



Lutherans IN Africa

FORMING AFRICAN LUTHERANS TO BE TEACHERS OF THE FAITH

www.lutheransinafrica.com | March 2018

87 Baptisms, Teaching, and Construction: *Can You Help?*

YOUTH SEMINAR

2017 ended and 2018 began with lots of activity. As you may remember from years past, we traditionally have a Christmas Youth Seminar and this year was no different. A church full of Lutheran youths filled Msabweni Congregation where they learned about Jesus in the Psalms, Jesus in Advent, and Jesus in the liturgy. In addition to Pastor Paul Arndt assisting to teach, Abinar Momanyi also joined the program to teach several Lutheran hymns.



87 BAPTISMS: KALOBYEI REFUGEE CAMP

After a quiet New Year at home then it was off to the largest refugee camp in Africa, the Kakuma and Kalobeyei Refugee Camps. In the past year, hundreds of thousands of refugees have been relocated to Kalobeyei which is just north of Kakuma. They were relocated from Dadaab because

of the security risk from Al Shabab who regularly persecuted and killed Christians or those who refused to convert to Islam. Kalobeyei is far from Somalia, therefore the people are much safer from persecution, but they are still far from civilization and it is more than a two-day drive from Nairobi. Many of the people had written me over the years from Dadaab because they had not seen a Lutheran pastor in more than ten years and they were pleading for someone to baptize and teach them. When I went there the church was packed on Sunday and during the week we limited the number to 35 men who would be trained to teach others. When it came to baptism, 87 souls were born again and were sealed in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. (More pictures of Baptisms below.)



CONSTRUCTION WITH FRIENDS

Soon after returning back to Nairobi, several volunteers began showing up. First we had three from Finland then seven more from Minnesota and Texas. Their expertise in building, landscaping, and library cataloging are helping to develop and improve the Lutheran School of Theology. They were a bit overwhelmed with all that needs to be done at first but then they realized, they will just do what they can for today and then encourage others to come and help. How about you? Can you weld, do carpentry work, interior finishings, make drapes, paint, landscape, or catalog books in a library software? We could use your help! (More pictures of volunteer work below.)



Can you drill and weld? Lots of frames need to be constructed.



Can you use your head or put up sheetrock?



How about painting or making curtains?

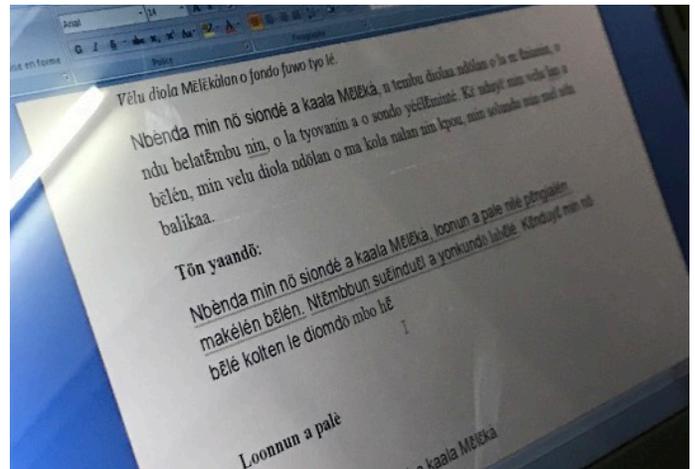
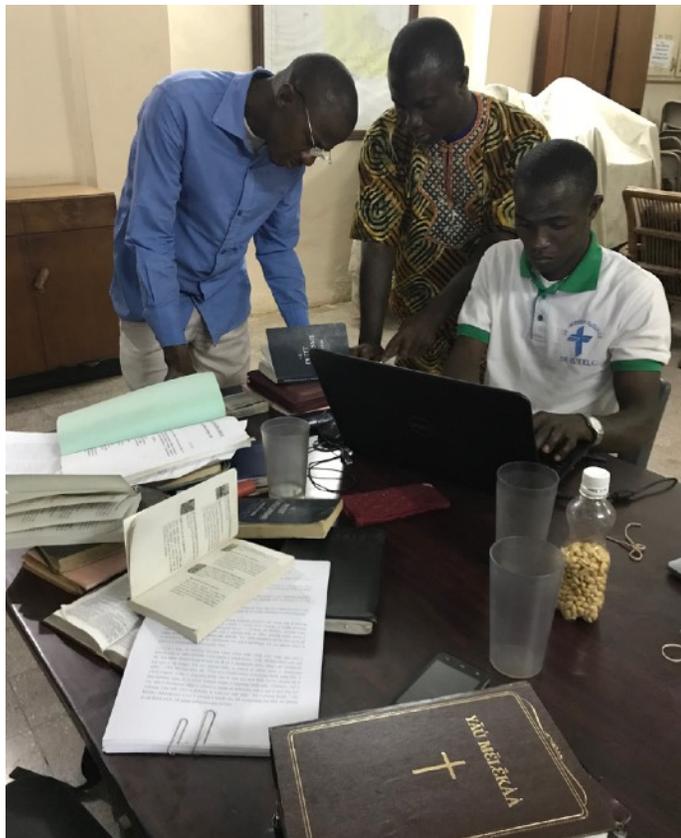


Every skill from welding, operating a backhoe (a new skill I learned), to organizing the library, cataloging books, and putting film on windows. Lutherans in Africa needs your help!

TRANSLATING LUTHER'S SMALL CATECHISM

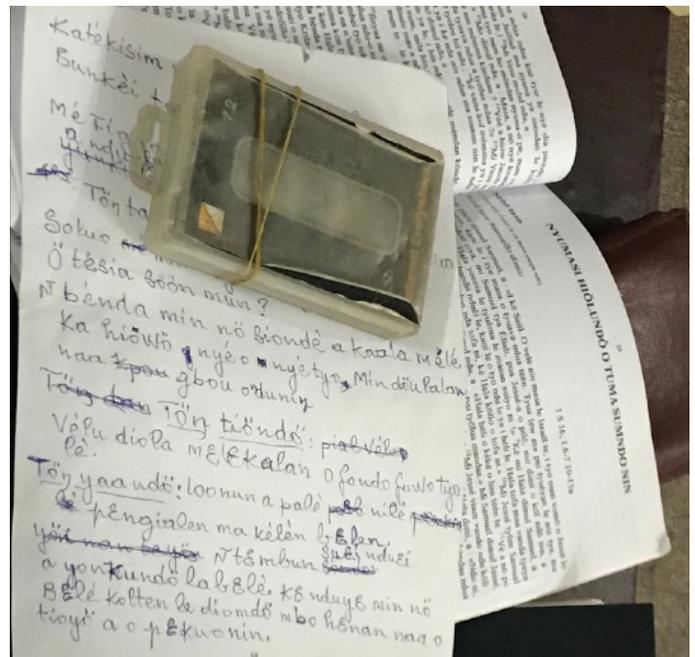
As I type this newsletter I am in Bamako, Mali to organize a team of pastors from Guinea who will translate Luther's Small Catechism into another African language. This was a real challenge for them and it is really hard for me to describe. Let me try by giving a few examples of the infrastructure. My friend Rev Tim Heiney who is a missionary in Siguiri, Guinea told me that they have not had electricity for three years. The pastors with whom I am working traveled 330 miles from Kissidougou to Bamako. The trip took two days to go 330 miles. Now that the rains have begun, it will take another day to get back. The education situation is not much better as only 30% of the population can read and this is lower amongst women. As I have often said, what Africa needs most is education. Guinea is one of the most mineral rich countries in the world but those are mostly exploited by China, Europe, and their own leaders.

At the same time, there is plenty of reason for encouragement. The primary reason is that there are



faithful pastors who have been with me the last three days and have been translating from 8am until 8pm each night. Often Tim has complained that he wants to go and eat while these guys want to keep translating.

We have had very interesting theological conversations when trying to translate words such as conception. What does it mean that Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary? This is something we confess in the Apostles Creed each Sunday and many often overlook how important that statement is. Jesus is conceived by



the Holy Spirit and is fully Divine but does NOT receive original sin from a human father. Jesus is born of the virgin Mary so that He is fully man and can be our substitute and pay for all our sins, especially the sickness we all inherit from our fathers, Original Sin.

The Augsburg Confession gives a very short but clear statement:

Our churches teach that since the fall of Adam [Romans 5:12], all who are naturally born are born with sin [Psalm 51:5], that is, without the fear of God, without trust in God, and with the inclination to sin, called concupiscence. Concupiscence is a disease and original vice that is truly sin. It damns and brings eternal death on those who are not born anew through Baptism and the Holy Spirit [John 3:5].

Our churches condemn the Pelagians and others who deny that original depravity is sin, thus obscuring the glory of Christ's merit and benefits. Pelagians argue that a person can be justified before God by his own strength and reason.

Paul Timothy McCain, ed., Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2005), 31-32.

Most churches deny this and think that they have something Holy in themselves to do good. If that were the case, we would not need Jesus nor the Holy Spirit. We would just make the "decision" to do good. This is also the primary reason why most Protestant churches reject baptism of infants. They do not think it is necessary and thus they emphasize the "good decision" of a man.

This is contrary to the clear teaching of God's Word which says:

And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world,

following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience- among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ-by grace you have been saved (Eph 2:1-5).

Our brothers, Thomas, Tamba, and Joseph continually say they have learned so much from translating the catechism because you have to go slow, word by word, and actually know what it all means. This practice will also help them as they teach others.



PRAYER REQUESTS

Safety for everyone on the Lutheran School of Theology construction work site.

Safe travels for everyone traveling to and from the LST. Safe travels as students return for the spring semester. Safe travels as Pastor May travels while teaching others.

Guidance of the Holy Spirit as new pastors are being trained.

Guidance as we put together our summer 2018 furlough schedule. (Please contact us for possible mid-week visits in addition to Sunday visits. We hope to see as many of you as possible!)

Peace and comfort for Tiina and the kids as they prepare for home and school transitions as we will be moving from town out to the Lutheran School of Theology.

In Christ,
Reverend James May

KALOBEYEI REFUGEE CAMP AND BAPTISMS

