

If you are in Finland you can send support to the mission account set up by LSRV

Lähetystilin Numero: OP 521413-213013

Viitenumero: 1232

Saaja: Länsi-Suomen Rukoilevaisten Yhdistys r.y.