



Lutherans IN Africa

FORMING AFRICAN LUTHERANS TO BE TEACHERS OF THE FAITH

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Finally Home!

May Family Newsletter



We have arrived!

At the long last, we are home in Kenya. Little did we know when we flew out to America in August that it would take us eight months to return. Plans were made, plans were changed. That seems to be a norm these days extending to an unseen future. Not knowing how the world shifts and changes is mighty frustrating, but what a great joy we Christians have in the promises of God:

"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope." (Jer. 29:11)

He has the plans for us. He gives us a future. Things will work out and not in a sloppy manner either, but in the best possible way when our Heavenly Father has us covered. This gives us a good reason to hand our worries and anxieties over to Him and be at peace even while the world around us is in tumult.

Let me tell you friends: if you leave your house in Africa for eight months, you will see some dust upon your return. At first, I was disappointed that

we could not drive home direct from the airport when we arrived at the night time. However, after opening the front door the next day and finding every surface and crevice thickly covered with dust and spiderwebs, a few dead bugs, and lizards



adding a special touch, I was relieved that I had not needed to face the mess in the middle of the night. This part of Kenya has a nighttime curfew beginning at 8 P.M. and we did not want to try our luck getting past the police then. We slept at a hotel near the airport and ordered two vehicles to take us home in the morning. We had so many pieces of luggage! Some were filled with beautiful ecclesiastic embroidery textiles that our new friends from Baxter, MN gifted to African churches [check them out at <https://www.ecclesiasticalsewing.com/>]. Some bags had heavy hydraulic hoses for our backhoe and wrenches to work on them. But most of the suitcases were filled with my dear doctoral student's books. Of course, everyone else too had accumulated a small library of their own. We also carried homeschool books for the next year, but nothing compared with the amount of theological and other Ph.D. books that we hauled with us.



So it happened that we were stopped by the police on our way home even though we were driving during daytime hours and did not break the curfew. I did not think much of it at first, but then realized that unlike other cars, we were not let through. After a long wait in a hot car, an officer yanked the door open and seated himself ordering us to give him a ride to the police station as we were going to be detained. The virus has driven the economy to the ground in Kenya and everyone is scrambling to find money; the police not being an exception. Our drivers, who are in safari business, have not had any income from tourism for a full year, and therefore had not paid some tourism tax, of which the police were eagerly now accusing them. As soon as we pulled to the station the license plates were roughly hacked off and a long wait commenced. It did not help to tell that we are not tourists. Police had seen our



suitcases and decided that people with that amount of luggage and white faces certainly are tourists. They would not let the drivers leave until their tourist tax issue was settled. We had to hire a third vehicle to take us home and finally in the evening our things, drivers, and their vehicles were released. Classic welcome!

Some people have asked what Pastor May's Ph.D. research is about and how is it going. The topic discusses motives and dependency in African mission work. What are the motives of missionaries or volunteers to do mission work? What kind of relationships are created between the Westerners and natives? What practices lead to unhealthy dependency? How can Westerners and natives work and grow together? Right now, Pastor May has passed four courses out of required six. He will commence his fifth course in the beginning of May. The course study is extremely intense with a huge load of reading and writing to do. It is challenging to fit other things into the calendar during the semesters. Thankfully, this time he has only one course to tackle; other semesters he has juggled two of them simultaneously. While having all the other director's responsibilities here at the LST, it would be very likely to be impossible to manage more than one course at the time.

By now everyone has recovered from jet lag. The days consist of a lot of cleaning as the dust has entered everywhere. All kids are also trying to keep up with their studies. Our eldest, Maggie, traveled here with us since her college studies are online and she can attend to her classes from here. Unfortunately, due to the time difference her classes take place in the middle of the night, but thankfully those live sessions are only twice a week. It has been wonderful to spend time with her. She is half amused, half anxious about readjusting to the African life after being gone for three years. She suffered near heart attacks, several times, in the traffic on our way home, when nobody else paid any heed to it. Foods are different, mess in the house and limited internet are overwhelming, and even people's different ways have caused mild bewilderment. However, she is glad that she decided to come and gets to be with the family. She

is also hoping to reunite with her former high school friends once the lockdown ends.



Trees and flowers have grown splendidly while we were gone. Our yard is much greener now and different plants make the place delightful. More than anything we have enjoyed seeing our work team again and hearing everybody's news. We got together for a goat lunch (nyama choma) and Maggie had a chance to get to know everyone a bit.

A couple of days ago, we participated in a burial of one of our neighbors, and we have invitations lined up for weddings, baptisms, and house visits. We are blessed to have been welcomed back to this community so warmly. However, one primary thing is sadly missing: seminary students. Please pray with us that lockdowns and school closures would soon be in the past and our eager future pastors would be able to travel back and continue their studies!

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We noticed a problem with our contact list; no new email addresses got added to it for the last few months. If you signed up for the newsletters but have not received any, you can find the previous months' letters at our website [*lutheransinafrica*](http://lutheransinafrica.com)

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