

Jesus Never Fails

An autobiography and history of the
Lutheran Heritage Foundation

Golden
Ring

Cross of Christ

Heart

Flower

Lutheran Heritage
Foundation

Robert L. Rahn

JESUS NEVER FAILS

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND HISTORY OF THE
LUTHERAN HERITAGE FOUNDATION

ROBERT RAHN

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PREFACE

In the preparation of this book, I owe a debt of gratitude to many people. To the people (far and wide) who helped to give shape to the plans, ideas, and work that you will read about in this volume, I am thankful. To my fellow pastors who provided encouragement, advice, and counsel along the way, I owe thanks. To the congregations where I was allowed to serve with great support, especially Trinity-Wolf Point, Montana, putting up with my early entrance into the ministry and to Messiah, Missoula, Montana, where I had the privilege to have organizational skills tested while starting a new mission, I have much appreciation. Moving out of the parish ministry into institutions such as Concordia, River Forest, Illinois, Concordia Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana, and God's Word to the Nations Bible Society, Cleveland, Ohio. I give humble gratitude. To the board and staff of the Lutheran Heritage Foundation for their support and encouragement, I am humbly grateful. For my church family at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, Chicago, Illinois, St. Paul Lutheran Church, Westlake, Ohio, St. John's Lutheran Church, Fraser, Michigan, for their support and encouragement, the Lord be praised. To our loyal team of stuffers, the King's Royal Order of Stuffers, for demonstrating the volunteer spirit, and for helping to raise awareness and support for our mission, thanks be to God for their loyal service. And to our LHF family of donors who embraced our mission and provided the resources for us to grow and go, many of you who have been on our team from the very beginning, your help in every instance is, indeed, a demonstration of the grace of God. Please receive our humble thanks for this your important participation and service.

In Honor and Tribute to Family

Michigan has become an important place for us. While we remember our Minnesota roots, our Montana joys, our Chicago memories of overcoming the asphalt jungle (in our early view), our Fort Wayne friendships, and our Cleveland connections, we have come to see Michigan as the place where family ties are replacing Minnesota roots. It is here where we participated in the marriage of our son, Jeff, to Becky Upleger and thus became part of the Upleger family. This marriage blessed us with two wonderful grandchildren, Mackenzie and Carter, who manage to keep our lives focused on the "bright

and beautiful” (if grandparents can be so focused)! To Jeff, Becky, Mackenzie and Carter we dedicate this work as representatives of future Lutheranism that is loyal and true.

Finally, I am grateful, more than I can say, to the person who is most often introduced as the LHF Executive Volunteer, Donna, my wife, my partner, my friend.



INTRODUCTION

Many have suggested that I compile an account of the occurrences pertaining to the history of the Lutheran Heritage Foundation, just as it was observed from the beginning. Several have also suggested that the compilation be autobiographic and historic, offering a view of my background which includes farming, boarding school, loss of loved ones, seminary school, and more. It seemed fitting to write out for you, in consecutive order, the exact truth about the things of which you have heard, seen, or taken part. Thus, the following account explains how God has grown me and the Lutheran Heritage Foundation up from the roots.



CHAPTER ONE: BEGINNINGS

Back to the Beginning, Down on the Farm

We go back to the beginning to see the planted seeds of work ethic and values needed to bring the Lutheran Heritage Foundation into existence.

The farm in rural Minnesota (then a train stop in the community of Nichols, but now a community known as Eagan) was the place where God began to establish His plan. It was a place where one learned the rigors of honest, hard work. For my parents it meant carving out a land that would provide a living; it meant horses, an axe, a grub hoe, a saw, and some dynamite (although the saw would be the type you would now see on the wall of a museum or restaurant featuring tools of the past), and we didn't use a tractor. As a result of my parent's determination, much of the 160 acre farm became tillable over the years.

My family worked very hard to keep the farm operating and growing. We learned the importance of responsibility at a young age. As children, all seven of us helped out like farm hands. With plenty of chores to share, my two brothers, four sisters, and I always had work to do, like the daily milking of our cows and the seasonal planting or harvesting. Here on the farm, the core values were developed that were the ingredients needed for future service in the Kingdom. Work on the farm produced the virtues of stamina, integrity, tenaciousness, zeal, commitment, and community in us.

That farm also produced good potatoes, corn, and oats. However, the soil was also speckled with rocks and stones that had to be cleared, which led to my dislike of certain aspects of farm work. Every spring the horse, stone boat (another relic of the past), and I combed the field picking up the pestilent rocks that had slyly pushed to the surface. After the field was cleared, planting and harvesting crops to sustain a Holstein herd of forty kept our family busy. It was this intense preparation that led to a good harvest, just like God intentionally prepared my background to be a helper in His fields.

Farm work provides needed ingredients for service in the Kingdom. The Haying Process

The early haying process included horses, hay loaders, and stackers. The

hay loader, pulled behind a hay wagon, was a handy wheel-driven machine, which lifted the hay from the windrow and up a chute to the wagon. There, it was arranged to accommodate the largest amount possible and driven to the barn. A hay fork took large bites of hay from the loaded wagon. Through a system of pulleys and tracks, the hay was lifted into what we called a hay mow, or storage area, in the barn.

Then came the tractor and hay baler age. What an age that was! With the early model baler, blocks had to be placed in a chamber to separate the bales. There the wire could be strung to tie the bale. With one person needed on each side of the chamber, this was a perfect job for a mother and daughter, while the “boys” picked up the bales or packed them on the wagon. Unlike today, there were no large square or round bales to be left covered by plastic in the fields. These bales had to be put on an elevator and lifted into the hay mow or loft.

Later came the invention of the round baler. One such model, an Allis Chalmers, found its way to our farm. It was used with some disgust, as it had not yet been fully perfected. A clumsy and bulky New Holland was its replacement.

Besides hay, other crops were planted and harvested which also fit the “labor intensive” category. Oats, for one, required walking the fields to pull the mustard and other noxious weeds, in what we could call the pre-pesticide and herbicide era. Even the younger siblings could perform this task. The horse-drawn grain binder was followed by the shocking of the bundles. This required wearing long sleeves, even in the heat of summer, to protect the arms during the shocking process.

Character and Zeal Developed in the Fields

Finally, the fun part came during the harvest. This was the age of the threshing bee when neighbors would join together in a threshing ring and help each other. Teams of horses with wagons would follow the gigantic steam engine pulling the threshing machine and lining up the huge belt that would provide the power for the machine. A steel-wheeled Aultman & Taylor steam engine caused a lot of excitement as it rumbled slowly down the gravel road to the farm, leaving behind its large tell-tale wheel lug marks.

The separation of the grain from the chaff helps even today to understand the Last Things described in the Bible. Pitching the bundles into the “feeder” was a task for trained farmers. Care had to be taken that the bundles were fed so as not to cause the machine to become blocked. It was important that the grain be at the proper dried condition to ensure the proper separation of wheat, chaff and straw. It was also a time when the

sense of community was present without the modern need for “community organizers.”

There was something about the harvest that was part celebration, especially the noon banquet. There were scrumptious sandwiches mid-morning and mid-afternoon, but the noon meal prepared by the women of the threshing ring was truly a banquet eaten in shifts. It always included meat and potatoes and finished off with a delicious homemade pie for dessert. This was truly better than picking rocks, pulling mustard, or hoeing corn.

The heat from working in the cornfields was well remembered and provided experience for tenacity and zeal. These were days before the onslaught of pesticides, multi-rowed computerized planters, convertible combine heads (the part that cuts the grain and corn). These were the days of hand tools and sweat to hoe the weeds that a cultivator could not reach in the rows. “Just one more row” was a common liturgical refrain for the “farm hands.”

The enjoyable parts were the morning and afternoon lunch breaks, common to the farm. The water and coffee from tin cups and delicious but simple sandwiches, cookies and cake always served as the “pause that refreshes.” You’ve heard the old adage: “A mother’s work is never done.” This was especially apt to the wife of a farmer on a dairy farm.

We called the next task “filling silo.” After the corn was cut, it lay in the field in bundles. To lift the heavy bundles onto wagons and drive the load up to the silo filler, a machine was used that was hooked up to a tractor. With pulley and belt, a number of blades would begin to rotate. As the rotation got to a certain level, the bundles were placed on a conveyer which led them to the knives, and the stalks and ears were cut into short pieces that were called silage. Care had to be taken not to feed too much too fast, because silos are filled from the top. The next part of the process had the silage blown up a pipe and into the silo by paddles hooked to the knives. Sometimes this could be from 40-60 feet high.

There was also a gradual introduction of labor-saving machinery. Instead of bundles covering the ground to be picked up, an elevator was attached to a corn binder, as it was called, and the bundles elevated directly onto the wagon pulled alongside. Later corn choppers were introduced that blew the silage into a covered wagon and then dumped into a blower that propelled the silage into the silo. As time went on, some silos stood empty and silage was stored in silage pits with plastic protection.

Some corn was grown for silage, but there was also a type called “field corn.” This was meant to be picked and shelled, some to be ground into feed and perhaps mixed with oats. In early years, horses pulled the binder and the heavy bundles had to be picked up and “shocks” created. About 15-20

bundles were placed in teepee style for drying. Once the stalks and husks were dried, they were then hauled to a corn shredder, which had the same purpose as the threshing machine.

The corn shredder is another one of those obsolete farm machines, and modern farmers are more familiar with changing the head on a combine. All in one process, it separates the corn from the stalk, and the kernels from the ears out in the field. The stalks are shred by the combine and spread in the field for compost, and the kernels of corn are collected in huge tanks on the combine and transferred to trucks and wagons when the tank is full. With the onslaught of corporate farming, it isn't uncommon to see combines which can gobble up six, eight, ten or twelve rows of corn at a time.

Judgment and discipline were also principles learned on the farm that helped to prepare for work in the Kingdom. The horse age helped to shape these characteristics. One such teachable event occurred as part of a team run-away experience. Cleaning up a hay field meant covering it with a team of horses pulling a dump rake that gathered up leftover hay in the narrow tines, raising the tines and dumping the hay in a row. On one occasion the field being cleaned up was on a long side hill. When the team got to the top, it decided to bolt down the hill and head for the barn. It was a rough ride, and I was aware of stories where a farmer would fall into the tines and literally be rolled along the ground.

Judgment was called for when the horses approached a gate that was just wide enough for the dump rake. Hitting the post would mean certain ejection from the seat. There was no stopping the team. Before entering the gate, I turned and jumped off the back of the rake as it hit the post and shot into the air.

It did not faze the galloping team. They hit the gravel road for a quarter of a mile at full speed, strode up the driveway, and came to a stop at the barn. Witnessing the event and seeing the wise decision of "disembarking" and being safe from harm, my dad continued his trek to the barn. Then he mounted the seat of the dump rake, and with reins firmly in hand, drove the team to the very spot they had left and had them slowly retrace their steps. It was known as disciplining and correcting a team. Discipline, obedience, and correction are all hard lessons one has to learn as a Christian. There would be a time for it to be applied in a spiritual realm. Here a lesson was learned, not just for a team of horses, but applied to human situations.

Sorrow and Heartache

"There is a time for every event under heaven - a time to give birth and time

to die, a time to weep and a time to laugh; a time to mourn and a time to dance.” Ecclesiastes 3:1, 2, 4

My family’s life has been joyful and full of success, but at times we were plagued by great sorrow. Some incidents I merely heard about, like my brother Harold who died from convulsions when I was an infant. Other incidents I remember vividly, like the tragic accident that took the life of my six-year-old sister Joyce just before her first day of school.

A gravel road, unfamiliarity with the new invention of power steering, and a soft road shoulder contributed to the accident. My mother was driving to the church before the wedding shower for my sister Lorna. Because there were no seat belts or child seats then, Joyce was sitting in between my mother and Lorna in the front seat. Hitting the soft portion of the shoulder, the car was pulled into the ditch and collided head on with a stump. In those days the padded dash was not a feature. Even though there probably was the natural reaction of arms trying to protect her, she was propelled by the impact and hit her head on the dash, causing massive head injuries.

The seldom traveled country road did not bring passers-by to assist. Although seriously injured herself, my mother, knowing the severity of the situation, took the child in her arms and stoically went down the road to the nearest farm house for help.

I don’t remember how another sister and I got to the church to tell an aunt that there would be no shower, but a funeral. I do remember being taken to the parsonage to stay with the pastor’s wife while the pastor went to speak to the group and then rushed to the hospital. I will forever remember the text used for the funeral sermon: “A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children; and she refused to be comforted, because they were no more.” Matthew 2:18

Through this tragedy, I witnessed how a Christian couple dealt with death and dying. To avoid adding more grief and guilt on my mother, I never questioned how my mother had the strength, courage and stamina to bear the burden of this ordeal. Grief counselors might have suggested open discussion. All I can say is that “We were German.” That means we were a family that did not express a lot of emotion.

CHAPTER TWO: EDUCATION

To Grade School

Early grades one to four were spent at Christ Lutheran School, Nichols, Minnesota. This one-room and one-teacher school served all eight grades. A potbelly stove in the middle of the room provided the heat, if someone got it started on winter mornings. The mile walk was a challenge in the winter but enjoyable in the spring and fall. Unknowingly, we were in a bona fide fitness program.

Games at school included softball, dodge ball and ante ante over. In the winter it was fox and geese with an appropriate “game board” drawn in the snow.

As happened on a regular basis, we experienced the demise of the small rural Lutheran schools. When Christ Lutheran School closed, I transferred as a fifth grader to the public school: District 104, as it was known. Again, it was a one-room school and Mrs. Janssen was the teacher. This school had a “well-equipped” playground - it had a merry go round. Other than bruises and bumps, no serious casualties were inflicted as the boys pushed for a faster and faster ride.

My best recollection of those days was being responsible to inform my Dad of the oil level for the furnace. I was derelict a couple of times, as “a student committee” decided we needed a day’s recess due to a cold school room. Another recollection is that the teacher visited us and ran over my bicycle. Had there been a driver’s ed program, it would have been recommended!

To High School

Where to go to high school was a lesson to be learned by modern day recruiters. During confirmation, the pastor suggested several times that I might be suited for the ministry and I should think of Concordia, St. Paul. When fall enrollment time arrived, his word simply was, “I’ll be by tomorrow to pick you up.” What? In the middle of that enjoyable time of filling silo? My mother had a suitcase packed for me when Pastor drove up the next day. There were no questions asked, only a delivery made to Concordia and a classical high school education began.

We were boarding students at the age of 13, and we were in the ministerial

track. German, Latin and Greek were all part of our high school curriculum, along with the usual subjects of English, literature, algebra, biology, physics and, of course, religion. Times have changed and certainly recruitment has changed.

The campus had changed. There were girls now being admitted into the college division. Some interaction took place when the high school homecoming court was selected with girls from the college in the mix.

Sports were an integral part of my high school days with football (probably a 90-pound wonder on the freshman team), basketball (a 5'4" would be center) and baseball (successful enough to win some MVP awards). Hockey and track were also available. The girls had cheerleading. Title IX hadn't been handed down.

This is what was known as "the system." If you went to a Concordia for high school and college, you were known to have come through "the system." Currently there is no real "system" as students enter a program in myriad of ways. I feel something is lacking, as no real camaraderie is built as we had it in community living.

My junior year in high school would also be the time when a gal by the name of Donna became part of my life. After eight years of courtship, much of it from a distance, and after many letters, baseball, softball, basketball games, and roller skating rounds, she would become my wife. The joke was that I married for the money, as she was already working at a bank from her early high school years.

College

All we had to do is move out of Luther Hall and into one of the Concordia Junior College dorms. In some cases four people were assigned to a small single room. No large wardrobes were possible with that limited space. There were no mini refrigerators and no space for a "hi fi" system. Some students were "innovative" with hot plates, and Spam was often served as the delicacy of the day.

I had the advantage of going home many weekends, as my mother had an egg route that each Friday brought her near the campus. There were many volunteers who would be more than happy to come along for the weekend to take advantage of some home-cooked meals. When we returned on Monday morning, assumptions were made that we had food to be distributed! What did the students care that my mother would have reserved at the small grocery store (Geiger's) a "day or two" old supply of bakery goods, stuffed neatly in what today would be called a lawn bag. We knew this would be an apt substitute for the frequent Sunday evening campus meal of cocoa, apples and popcorn.

These weekend jaunts usually involved Walther League activities. Being active as the President of the Dakota-Scott-Rice Zone meant once-a-month roller skating parties in Farmington, softball teams in the summer, basketball in the winter, and regular zone meetings. The distance from the college to the farm was only about ten miles. Fred Muenchow, a classmate who spent time in an orphanage growing up, was a frequent visitor and became like a member of the family.

Seminary (What are you doing here?)

The reason the question was asked was that we were supposed to be the first class experiencing a new twist to the system. We were scheduled to be the first class entering the Senior College in Fort Wayne, a two-year course prior to entering the Seminary. Unfortunately (or fortunately, as some would view it), the heating system was not yet operative and we were “shipped on” to St. Louis. Last minute adjustments had to be made to accommodate us.

Thus, we were the underclassmen for two years while we waited for the next class to arrive. It also meant that our class had to try and plug the gap when there would be a year of no vicars or graduates. The solution was to ask some members of the class to accept two-year vicarages. Even with this solution, I count 144 men on my 1961 graduation picture.

I will readily admit that I was not a good student until my fourth year. You could say that I was living “on the edge.” Grades were good enough to stay on the varsity baseball team. It was a day when most students were single and lived on campus. Only a few were married, mostly during the last year of seminary.

Like any school faculty, there were those who challenged your abilities, and there was a scramble to avoid those profs if at all possible. In some cases it was not possible because it was a class that had to be taken to fulfill your required courses.

Coach Pete Petersen wasn't just the coach of a basketball team.

He was a coach to all the students and set up a program whereby each student had to compete in some activity. An elaborate competition was set up between dorms in a variety of sports. During the year each dorm would receive points for participation and for winning competition in touch football, softball, tennis, basketball and ping pong. During our second year Dorm L was a “super power” and won the coveted intramural championship. Fred Muenchow and I served as dorm captains and utilized our strong dorm recruitment system to get participation in all sporting activities.

More Formal Sports

More formal sports were also available on campus and I chose to participate in baseball. We played formidable teams like Washington University and St. Louis University where we met several future major league players. We also had the rare privilege to be coached one year by a major league player: Mr. Shortstop of the St. Louis Cardinals, Marty Marion. Team members remember that his contract was one of no pay but a demand for a ready supply of new baseballs. His coaching created a lot of interest and we always were covered by the St. Louis sports pages.

Students around that time were Jack Faszholz, Herman Otten, Rip Rehwinkel, Joe Hauser and Tom Faszholz, all of whom got looks either from major league baseball or the National Basketball Association. Occasionally we had the privilege of scrimmaging with members of the St. Louis Hawks basketball team, who would come to practice in the Seminary Fieldhouse, the “house that Pete built!”

Preparing for the Pulpit

During the course of our studies at the seminary we took Homiletics. The first sermon I was to preach was to be in front of my Homiletics class. You can't imagine how difficult this would be to have second year seminarians listening and knowing of the involvement in some of the pranks listed below and some not listed here. This was to be done without notes or manuscript. It never happened the first time around. Halfway through the sermon my mind took on a complete blank and I had to schedule a re-run.

My first sermon in my home congregation was Christmas, 1958, at St. John's, Rich Valley. I was preaching to parents, family, and those teenage friends from the past. It was probably the worst sermon I ever preached, but the kind listeners said it was very good.

Pranksters at Work

It was not all piety and majestic ministerial decorum. Some of us in Dorm L thought the night watchman was beginning to take his job a little too seriously in confronting students driving on campus. A scheme for a classic prank was organized. It involved the log cabin replica of the first seminary, which stood on the knoll and had a bell tower and bell. A string was tied to the clapper and strung high in the trees, to a window on the second floor of Dorm L. At a given point late in the night, a dark dorm room full of students joined the string pullers, and the bell began to toll.

The watchman came racing down the seminary lane, ran up to the tower and began shouting, "Come down! I know you are up there." When there was no response and another toll rang out, and a signal given that some firecrackers should be set off in the Quad. This was a rather serious offense in the mind of the night watchman, who ran towards the quad to catch the culprits there. At the same time the bell started tolling once again, causing his quick return to the hill where all could clearly hear his voice, "Okay, I know you are up there and I'm going to count to three, and if you don't come down I'm going to start slinging lead." The string broke, but shots were fired into the tower, with bullets causing their own ringing. The administration determined that in spite of the pranksters' activity, it might be better to have a night watchman without a gun.

Work for Tuition Pay

I can't recall any program of student aid, student loans, or government loans. Most seminarians had jobs of some kind. There was a group of us who belonged to the waiter's union and served the big banquets at the Chase Park Plaza Hotel and other venues. We weren't exactly appreciated by the "union regulars." Schemes had to be worked up to make sure they were humbled at times.

When they lined up in the kitchen, trays in hand, the order was given for silence from the union steward. Invariably, a tray would go clanging loudly to the floor, with the guilty waiter being severely reprimanded. Little did he know which seminarian had "helped" the tray to fall.

The "regular union" waiters were notorious tray stand stealers. This had to be remedied. One of the worst offenders was targeted. A three-legged stand was located and placed at the "appropriate station" with a cord tied to it. When the waiter brought his steel tray (on which were placed 10 large filled fruit cocktail glasses), it was gingerly set on the stand. Down at the end of the hall, the cord was pulled. With the loudest cacophony of sound filling the room, the waiter stood completely stunned as he saw the steward racing over to his station. The word was out not to mess with the tray stands of those "irregular union waiters."

The Veiled Prophet Ball was the biggest event to be held in the hotel each year. There are pictures, probably hidden in the Reverend's archives, of wine stewards dressed in silk stockings, shorts, tuxedo tails, and bow ties, with a chain clearly seen dangling from one man's side. This was the one who had the symbolic key to the wine cellar and served wine all around.

Another event served by talented seminarians, surprisingly, especially

those with a rural background, was the Briddlespur Event. This was a prestigious event that featured horse jumping events on Grant's Budweiser Farm.

It meant a large horse tent with stalls had to be erected weeks before the event. During the event we, appropriately attired in red coats and white pants, were responsible for resetting the jumps for each event. Part of our job was also to serve beer from the readily available, conveniently parked Budweiser truck. From time to time we also became tasters, although this was not specifically implied in our contract!!

Vacation Work

While home for summer vacation, we were intent on earning sufficient funds to cover the next year's tuition, room and board. This was generally exceeded with seminary costs relatively low at some \$600 per year. The infamous Minnesota gang of Ruclare Pauling, Fred Muenchow, Harold Ross, Dan Zielske and me were all part of what was dubbed as the HEISZE CONTRACT CO. This was a paint crew that roamed the Twin Cities and rural Minnesota, fulfilling contracts to paint houses, barns, cottages, silos, and you name it. A key piece of equipment was our 40' ladder, borrowed from the farm in exchange for a barn painting every other year. Never out of work, we'd start the season by buying an old junk car, taking out the back seat, installing roof top carriers, and we were in business.

There were narrow escapes, like when we were turning off the freeway with our 49 Studebaker and the front wheel broke off. Or when painting from the top of a 40' ladder, someone below would lose control of another ladder. You would find yourself hanging onto a ladder that was sliding and only stopped by the roof overhang. Or climbing to the top of the ladder and reaching for the opening at the top of a silo window, and have the window frame in your hand while reclaiming your balance.

The summer work enabled us to own used vehicles like a 1948 Dodge, 1950 Chevrolet or 1953 Mercury. This was after our first year at the seminary when we were known to hitchhike from St. Louis to St. Paul a time or two.

CHAPTER THREE

The Call to Ministry

It was time to leave the classroom, the rigors of study, the work, and the fun. Family, friends, girlfriends, and wives crowded into the Quad for the Call Day Ceremony. There was much anticipation and much fear as we wondered where each of us would serve. It wouldn't be until your name was called and you stepped before the Dean of Students that your place of service would be announced.

I can still remember meeting with the president of the district to which I was called, Montana District President Paul Freiburger. There were four of us meeting with him. He asked, "Now, which one of you is Rahn?" I raised my hand timidly, as if I were about to be sentenced in a court of law. "Your congregation is Trinity in Wolf Point, and that's a self-supporting congregation, and I want you to keep it that way." What could I say?

After addressing the others, with names that almost seemed they were taken in alphabetical order by the Placement Committee, Pauling, Raedeke, Rahn, Redeker, it was back to me. This was Memorial Day weekend. He asked, "Can we plan for your installation the first part of June?" My nervous response was that date would not work out as I had some plans for a wedding on June 24. He made some comment that those weren't plans, just arrangements. We settled on an August 7th date.

The "Arrangements"

On June 17th, after having been "picked up from the harvest fields," Rev. Carl Bornmann conducted the service of ordination that claimed me for the "fields ripe unto harvest." One of the gifts given to me at the ordination was a modern, up-to-date, Olympia manual typewriter. It wasn't until I got to my second parish that we upgraded to the Cadillac of all typewriters – the IBM Correcting Selectric. What a sensational invention!!!

The other "arrangement" was the wedding. Could it finally be happening? After eight years, these high school, college and seminary sweethearts would be pronounced husband and wife. I thought all the letters written ended up in a dead letter file, but I've been reminded that many of them are still filed in the cedar chest she received as a gift after two years of

dating, and one that she thought was a little presumptuous on my part.

After the wedding service, a wedding reception followed in the church basement, and then a second reception for the rest of the evening took place “out on the farm.” After a honeymoon on the Gun Flint Trail, we returned to get ready for a move. What would be done about furniture and general furnishings for a parsonage with an annual salary of \$3,000? My wife’s next-door neighbors came to the rescue. Two sisters, nuns in the Catholic church, offered to provide major furnishings at almost no cost “because we were in the same business!”

With my wife’s savings from working as a bank teller for some ten years, we were able to have a moving truck transport our items to Trinity Lutheran Church, Wolf Point, Montana. On our way on Hwy 2 to the destination, we saw the sign “Entering Wolf Point.” All of a sudden we were driving through the Indian reservation. We had missed the turn, because the Wolf Point metropolis of 1,200 people was accessed by going under a railroad tunnel.

On August 7, 1961, Rev. Dr. Paul M. Freiburger provided the sermon (long) on a day when the temperature was 106 and there was no air conditioning. The church was a lovely A-frame building built two years before. The congregation became vacant shortly after dedication and no building payments had been made during the vacancy. It would become my first experience in the work of development. The debt was quickly eliminated by challenging the Council to stop wringing their hands over the debt and showing the congregation we were interested enough in eliminating our debt by first giving ourselves. The congregation willingly followed.

Building a Home

There was joy and sadness in establishing a home in a parsonage. We had not yet gotten settled after less than two months, when the unsettling news came that my wife’s father had passed away. Many pastors and their wives experience this chapter in their lives, away from home and alone. The hurt is deep and the sorrow sharp. Joining her seven brothers and one sister, we gathered to lay her father to rest. The experience helped us to stand at the grave with many other church members who received the comforting words of Jesus, who is the Resurrection and the Life.

During the Wolf Point pastorate, we served on the American Red Cross Service to Military Families Chapter. We learned something about organizing when the earthquake happened in Alaska back in the late 60s. Those taking the cruise to Alaska, which also includes train and bus travel, have seen the devastation still remaining today.

Moving Ahead in Missions

For five years we served the Wolf Point parish and several times served vacancies in triple parishes, covering a distance of 100 miles. After 12 previous Calls, I accepted the 13th one. The membership just knew a Call would be taken whenever one arrived. It was an appreciative congregation that knew I had turned down many “ideal” Calls and took one to a place where there was nothing.

The Call was to Missoula, Montana, to establish a new mission congregation in the Rattlesnake Canyon. Rattlesnake Creek ran down through that area. Some referred to us as “Up the Creek Lutherans,” but we adopted the name Messiah as the church designation. Our Call had stipulated that the congregation should be started from scratch with no transfers from the downtown sister congregation.

I personally knocked at the door of every home in the Rattlesnake, around 1,000 homes. The Spirit led some 75 people to become members when the congregation officially organized. This would be an active, young, closely knit, and rapidly growing congregation, reaching a level of some 325 baptized members in six years.

One of the highlights of service in that congregation was coordinating a Lutheran Hour Rally with Dr. Oswald Hoffmann on the University of Montana campus. Fishing in the Missoula area was fabulous in the many “rivers running through it.” I have gone neither hunting nor fishing since leaving Montana.

Missoula was the birthplace of our son, Jeffrey, a special gift from God after ten years of medical procedures and tests. He arrived about the time we were seriously considering adoption as our only avenue. Donna often mentions the providence of God in having him arrive after those ten years. Had it been earlier, we would not have had the opportunity to work together on the LHF mission team. The Lord provides, and this would be seen time after time as we proceeded down this road that led to the formation of the Lutheran Heritage Foundation.

Both in Wolf Point and in Missoula, I put together the experience I learned from Pete Pedersen at the seminary by organizing church softball leagues. This provided some good evangelism efforts for the congregations. We still have friends who are in the church because of the attraction through this fellowship. Roger Hall, a member in Wolf Point, confessed to me that had it not been for the softball attraction he would never have stepped foot in the church. He died only a few years ago in Arizona, where he retained his strong faith in the Savior over these many years.

The fellowship in Missoula also included an annual Christmas tree hunt in the forest, with permission from the Forest Service. Members cut trees for their homes and a large tree for the church. The hunt was followed by church decorating and a chili supper. It is a custom still observed by the congregation today.

A church softball team had also been part of the venue in my vicarage congregation – Christ Lutheran Church, St. Catharines, Ontario. It was only 15 miles to the world famous attraction of Niagara Falls; I can recall standing at the Falls and looking across to see the United States flag fluttering in the distance. It prompted feelings of definitely being in a foreign land, even though we were just a few miles from the border. We also spent some hours watching the big boats go through the St. Lawrence Seaway (Welland Canal), which was right on the edge of the city of St. Catharines.

Leaving the Parish

God still leads and controls. This was especially evident during our joyful years in Missoula when we were telling people, “if we ever moved we would move further west.” That is when God pointed us east, from the garden city of Montana to what we termed the “asphalt jungle” of Chicago. How on earth did we become so misdirected? Was it because global positioning systems had not yet been invented?

God used Dr. Paul Zimmerman, college president at Concordia Seward, Ann Arbor, and River Forest, to put us on the eastern path. This meant leaving the parish and joining a faculty. The phone call came from a man I had never met, but I would find out later how God put him on my trail.

This came about as a result of an interview I had with the Synod Board for Communications, when they were looking for an editor for the *Lutheran Witness*. I was asked to serve as assistant editor and I declined. Among other things, I had told the board that I felt the *Lutheran Witness* was too political, and it needed to be made Lutheran once again. At the time of the interview, I was serving as the editor of the Montana supplement to the *Lutheran Witness*. It seems my answers to questions in the presence of Dr. Jack Preus, synod president, and Dr. John Klotz, professor at the St. Louis seminary, (members of that board) were reported to Paul Zimmerman.

This led to a phone call from Dr. Zimmerman, asking me to come and serve on the faculty as assistant to the president and development. My immediate answer was, “I’m not interested.” His response was, “I didn’t ask you for a decision. I asked you for an interview.” I responded, “I have two other Calls and I’m visiting those congregations in Iowa and California. I suppose I can come back through

Chicago for an interview.” The arrangements were made with the “counsel” of my wife and my assurance it would never be Chicago.

While visiting the parish in California, the discussion in the calling committee that evening was how the window in the bus was shot out during the morning run. It didn’t exactly give me confidence to make any change. Chicago was bad enough, but windows being shot out of a bus wasn’t exactly a call for change either. If it was to be California, I should have taken an earlier Call to San Diego.

I then had the privilege of sitting in Dr. Zimmerman’s office at River Forest and hearing his story. Those were the days many have forgotten. Elsewhere you can read about the seminary walkout by most students and professors. It involved the symbolic act of boarding up the entrance to the Quad. There are those who are reading this who may be skeptical of the reports on that event. I lived in the midst of it and experienced some of the fallout.

Dr. Zimmerman told me that when he only recently had received the Call to be president at River Forest, some faculty there called him and told him not to come. Apparently they felt that his convictions would not fit in halls of learning; some thought they could follow the seminary faculty and make this college a kind of seminex teacher training school. Zimmerman’s response to them was, “The Call I have comes from the Lord and not from a few faculty members.”

Dr. Zimmerman wanted me to help him retain River Forest as a true bastion of teacher education for the synod. Our discussion as to how this could be done piqued my interest, and I started for home in a disturbed state. Donna and Jeff made their way to the airport with great difficulty in a snowstorm. When we drove back, the inevitable question came: “You told him you weren’t interested, didn’t you?” My response was, “No, I think I am interested. He needs my help and we need to pray for God’s guidance as to where we can best serve.”

My final Sunday at Messiah in mid-January served also as the dedication of an addition to the church for added seating, office, and basement expansion for the kindergarten program that had been started. I explained to the congregation that it was time for them to learn whether their loyalty was to a person or to God. My departure would give them that opportunity.

To the Asphalt Jungle

The move to Chicago didn’t do anything to remove the stigma that we applied to it as the “asphalt jungle.” We were leaving a new four-bedroom parsonage, and with the housing prices in the Chicago-land area, my search

for something similar was only a figment of my imagination. My first search ended in no possibilities.

We scheduled our move with the moving company, and they kept advising us that without an address, no concrete plans could be made. Potential apartments were proposed, but by the time our contact was made, they were no longer available.

The movers kept calling for the address when there was none. Finally, good old Mr. Schmidt, a fireman in the city of Chicago, was reached. He had a two flat and just finished remodeling the first floor. When I called, his wife answered and said he was over working on the apartment and he would call me when he got in. Mr. Schmidt called and explained he only rented by interview. He wanted to know who he was renting to, admitting that he was prejudiced.

I began my best petitioning, while in the background I could hear the wife's response, "Don't rent it to him! Don't rent it to him!" He said, "Well, you'll have to come for an interview." I said I couldn't afford to make another trip as I had just been there. I told the remodeler I was coming to be the assistant to the president at Concordia. His answer: "I know you'd just have a bunch of those hippies here having parties."

"No, I'm a pastor," I explained. He responded, "What's a pastor?"

As a last resort I used the German trump card, thinking the name Schmidt might be German. After a few German phrases that I won't spell for fear of butchering the language, he with some frustration responded, "I said I would never do this again, but I'm going to rent it to you. But you have to have the money here tomorrow for a deposit and month's rent." I answered, "Don't worry you'll have it." So the flat was rented unseen.

Now we joyfully called the movers with our Elmwood Park address. They said, "It's good you have an address, but we can't move you because we are on strike. You have two options. Have us move your belongings to a warehouse in the Chicago area and probably lose half your belongings, or leave members of the congregation in charge to oversee the loading when the strike is over." We, of course, chose the latter.

Journey Begins

"Do not urge me to leave you or turn back from following you; for where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God." Ruth 1:16

Donna and Jeff stayed with her mother in St. Paul, and I journeyed on ahead. I came to River Forest and had to ask for directions to the college.

I didn't know I was right on the corner of the property. The filling station attendant saw my Montana car license and asked what I was doing here. I told him of my new position on the faculty and his comment was: "I wish those professors over there would stick their head in the sand and forget it." It was too late for me to ask questions. I was only interested in picking up the key for my two flat and seeing what it was.

Even though it was just remodeled, it wasn't much compared to the ranch-style house in Montana. I rolled out a sleeping bag on the hardwood floor and opened the Bible for my daily reading in a program of reading through the Bible in a year. That is still the practice followed today. At the time I was reading in the book of Second Chronicles. My mind was in the mode that nothing would be found in this reading pertinent to the situation I was in. Perhaps you have experienced the same. That was until I read the following in 2 Chronicles 15:7. "Be ye strong, therefore, and let not your hands be weak, for your work will be rewarded." God had spoken. It was a passage I would claim in the months and years ahead.

After several weeks the movers settled their strike, and the journey of our belongings began under the Mayflower banner. Donna, Jeff, her mother, and a brother arrived after the van and helped with the unpacking.

For my wife, it required a "Ruthian" type of commitment in what was to follow in the days ahead. My adjustment was of an easier nature, surrounded by encouragers and daily immersion in the Word in chapel with the students. I was with my peers. She was alone with a son of four years and lots of tears. A kind neighbor in the flat some six feet away (common Chicago lot sizes) befriended her, and life became easier until the tenant in the upstairs flat lost his job. The wife worked, and there was a lot of shouting and fighting that emanated from that flat. During the day he would drink, and when the wife came home the fighting would begin.

Out of fear, my wife would leave the flat every day and go to a library or park instead of listening to loud music and thumping on the floor above. The sidewalk next to the flat led directly to the nearby L train and lots of traffic. The paper was usually stolen by the time we would get out to retrieve it. Tomato plants that were planted along the fence were ripped up and stolen.

One day my wife mentioned the upstairs noise to the neighbor and her fear of telling the landlord lest they would get mad and cause more problems. The entrance to the upstairs flat was by a common hallway in the back. The neighbor told her she'd better mention it, because the upstairs renter had already shot his wife in the leg on one occasion. Welcome to Chicago.

After reporting this to the landlord, he was anxious to have them removed and simply told them he was going to raise the rent. This caused them to

leave. He then began a remodeling project on the second floor. For my wife the sound of a hammer and saw was sweet music to her ears and a source of comfort and appreciation.

Needless to say, the day we moved in, we began looking for another residence. A fellow faculty member knew of our interest and informed us that a neighbor had died, and the widow had mentioned the thought of selling her home and moving to a retirement home. I quickly followed up and stood on her doorstep, making an inquiry of interest. She wanted to talk to her son before making any commitment. My thought was that this would end in failure. In my follow-up phone call, I learned there was a possibility. I told her I would be by the next morning with a check for down payment, to at least demonstrate a strong interest, and we could work out details.

So a home was purchased while my wife was back in Minnesota visiting her family. She would determine that it was an ideal home in an ideal location. The widow had students from River Forest helping her from time to time. This was a positive factor when the ideal price had been set. We agreed that she could live there until she found the retirement place she wanted. It was only a matter of months, and we moved into our residence at 739 Monroe in River Forest, just two blocks from the campus. This was the beginning of a new view of Chicago. It had become more than just an asphalt jungle.

It was here where Jeffrey helped initiate an Early Childhood Education program, as a tuition-free student in a pilot program under the direction of Shirley Morgenthaler. It eventually led to one of the first degree programs in the field of Early Childhood Education.

Another event that helped immensely in getting us acclimated to Chicago was a phone call my first Saturday night. Someone knew I was the newest pastor in town, and emergency help was needed for a pastor who had been hospitalized. Could I fill the Sunday morning pulpit? What a blessing this was, especially for my wife. This commitment led to an almost full-time temporary service to the congregation and the opportunity to be in a more congregation-oriented setting. Gloria Dei Lutheran Church and School and Pastor and Enid Sedory became dear friends and a strong support base. It was the season of Lent, and Pastor Sedory was allowed to return to service on a gradual basis. I became his pulpit assistant and we became members of Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, located just at the end of the south runway at Midway Airport. It meant that we occasionally had to pause in sermons for a plane to go over.

It was at Gloria Dei that Jeffrey had his first experience with Sunday school education. Donna and Enid used the opportunity to visit while the second service was underway. We got to know their large family and are

still in touch with the children today. We would either have dinner with the family or go across the street to another member's home. God has called all of them home, and we recently returned for a special anniversary of the church and school, invited by the president of the congregation, Mr. Dan Sedory. After officiating at the funerals of both Elmer and Enid, it was good to get back for a less sorrowful event.

With the family being more settled in a quaint River Forest home, fuller attention could be given to the work on the staff. We found it a delight to work in the office with Mr. Don Roush, development director; Mr. Greg Braun, alumni director; and secretary Ada Johnson. It is here where we also developed a close friendship with those serving in the PR and Admission Department, Rev. George and Lois Lange, Mr. Bob and Barb Preloger, Mr. Fred Schebor and Mr. Ray Brown. We worked together, but there often were times when we would socialize together. Don and Velma Roush, now both deceased, were great hosts for parties. Don, being a native Chicagoan, was a die-hard Cub fan. He was also a member of the Chet Roush Band as a piano player who could play any tune you asked for without music.

The completion of the chapel building project was one of our special efforts. Today we are especially proud of the windows in the chapel. The main one was called "The Montana Window" during construction, and later became "The Window of the Holy Trinity." Another window was labeled the student window, and later received the designation as "The Window of the Holy Spirit." It was especially delightful to announce to the Concordia community the gift of the Schoknecht Organ and to have members of the Schoknecht family, Mark, Faye, and Dorothy, present for the dedication. The derivation of the sculpture on the outside chapel entrance wall was art that was commissioned for some Catholic structure that was never completed. We purchased it for a small amount, made some slight alterations, and mounted it. We don't know what name they had reserved for it, but we designated it as a sculpture depicting the passage from Malachi 4:2, "The Sun of Righteousness shall rise with healing in His wings." It is an appropriate symbol for the healing that takes place where the Word and Sacraments are offered. If you are ever on the Concordia campus in River Forest, please notice it.

It was here that we initiated a development program labeled the ACRE FOR CHRIST effort. As I was from the farm, it interested me to note the history of how River Forest got started. Farmers had designated portions of their crop and produce to help build the school. Yet there were hardly any farmers actively supporting the programs. We engaged the farmers by offering to buy the seed for an acre of corn or beans if they would give the

yield from that acre. Eventually all sorts of products came as yield, including oil wells, hay, motel rooms, goats, sheep, milk. Even the governor of Montana, an ALC former farmer from the Wolf Point area, got involved.

One day, President Zimmerman asked me what I was saying to people out there that was resulting in growing support for the college. I related to him that I was simply suggesting (strongly) that you can be conservative and successful, and that I was challenging people to help raise that banner. I didn't mind relating the story as to what sacrifices we made personally to come to help, and we needed their help as well. Zimmerman's response was, "Whatever you are doing, keep doing it. It's working."

Yes, this is a history of the Lutheran Heritage Foundation and this was the groundwork the Lord used for what was to come, even though we didn't know it. After President Zimmerman retired and went to Michigan to help out in a parish, I told him in one of our visits: "You got me out of the parish and now you enter the parish. This whole thing was your doing." Eventually it all came together.

After ten years of my service, there was a change in the presidency at River Forest. My role as assistant to the president didn't have the desired fit. However, the Lord provided. First a Call came from Dr. Barth at the St. Louis seminary, where I was invited to become the vice president for development. That Call was declined, as other changes in that department were to be made and weren't yet complete. When Dr. Robert Preus asked the synod to call me as the first representative in what would be called a Joint Seminary Development Program, I accepted the Call. I served in that role for the Synod Stewardship Department, working from the Fort Wayne campus under Dr. Preus and Mr. Richard Engdahl.

After several years of difficult service in this new concept, an attempt was made to remove Dr. Preus as president on the basis of him being a "poor administrator." Ironically, the seminary was operating with a balanced budget and that hardly indicated poor administration. The tension for me was having one boss in St. Louis and another in Fort Wayne. One was very satisfied with the work, and the other constantly badgering and critical, including the accusation that too much was being done for the Fort Wayne seminary and not enough for St. Louis.

The Firing: Part One

After several discussions with the synod stewardship executive the "job/Call" ended with a disagreement when the statement was made, "You should know that I write the check and I call the shots." My response was, "I'll call

the next shot. There is the door. Use it, and we will meet in Dr. Preus's office to determine who calls the shots." I was an observer at that point. Not too long following this exchange I received an offer to join the staff at God's Word to the Nations Bible Society.

Dr. Preus came to me and said he never thought he would suggest that I accept any offer, but the circumstances here were not permitting either of us to do the work we are capable of doing. He said that I could better serve in Cleveland with the Bible Society.

The synodical storm was brewing, and we were in the eye of the hurricane. My contention is that these actions from higher places resulted in a great strain on Dr. Preus and contributed to his premature death several years later, although he was vindicated even after being unceremoniously removed from his office. These were not the best days of synod, and we observed them from a very close perspective. Much more could be said, but the church moves on. Hopefully repentance has been achieved where necessary.

The Firing: Part Two

At some monetary loss after living in our Fort Wayne home for only three years, we moved to a new home in Avon Lake, Ohio, and joined Rev. Dr. Phillip Giessler in the effort of publishing a new translation of the Bible: God's Word to the Nations (GWN).

The house in Fort Wayne did not sell, and we were making two house payments. When we were on the verge of moving back to Fort Wayne and putting the Ohio house on the market, the house finally sold at a significantly reduced price. At least we were back to one monthly house payment.

Progress was being made on the new translation. After the New Testament was completed, we toured various parts of the U.S. putting on seminars to promote the new translation. A major luncheon presentation was made at one point to some 500 people attending a synodical convention in St. Louis. Another major presentation was made to an LLL Convention in Little Rock, Arkansas. The books arrived only half an hour prior to the luncheon due to several problems with rented trucks, including a fire that was extinguished before the books were destroyed. Satan thwarts the Lord's work in whatever ways possible.

The resignation of Dr. Giessler from the project resulted in my being appointed as executive director of the Bible Society.

It was during this time that we visited Russia and found an interest that led to the publishing of a side-by-side (English/Russian) edition of the GWN. Support for this mission project expanded rapidly, so another trip was made

to Russia with the U.S. head of the National Religious Broadcasters, Dr. Ben Armstrong, and with the head of the Religious Broadcasters of Holland. We were going through the former Soviet Union to set up seminars on education and promotion of this translation that the Holland leader wanted to make the official Bible for the churches of Holland.

During this trip we also had an audience with the president of the Republic of Belarus, who became eagerly interested in the translation. Arrangements were made by my fellow travelers to bring the Belarusian president to Pittsburgh for a radio interview to promote the education/Bible program for Russia. This was never reported to the Bible Society because of changing circumstances stated as follows.

My thinking was looking ahead to when the translation was completed, and having the translators work on Bible studies and other materials that would enhance the use of the new translation. When I returned from the Russian trip, I found myself in a hostile situation and appearing before the GWN Executive Committee prior to a board meeting. I was being questioned about misdirecting the focus of the Bible Society. It seemed there had been staff meetings unknown to me and reports made to the board undermining my position. Now questions were being asked. The more questions asked, the more I was finding out about the problem that surfaced.

Because there was a reported lack of confidence in my leadership, the executive committee gave me several options. They wanted me to think about them and give an answer to the board the next day. I was asked to stay on in a development role, or I could take the funds that came in for the Russia project and start my own organization.

During that evening, I discovered the violations of the eighth commandment and the behind-the-scenes manipulations. I was ready to face the board with a decision. The discussion with the board didn't turn out as expected, because the answer I gave was not to an option they offered. I referred to the proposals they offered and indicated that neither option was viable. I asked the board if they would work for an organization that would take your money raised but not respect your leadership. I would not, and I ventured to guess neither would they. To the second option I responded, "I'm surprised you made such an offer. It is an option that is either immoral or illegal. I do not believe you can offer funds that came into your organization and give them to another unless you asked each individual donor for that permission. This would also be against every principle of the Internal Revenue Service that has given you a 501 c3 status. I have determined to take a third option, one you did not offer. In view of what I have learned in the last 12 hours, I choose to stay on as executive director and request

repentance of the staff.”

This became a dilemma in a hopelessly divided board. After four hours of deliberation in executive session, two members of the board came to me with a report. Dr. Robert Preus and Mr. Richard Hallgren, two strong advocates for my position, sat with me and counseled that I accept the suggestion of resignation, because it would be an unhealthy environment in which to work. Furthermore, they had arranged for a six-month severance pay. Upon accepting the board’s suggestion, I was asked to be out of the office the next day.

While I was looking after and concerned about the future of the workers, another spirit was working within the organization. The staff and board won the confrontation. But did they? The beautiful million dollar office complex, built under Giessler’s direction, was shortly thereafter put to the highest bidder. Workers lost their positions due to a shortage of funds. The promotion of the Bible was non-existent, the publishers who bought the rights ended up in default. The Bible Society ended up with a warehouse full of Bibles that the publishers could not sell. Today there isn’t even an office in Cleveland.

Six months were now available to wait for a Call back to the parish. There was no use sitting around stewing over circumstances. I resorted to an old profession of painting houses. In the meantime, my name made it on the list of three congregations actually only a few miles from my door. Much to my dismay, all called someone else. This certainly fits the trend of today. Once you reach the age of 50, it becomes more difficult to obtain a Call. There is a joke that claims congregations generally desire a man who is 25 years old and has 40 years of experience. Age is a factor.

CHAPTER FOUR

Finally Getting to the Founding

“Do not be afraid, for am I in God’s place? As for you, Ye thought evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.” Genesis 50:19, 20

The severance pay was running out, but running through my mind was the Russian interest in the Bible as a way to learn English. I made another trip to the former Soviet Union, this time to Latvia with Dr. Wallace Schulz, with the intent of trying to restore Lutheran churches taken over by the Communists during their 70-year rule.

Coming back from that trip, I was mulling over the thought of going to Russia and helping to restore Lutheranism, now that the wall had come down. What about translating and publishing Lutheran books and materials to help restore Lutheranism? How about an organization that would have this as its sole endeavor? Such an entity never existed in the history of the synod.

Among the pastors and friends that I called to test these waters was an old friend, Dr. Robert Preus, who gave the idea strong endorsement. Then a call to Lutheran Bible Translators to see if they had any plans to move in the direction of publishing Lutheran books and materials, and the answer was no.

We put in a phone call to Dr. Wallace Schulz, then serving with the LLL in Riga, Latvia. We asked him if he knew of any translators that could be suggested. I informed him I was starting an organization to translate Lutheran books into Russian. There was a momentary pause on the line and then this response: “You are not going to believe this, but I was just informed by the LLL that I was to come back to St. Louis and close down this office in Riga. I have been sitting here wondering what I was going to tell two of my translators whose jobs have ended. Yes, I have two men to recommend to you: Konstantin Komarov and Andris Smilgdrivs.”

Getting the Pieces Together

Now that we had the purpose defined and several personnel ready to

work, it was time to solidify the organization. We prepared an application as a 501(c)(3) organization. St. Paul Lutheran Church, Lakewood, Ohio, provided a Call to serve as a pulpit assistant for Rev. Jack Cascione. His church would become the first headquarters of this organization.

It was time to select those who would serve on a board. The first board meeting was held in the dining room of our home in Avon Lake.



Present for the meeting were Dr. Robert Preus, Rev. Jack Cascione, Mr. Lloyd Wittenmyer, Mrs. Barbara Danner, Mr. Del Welker, Rev. Richard Bolling, and Mr. Melvin Volkert. Rev. Cascione suggested the Lutheran Heritage Foundation as the name and agreed to use his artistic talent to design a logo. It is the LHF logo still being used today.

Waiting and Moving

While waiting for approval on our 501(c)(3) organization, St. Paul Lutheran agreed to let us locate in their building and to make use of their mailing permit. The mailing list was being formed. Jeff, who was now attending Concordia, Ann Arbor, would come home on weekends to computerize all aspects of this new organization. He would occupy the den upstairs and I had a makeshift office in the basement. Thus, the first activity of the LHF organization would be out of Cleveland. It was appropriate for us to form in Cleveland, for it was here that many early Lutheran formations took place, such as the first Christmas tree utilized in Lutheran churches and the beginning of the Lutheran Hour broadcasts. It was an auspicious

beginning on an auspicious date: November 10, 1992. Many will recognize November 10 as the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther.

Some in Detroit have often asked how we decided to locate in the Detroit area. Two aspects led us to locate in Michigan. The first had to do with GWN. I did not want to continue in a position where we would constantly face the question of what happened at GWN. Neither did I want to be soliciting donors who were supporting the GWN project. Second, there was the strong “invitation” from Mr. Richard Hallgren, suggesting that Michigan congregations far outnumbered those in Ohio, and it would be a place that would welcome a Lutheran organization.

We made several trips to Michigan and we literally looked at some 100 homes before settling on one in Sterling Heights. This was a location only a mile from St. John Lutheran Church in Fraser, Michigan, a historic church once served by the late Dr. Edwin Weber, former first vice president of synod, and served at that time by Rev. Ed Narr, another stalwart in the confessional Lutheran circles.

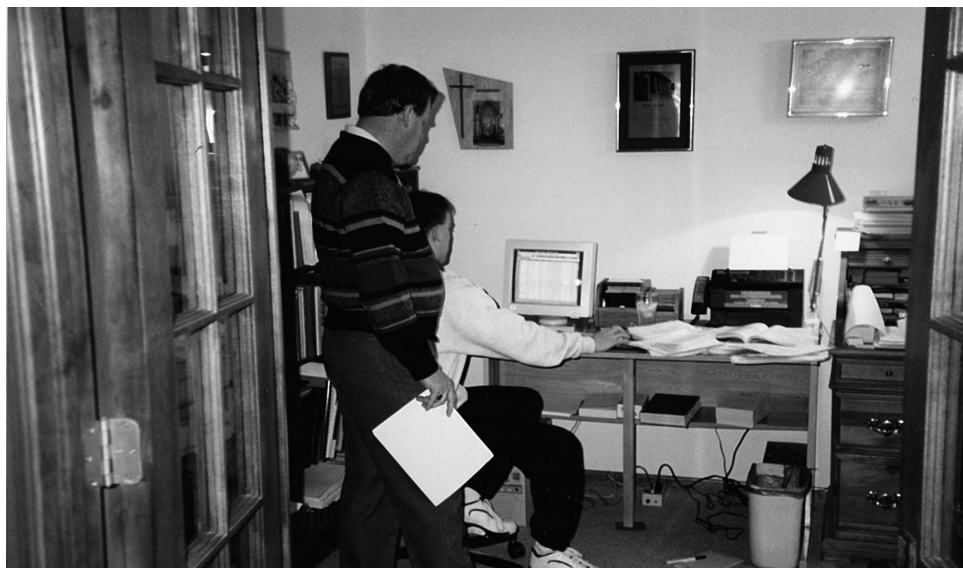
Settling In

I told my wife that we were finally finding our dream by moving west – from Cleveland to Detroit! It was a start that looked like a finish at that moment. Jeff would continue his weekend jaunts to keep up a mailing list and the necessary accounting and receipts for funds received. The IRS 501(c)(3) was granted, and things were now more official. Jeff graduated from Concordia Ann Arbor’s business program and worked with LHF while job hunting.

The board expansion was continuing with Mr. Richard Hallgren becoming board president and Dr. Preus as board chairman. Others added along the way were John Wittenmyer, Hugh Cotton, Rev. Richard Bolling, Susan Burgdorf, William Fecht, Tom Fabricius, Susan Hecht, Rev. Gene Rehwinkel, Brad Vincent, Rev. Erling Teigen, Edwin Hinnefeld, Rev. Elmer Sedory. (A complete listing of past and present board members can be located in the Appendix.)

Things were rapidly developing with three members on the staff, all volunteers. I had determined that I would not accept a salary until I knew the LHF was a viable organization. My first pay check came in March 1993. Donna and Jeff continued on a volunteer basis. When the board asked what I would do if Jeff found a job, I indicated I would be totally in the dark, as I knew nothing about computers. Jeff then became a part-time employee and would be given a full-time position by the end of 1993. With a full-time position, he applied to Walsh College and entered the master’s program in

International Finance. By attending night classes he completed that degree in two years and continues to impact the international financial aspect of the LHF mission.



At that time we were doing a lot of night work. The nice thing was that we could fall out of bed and be at work. This was the “fax age.” With an eight-hour difference in time between us and Russia, we were doing a lot of communicating at midnight and after. Donna continued to serve as the executive volunteer for the organization. The dining room became a mail center, and the basement served as a warehouse.

The home operation lasted for five years. Then the move was made to a leased office in Clinton Township, and our first employee, Linda Leinhos, was hired.

At home in Minnesota for Christmas 1992, I got the distinct impression that my dad was beginning to wonder about my bouncing around. It was never directly mentioned, but questions asked had their own hidden agenda. My wife probably had similar questions during these unsettling times. My dad did not have to worry about these things much longer as on February 22, 1993, he quietly and quickly was called home. My mother, for whom he was a caregiver, passed away a few months later on July 2. The next year on March 30, 1994, my wife’s mother was called home, the last of our earthly parents.

It came time to break up the family farm home. Each member of the family was given an opportunity to take some item from the home as a special keepsake before the home was put on the market. The item I chose

would not require a truck or trailer to haul it off. It was just a little item that hung in the family farm home for 62 years of their married life.

There were two plaques one saw in rural homes in the late 1940s and in the 1950s. One said “PRAYER CHANGES THINGS” and the other one with its saying now hangs in my office where I see it every day. Before I hung it there, I took it to a printer and asked if he could reproduce it with its intricate design in bookmark form. Today all over the world this bookmark appears as a memorial to our parents with the statement

Jesus Never Fails

It was this truth that would be added to the 2 Chronicles verse to sustain us during some dark days.

In many sermons preached in various churches, cathedrals, schools, seminaries and grass huts, you might have heard my message conclude with the thoughts this plaque states. Jesus did not fail us. He met our deepest need. Our deepest need was for the forgiveness of sins. By going to the cross, shedding His blood, suffering, dying, and rising from the tomb, we have proof of His never failing love.

We soon discover in our lives that people fail us, things fail us, and finally our health fails us. Jesus never fails us. If He is able to deal with our deepest need, the forgiveness of our sins, can He not deal with our lesser needs as well?

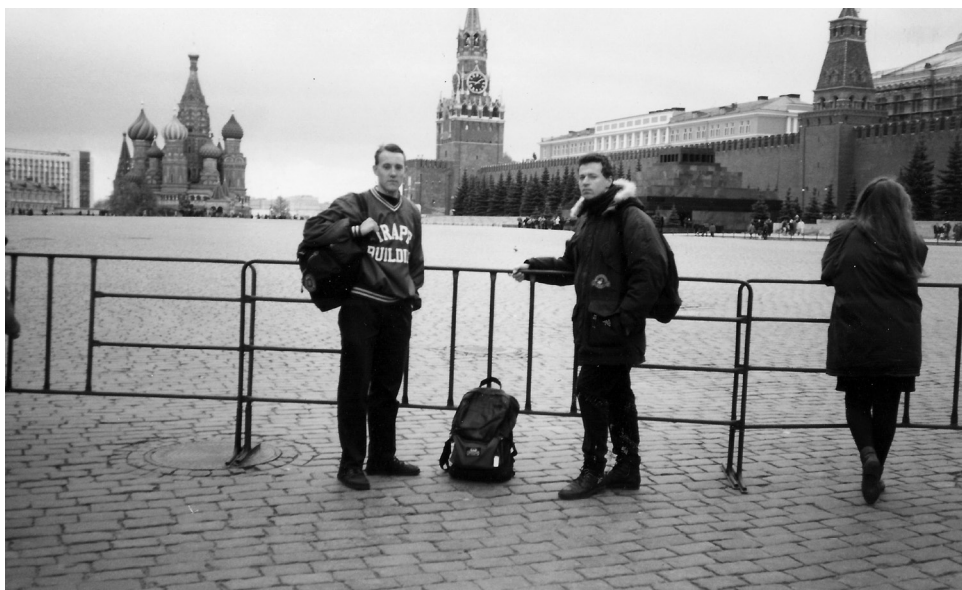
The Work

With two expert translators, we were now progressing in translating in both the Russian and Latvian languages. When looking for a possible reliable printer in Russia, we discovered everyone is a printer, but no one had a print shop. We learned a few lessons on the Russian mode of operation. The price of paper, ink, and transportation had increased, all reasons for altering the bids provided. One book from which we learned lessons was *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* that was only printed after many delays and increased costs. We did finally manage to get our first book off the press, a paperback edition of Pieper's Summary of Walther's *Law and Gospel* titled *God's No and God's Yes*. We had completed our first project.

Meanwhile an office opened in Riga, Latvia, and the first work published was a booklet by Lenard Galster, *The Good News About Jesus*.

It was time for our first LHF trip to Latvia and Russia. In Latvia we met Guntis Kalme serving Resurrection Lutheran Church, located in a cemetery. It had no roof, and we carried funds from Sunday schools and churches to help finish the roof project.

Konstantin Komarov accompanied us on an overnight train to Moscow where he had made arrangements to stay at the Christian Center, a building



under renovation for a school. It wasn't your traditional "We'll keep the light on for you" accommodation. We couldn't get anyone to come to the door, so it was necessary to scale a ten-foot wall and enter the back. We were gladly received and served a fish dinner. Jeff wondered what this trip was going to be like if this was the food menu: fish that was raw with a head still attached. He found a cat willing to help with the fish meal.

Work in the Former Soviet Union

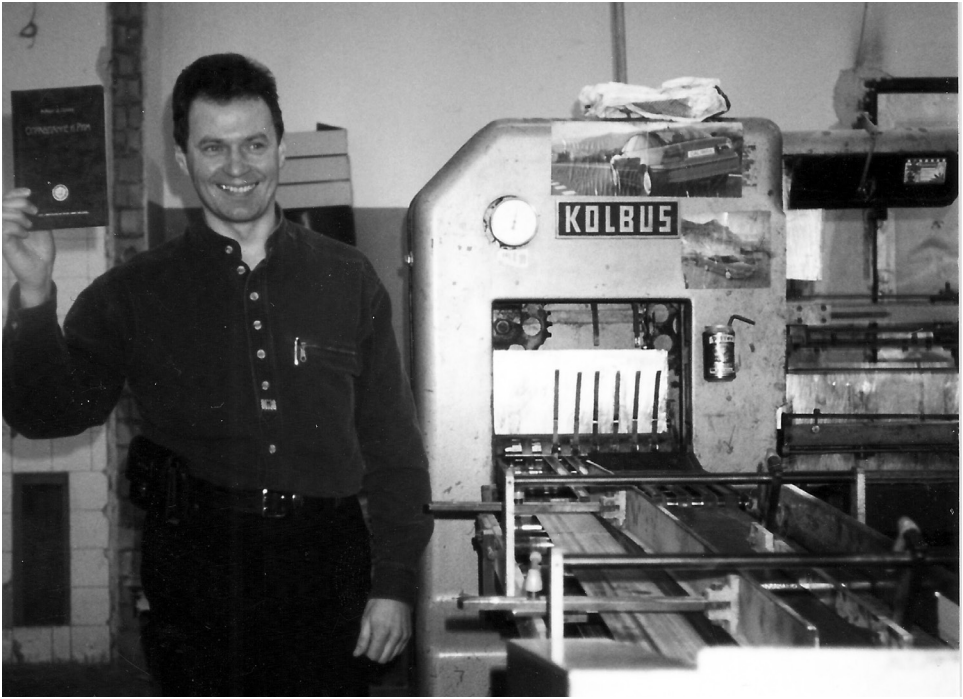
This was the area where the work started. Consequently, it had the largest number of books published for any area. It seemed that this was the hardest area for distribution. We do have a seminary in Kultesheh and one in Novosibirsk that gladly use our books, but on a congregational level, especially within the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Russia and Other States (ELCROS), there isn't a specific interest in confessional literature.

Early on we worked with Bishop Kalnins of the ELCROS. He was elderly and it seemed as if the assistant bishop was busy promoting himself for the position of bishop, which eventually happened. There seemed to be a basic disinterest in the utilization of confessional Lutheran works. We have seen some evidence where the retaining of German culture is more important than retaining the truth of God's Word and upholding the Lutheran confessions.

To a certain extent, this is symptomatic of a Russian Orthodox mindset. They consider their religion to be the national religion and other religions as intruders. The fact of the matter is that Katherine the Great brought the Lutheran religion to Russia centuries ago. When Russians needed to learn how to farm, it was the Germans who came on the scene with their expertise.

Having started the LHF work in the former Soviet Union, it is no surprise that Russian is second only to Latvian in the greatest number of books LHF has published. (See the Appendix listing of books published not only in the Russian language, but in other languages, some 600 titles.)

Early on most books for Russia, Latvia and Ukraine were published in Minsk, Belarus. When the LHF started, we were introduced to Gilbert Lindsay, who was establishing a printing operation in Minsk. Located in Dallas, Texas, he was to become one of the first American publishers to set up an operation in Russia. It was amazing how he was able to deal with the red tape. LHF and World Wide Printers would become working partners, both establishing work in the former Soviet Union. The value of a dependable Christian publisher was a tremendous blessing. It was the World Wide Printers Presses from which we celebrated the one millionth copy LHF produced.



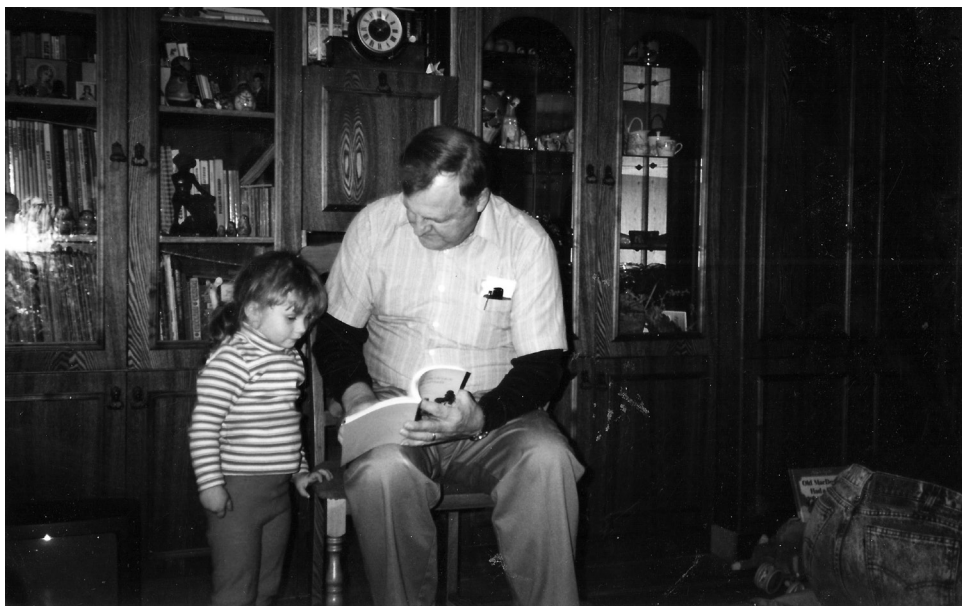
Artist in Residence

If you have traveled anywhere in Russia, you have run across street vendors and their wares, particularly Russian matryoshka dolls, ornately painted brooches, hair barrettes, jewelry boxes, and the like. These intrigued me and I wondered if some kind of brooch pin could be made with the Luther Seal and one with the LHF Logo. We were staying in the Izmailova Hotel Center of Moscow, which had been used for the Olympic Games when held in Moscow. Nearby there was a gigantic flea market with many people selling various items.

I asked Konstantin if we could talk to some of the vendors to see if we could find a Christian among them, whom we could talk to about creating the item. We went from booth to booth until we found a young couple who admitted to being Christian but non-attenders of the Russian Orthodox Church. We indicated to them we had a project we'd like to discuss and invited them to the lobby of the hotel after the flea market closed.

Marina and Dmitri Solodova came to the hotel to discuss our idea. Marina indicated she could do it and would bring me a rough sample the next day. So began a relationship that produced not only thousands of brooches and LHF pins, but also Luther seal pins, hair barrettes, eggs, Christmas ornaments, soldiers, and butterfly pins. We discovered that they had an infant daughter,

Katherina, who was not baptized. We discussed baptism and instructed her to have her Russian Orthodox priest do the baptism. They asked if I would be the godfather for the child. We agreed. The priest balked at a baptism with a Lutheran sponsor. We discussed baptism again and informed her that the Lutheran and Russian Orthodox baptism would both be biblical. Marina, now probably knowing more about baptism than her priest, went back and simply told the priest he would baptize the child.



We introduced Marina to a Lutheran friend and also to the LCMS missionary in Moscow, both of whom attended Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, a church that was being renovated after being used for a cemetery warehouse. It was located in a cemetery and was a common location. Eventually Marina took instruction and became a member of this Lutheran Church. LHF helped in the renovation by providing funds for a boiler.

We discovered some quirks in Russian rule when church renovations began. These bureaucrats who took over the churches and destroyed their interiors by turning them into warehouses, swimming pools, movie theaters, and manufacturing plants, or destroyed them, now demanded that any church renovations would have to restore the church to its exact original status. Even the carvings on the front doors of Holy Trinity Church had to be done several times to meet their rigid codes. Would that their codes would have been brought to bear when they were destroying the property in the first place!



The Word Works

Our chief Russian translator, Konstantin Komarov, provided living quarters for his parents in the same apartment. His brother was a school teacher and became involved with us as a reviewer for grammar and spelling. Along with their two sons, Konstantin and his wife, Galena, were striving to make ends meet and the translation stipends became their source of income. Konstantin had the experience of having been involved with the Pentecostal charismatic movement with some friends in Moscow.

He was now translating works by Luther and other Lutheran theologians, but not just translating. He was absorbing the Lutheran theology and liking what it represented. Before completing the *Book of Concord*, Konstantin became a Lutheran, instructed by our good friend, Rev. Alexander Bite. Konstantin disciplined other members of his family to become part of the Lutheran Church and helped to start a Russian speaking congregation in Mezzaparks, a suburb of Riga.

It was in Riga, Latvia, that we organized our first international LHF office with a board to supervise work in Russian and Latvian. The Latvian Lutheran Church was now just emerging from the shadows of the Soviet Union. They had no seminary, but a Faculty of Theology as part of the University and controlled by liberals. This shows how Lutheranism survives

attacks by hostile governments and liberal theologians. They came together in an “upper room” in the apartment of a beloved elderly Latvian pastor, Rev. Roberts Feldmanis. He once served on the University Faculty and once served as the mission director of the Latvian Lutheran Church. This man was over 80 years old and was part of the history of the LLC. It’s a wonder his second floor apartment didn’t crash through the floor. Everywhere you looked there were books from floor to ceiling.

This was a real “seminary in exile.” Every Friday night in this upper room young men, his students, would cram into any available space and sit at the “seat of wisdom.” It was a Bible class and young men were influenced to become pastors. Or young men who were pastors would be encouraged in their service. Together Dr. Preus and I visited Dr. Feldmanis at one time, and you would have thought that we were kings in his presence. To him our visit was the encouragement he appreciated. During every visit I made to Riga, if it was on a Friday, I participated in that gathering.

One pertinent observation is that these were the kind of events that actually happened and were a source of inspiration and encouragement. At times a question has been raised as to whether in our age of communication avenues, it is necessary to make numerous visits to countries where the work is carried out. This is a reciprocal situation, whereby your perspective is heightened and also that of those with whom you are working.

This upper room was the real heart of the Latvian Lutheran Church. Among the attendees was a young man, Rev. Janis Vanags, who was a member of the LHF Latvian Board of Directors and who later became the archbishop of the LLC. Also attending was Rev. Janis Smits, who became the secretary of the Latvian Parliament; Rev. Ilars Plume, who eventually was removed from the LLC because of his rigid conservatism; and Rev. Alexander Bite, who was a Greek specialist on the LHF translation team. Other men present are faithfully serving in the LLC today.

Rev. Feldmanis, a dear man of God, told us he graduated from Lenin University, which being interpreted meant he was a prisoner for a time during the Communist era. Occasionally I’d visit Riga when black banners were flying next to the Latvian flag. I discovered this was to commemorate the day when large contingents of people were hauled off to prisons and work camps. Many pastors, who were contemporaries of Feldmanis, were killed during this time. In talking with him and hearing the wealth of information within his memory, I knew that somehow this historical perspective had to be preserved. One of the best decisions we made regarding Russian Lutheranism was to appoint and pay a special secretary/scribe to be with him, to talk about the history of Lutheranism in Latvia, and have it recorded.

Rev. Feldmanis died just a few years ago and is buried in the church yard of a church he served for many years. Towards the end of his life, he was literally blind, and the secretary we appointed became more than just a secretary; he became his servant. It was a service that this Lutheran warrior deserved.

On one of my visits to that upper room, he walked over to a wall and took a picture down. After writing a dedication statement to LHF on the back, he handed it to me as a gesture of thanksgiving for helping to restore Lutheranism in Latvia and Russia. That picture of his home in Riga hangs in our office today. The other legacy left in his memory is the book LHF published on the history of the LLC, as seen through the dim eyes of this special servant of God and recorded by the LHF secretary, Rev. Janis Smits. Copies of this important work have been distributed throughout Latvia, and we have our own treasured copies in the LHF library.

Upper Room Influence Continues

As mentioned earlier, one of the students in the “Upper Room Lutheran University” was Rev. Janis Vanags. He became a candidate for bishop of the LLC. At the church convention he felt it was important for delegates to know where he stood on issues before voting for him. He felt compelled to tell the delegates that his loyalty to the Word of God led him to the conviction that the Bible is the inspired, infallible, inerrant Word of God, and his position of only-male clergy was based on that clear Word. If he was elected, these three principles would be clearly upheld. It was reported that he was elected by a one vote majority. His evangelical spirit and loyalty to the Word led people to esteem him highly, and he serves as archbishop even today.

Seminary Organized

After he became bishop, we had a number of conversations with Vanags relating to the education of the clergy. We encouraged organizing a separate seminary, rather than continuing under the liberal influence of Riga University and the Faculty of Theology. This became a reality through the help of the Schwan Foundation and Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana. A large apartment owned by the LLC was renovated as the Luther Academy, and seminary and leadership training took place here. The LHF provided many books for the library. It also received the extensive library of Rev. Feldmanis upon his death. The church, however, was unable to carry the overhead, and the building was sold and the seminary moved back to the Konsistory. Dr. Bill Weinrich, faculty member of CTS Fort Wayne, served as the rector of the seminary for several years. The LHF provided

books that served as the doctrinal text books. (See listing of Latvian books in Appendix.)

Offices in Riga

The LHF Latvia has functioned in an office facility from the very beginning. Coinciding with the growth of the organization, moves were frequent. The offices usually were in apartment type buildings, with room for offices, kitchen and sleeping quarters. We had the experience of a “hostile takeover” in regard to one of our offices in Riga. When the chairman of the LHF Latvia board became embroiled in a controversy with the bishop of the LLC, we felt it would be best if the chairman stepped down but remained on the board. After agreeing to do this, there was a change of heart and the majority on the board decided to disband LHF and organize what was called the Augsburg Institute. We simply took the position that we would reorganize and walk away, rather than insist on retaining our property that included furniture, computers and a large library we had established. We retained a friendly relationship with the group, but their efforts diminished with time due to lack of financial support.

Today Juris Ulgis serves as LHF coordinator for Latvia. He has developed a broad distribution system that includes an LHF book display in each congregation and some books also distributed through sales at local book stores. Books are sold at a minimum cost and the revenue used to publish additional books. LHF Latvia has also developed support through several Swedish mission societies. This is an office that is able to function on its own in an effective manner.

Dates and Tidbits

Any author writing a volume has to do research, especially of historic dates. I reached a conclusion while debating in my mind what format these dates would take and how could they be woven into the fabric of a volume that reports one historic date after another. I began the research project of recording what I considered historic dates. After a rather lengthy listing of those dates, I realized it would take a massive effort to go back and review which dates would be included.

My final decision is now reflected in the continuation of the history. I determined to compile a history of dates. In connection with certain dates, I would provide selected “tidbits” of interest. The reader will have to read between the line of dates to find what I considered the worthy “tidbits.” I trust the reader will be encouraged to mine the tidbits recorded between

historic dates. It is my prayer that you will find the dates significant and the tidbits interesting.

From here on, the division of book chapters is by one-year intervals, covering our nearly 20 years of history.

AN INCREDIBLE JOURNEY

The Scriptures record some of the most incredible journeys ever undertaken by mankind. None of them engaged a travel agent or utilized a GPS, because their trip ticket had been arranged by God Himself. Some of them went “not knowing where they were going.” The journeys of Noah, Moses, Abraham, Joseph, Daniel, Job and Paul are some that come to mind immediately. Of course, no journey ever taken was greater than that taken by God himself. The stop in Bethlehem was the beginning, and the route to Calvary gave us new beginnings.

In view of these great travel documentaries from the pages of Scripture, it seems a little arrogant to call the LHF journey in history an incredible one. It is only incredible in the sense that we believe God’s hand was and is in it.

DATES IN LHF HISTORY

1992

February 20 – A Russian trip was made together with Dr. Ben Armstrong, National Religious Broadcasters, executive director; Dr. Bert Dornbos, president, Rainbow International Holland; and Mr. Andre Ceelen, president, Good Time Media Management. That trip included meetings with a number of high officials in Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Minsk, Belarus. The goal of the trip was to initiate education conferences that would include presentations on evolution and creation, distribute Bibles, and provide help for Chernobyl victims.

Minsk, Belarus, would become a main publishing site, with Gilbert Lindsay establishing a printing plant and publishing most of our early books in East European languages. In those early days everyone was capable of publishing, and there were a few operations that we had to expose as being frauds. Gilbert Lindsay, a Baptist businessman, grew his business at the same time LHF was expanding.

It was on May 28, 1997, when a Rev. Nikolay Akhremovych Badrusiow called Bishop Slavik Horpynchuk in Kiev, Ukraine. What was interesting was that the Belarusian Lutheran Church he was serving had a very genuine Lutheran background that extended back to the 16th century. They used to be an underground church in the Soviet times (Nikolay's father was a pastor of the same church). They began to worship openly in 1995. Their worship and preaching were in the Belarusian language, but they used the *Small* and *Large Catechism* in Russian. These books were given to them by Rev. Markus Saarella of Finland. The group consisted of 50 members, many of whom are German. Pastor Badrusiow was 45 and had six children. In order to support his family, he worked in a Minsk manufacturing plant. The *Small Catechism* is already translated into Belarusian, and a number of other books have been published.

The Belarus history includes contact with Bishop Petro Hushcha, who at the time was the leader of the Belarusian National Church of the Augsburg Confession (a membership of some 4,000). He became interested in becoming part of the Ukrainian Lutheran Church. Rev. Horpynchuk was in the process of interviewing him for membership when Hushcha was suddenly arrested without warning and knocked unconscious with a blow to the head.

The bishop was originally charged with child molestation. Then the charge was changed to public lewdness. Finally he was placed in a psychiatric hospital. The final charge leveled was “violent hooliganism.” It was clear that all charges were trumped up in the usual Soviet style. The government at the time had a very pro-Russian orientation, including a firm policy to support and promote the Russian Orthodox Church and the Russian language in Belarus.

In contrast, Bishop Hushcha defended the rights of the Church of the Augsburg Confession, and he also defended and promoted the native Belarusian culture and language. For these reasons, he had a very rocky relationship with the government over time and was frequently harassed. Just before his arrest, he and his congregation were restoring a vacant church building, which displeased the Russian Orthodox Church. After being held for five months, he was placed on trial, and the verdict was three years of imprisonment. After several months in prison, he was released and placed on probation for three years.

October 19, 1992 – A response was received to a proposal I submitted to a steering committee considering an umbrella organization for confessional groups within the Synod. The committee was made up of Pastors Glen Huebel, John Fehrmann, William Brege and Daniel Preus. The letter from Daniel Preus stated, “I know that you are excited about the possibilities expressed in your letter and that due to your situation, your future needs to be made clear as quickly as possible. As we look at the ‘authority’ which has been given to us, however, we cannot see how we can integrate your proposals into our present duties as a steering committee for the ad hoc group of people who met in Oak Park. We simply haven’t been given the commission to authorize an undertaking such as the one which you are suggesting. Many of your proposals truly look exciting, but we would be vastly exceeding what little authority has been given to us, were we to ask you to begin work along the lines which you suggested in your proposal.

“We are very appreciative of the effort which you clearly put into the proposals you have made and of the commitment to confessional Lutheranism which is so evident on your part. However, it does not appear possible for us at this time to consider implementing your suggestions. We pray that the Lord will bless you in the near future with an opportunity for service in His kingdom.”

The proposal referred to above was presented in three parts under the organization structure with the name WORD TO THE WORLD LUTHERAN ASSOCIATION. One document outlined the purposes of such an organization with proposed mission statements. Another part

outlined how such an organization would be funded and included a position description for Executive Director. President Al Barry was provided a copy of the concept as a matter of information.

November 24 – On this date I responded to Rev. Daniel Preus, “Thank you for your letter of October 19 that was helpful to me in sorting out the opportunities for service in the Kingdom. This is to let you know that I, with the help of others, have now brought into existence the LUTHERAN HERITAGE FOUNDATION (LHF). It has some of the same objectives outlined in the Word to the World Lutheran Association.

“Over the past seven months I have patiently waited while praying that some parish door might open where I could carry out a ministry. When opportunities never developed for the parish, I turned to the door that has remained open: a ministry connected with Russia. Just today I heard on our Christian radio station of an evangelical thrust into Russia called CO-MISSION. They have an avenue to provide Christian literature through the Russian schools. It won’t be Lutheran. Why do we have to be last on the scene when we once had a church there of some 2,800,000 members? I have met the head of all education in Russia, and he asked me a year ago for materials. I proposed some CO-MOTION on the part of Lutherans in this area.

“I am presently organizing the LHF board with six members already consenting to serve. Early in the New Year, the house will go up for sale since I can’t afford the payments any longer. A second mortgage has been taken to provide start-up funds for LHF.”

Rev. Dan Preus responded: “I can well imagine that you are pretty excited at this point as you begin the formation of LHF. I pray that God will richly bless all the work which you do in His Name in this new venture. As one confessional Lutheran to another, I hope we can stay in touch with each other’s activities, so that the new ASSOCIATION OF CONFSSIONAL LUTHERANS and the LHF can be mutually supportive of each other. In this day of ‘networking,’ those of us who are committed to like causes need to be aware of each other’s activities and help each other whenever possible.”

1993

January 6 – In the file we have a small pink index card with the following message written by Rev. Jonas Kalvanas, bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Lithuania (ELCL) with headquarters in Taurage, Lithuania. The note simply stated, “Translation work is urgently necessary. Please, will you in the LHF help us?” Several days later, Dr. Wallace Schulz, Lutheran Hour speaker, outlined a six-point program that might be followed in order

to initiate the work. Two months later I was in Taurage, meeting with a translation team of Rev. Darius Petkunas, Renata Ambrazevichiene, John Lawrence, and Luda Toleikiene. As work began in Lithuania, we learned of interest on the part of Lithuanians here in the U.S., Rev. Charles Keturakat, Escondido, California, and Rev. Jonas Josupait, Oak Lawn, Illinois. In evaluating the work that has been done in Lithuania, I would say that for the amount of time we spent urging, cajoling, begging, and pushing a bishop who wanted to do everything himself, we really don't have a lot of work to show on the completion page. Here we have a case where a translator, Renata, had great ambition and intentions that were simply thwarted and sidetracked by a well-intentioned but controlling bishop. There is now new leadership in the church, and Rev. Charles Evanson, Fort Wayne, Indiana, continues to serve in Lithuania as a special consultant to the new bishop.

January 11 – This date marked the beginning of contact with the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church (EELC). Our contact was with Rev. Kuno Pajula, bishop, and with Rev. Tiit Salumae, head of publication and information. When Bishop Pajula retired, our association was with Bishop Jean Kiivit over a period of 11 years that began as a concerted effort to produce a *Book of Concord* in the Estonian language. There were a number of trips made to Tallinn for meetings and voluminous correspondence. We did complete a translation of *Luther's Large Catechism* and several other booklets, but we were unable to find a working consistency that enabled us to move the project forward. At the present time, we are continuing our attempts to remain active on the *Book of Concord* project, but it is a difficult process. It is possible that the church may be able to complete the project on their own since they, over the years, have had some publishing activity through their own church publishing efforts. They had previously completed *Luther's Small Catechism*.

January 14 – Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraine: Kiunke Era

There were actually two eras covering our work in this western area of Ukraine. There the Russian language was more prominent due to the Moscow influence. The second era was one that featured the work of Rev. Vladyslav Baidak, which will be covered separately later. Rev. Gotthold Kiunke received my name and address from Wallace Schulz and wrote, "I am thanking God that He has led you to organize a conservative Lutheran group willing to engage in the production and distribution of good Lutheran literature within the former USSR. I have felt the need for it after I came here in May 1992. There is a lot of Baptist literature to be found, but much of it does not serve the real requirements. Since I cannot get enough aid from Germany to start a programme, I am glad the Lord has encouraged you to

tackle the task. I must add that I would not welcome money from the side in Germany, which is trying to transform the Lutheran church within the former Soviet Union into a World Council of Churches satellite, particularly when strings are attached to such aid."

Rev. Kiunke outlined a rather ambitious program when he stated, "I also envision starting a Lutheran periodical enabling us to make contacts with many people interested in the Gospel and looking for orientation in this vast country. But I need help for this project. I need German and English church periodicals from which articles could be translated. I need hymns with notes and dogmatic discussions. Your visit here would be very welcome."

Rev. Kiunke early on voiced some concern about Prof. Kretschmar, who was living in Latvia and "working with" Rev. Kalnins of the Ev. Lutheran Church of Russia and Other States (ELCROS). Rev. Kalnins was probably 85 and bishop of ELCROS, a position, it was evident, highly sought by Kretschmar. Kiunke asked, "Did you up to now experience any difficulties from the side of Prof. Kretschmar in Riga? It is because he intends to control all the publishing work within the church, maintaining that there exists an agreement with Missouri to this end. But in my opinion, his claims should be repudiated officially by the LCMS. Otherwise we would be captives of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), with whom Kretschmar has close cooperation links.

On June 19, 1993, we opened an office in Dnep, taking several rooms in the Lutheran church. Kiunke expressed appreciation for our contact. "Thank you once more for writing. Sometimes I feel very much alone and I appreciate every sign of friendship and brotherhood." This sentiment flows also to the continued need to personally visit stations and personnel. We too easily forget the importance of the aspect of Christian fellowship and are too often willing to sacrifice it at the altar of expediency and expenses. The many long letters from Kiunke demonstrate his desire for this fellowship within the brotherhood. I wrote to him and stated that these are the days when it seems that the battle for confessional Lutheranism is lost, but in the spirit of Luther we forge on right into the arena where Satan seems to hold sway. We go with the power of the Word, which has prevailed in spite of the cunning of men. We can ignite a NEW REFORMATION if we remain faithful to His Word, and with daring spirit enter the field of battle where one little Word can fell the fiercest foe.

As we continued our efforts to establish a presence in Dnep, I arranged a visit to Russia for Dr. Robert Preus, LHF board chairman. Dr. Schulz wrote to Kiunke and stated, "My wife and I feel very strongly regarding the future of the Confessional Church in the regions of the old USSR. Dr. Preus

and Rev. Rahn are two of the best representatives we have in our Synod of this movement. You can count on their integrity and their follow-through. Much time has already been wasted, and those who despise the Confessional Church have had plenty of time to sow their seeds; however, much of the future situation is not yet nailed down. By the grace of God, the future can belong to us. But, we need to act boldly and in love for the Gospel.”

When Synod officials became aware of the fact that Kiunke had indicated there was an agreement between LCMS and ELCROS, Dr. Glenn O’Shoney, Dr. Al Buckman, and Rev. Daniel Mattson sent a letter to the president of the synod, Dr. Jacob Preus, stating: “I think his report contains inaccuracies that we ought to correct. Rev. Kiunke is probably accurately reflecting the picture of us that is being given by Dr. Kretschmar, who, although likeable, is dedicated to service to the LWF. I could well imagine that he would give the impression that there is no alternative to the LWF. When we meet with our friends from the Baltics and Russia, we probably need to look for opportunities to indicate that we are an alternative to the LWF in some important ways. I think that Al Buckman has consistently staked out that position; and in the light of Rev. Kiunke’s letter, we need to continue on that line.” It was good to receive this stated position of the LCMS relative to the LWF.

The tension between groups working in Ukraine was cited by Kiunke when he reported on a trip he made back to Germany and said in a fax, “The Bavarian Lutheran Church plans to have serious talks with Supt. Grafenstein. They are not satisfied with his theological attitude (read: too conservative) and with his church policy. It might then be difficult for him to stay in office, because he is financially supported by the Bavarians. I heard also that the Bavarians do not like the influence of other Lutheran churches here in the Ukraine, i.e. the Lutheran Church Canada (LCC).”

January 23 – This marks the date for the first LHF Board of Director’s meeting held in our Avon Lake home, gathered around a dining room table. Present for the meeting were Dr. Robert Preus, chairman; Rev. Jack Cascione, first vice president; Mr. Lloyd Wittenmyer, third vice president, Rev. Richard Bolling, secretary; and Mr. Del Welker, Mr. Melvin Volkert, Mrs. Barbara Danner and Mr. Brad Vincent.

At this meeting a constitution was approved. Treasurer Richard Hallgren provided a report indicating the current balance stood at \$29,230, and a budget of \$241,040 was adopted. Rev. Cascione submitted ideas for an organizational logo. November 10 would be designated as the founding date of LHF, and we would operate under the auspices of Redeemer Lutheran Church, St. Clair Shores, Michigan, until such time that we would receive

our 501(c)(3) status with the IRS.

March 16 – *St. Petersburg, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia*

The early trips to the former Soviet Union generally included the above areas in addition to Moscow. Each trip was a learning experience. After a total of some 30 trips, there were many insights gained. On one trip someone asked if I had ever been in a Russian cemetery. I indicated I hadn't, so a journey began toward a cemetery in the distance. As we walked, the story was told of a Lutheran church that once stood at the base of the cemetery hill. It was burned down by the Communists. Each time the congregation gathered to worship they were disrupted, disturbed, and disbursed, until one day they discovered that if they worshiped in the cemetery, no one bothered them.

We started to climb the hill covered with white birch trees, tripping occasionally over pieces of iron that had rusted off at their bases – crosses that marked the graves of loved ones. The fact that the visit was made just days before Good Friday made it all the more poignant. As we crested the hill, a strange sight came into focus. There we saw what I concluded has to be the most beautiful church in all the world. There was a crude altar made out of parts of a stump. I stood behind the altar and looked out to see birch trees cut down and arranged for seating in an amphitheater style.

Now in my mind's eye I could see the congregation gathered. They had climbed the hill to gather for worship. They came up the hill with heavy hearts, with their disappointments, discouragements, disillusionments, and uncertainties, and took their place sitting on the tree trunk. Others made their way up the hill with difficulty, carrying burdens of sorrow, hopelessness, and loneliness over the loss of loved ones, some recent, some long ago.

They took their place next to someone, and they were in essence saying to each other, yes, there's disappointment, despair, and disillusionment, but there's hope. I believe they were saying that because they were Lutherans. Lutherans speak those words in their liturgies and hymns. Others who had to be helped up the hill took their place and the Word spoken was, yes, there's sorrow, loneliness, and heavy laden hearts, but there's eternal life. I believe they were saying that because they were Lutheran, and Lutherans express the hope we have in Christ.

I thought about the countless thousands who come to their churches in the same way – disappointed, and disillusioned, and we sit next to each other to speak a word of encouragement. Isn't that what our mere presence articulates? No encouragement can be given if our "tree trunks" are not occupied. Some come up the hill with heavy hearts over the loss of a loved one a year, two, five, ten, 25, even 40 years ago, and that ache is still there. We

sit down next to a friend, and we hear the message of hope.

Ours is a beautiful church. What makes for a beautiful church? It doesn't take padded pews, stained glass windows, a beautiful organ, the biggest choir, the largest membership, or fanciest appointments. What it takes is the Truth. Where the Word is preached and taught in all of its Truth and purity, there is a beautiful church. It is a message learned anew on another hill where the grave lost its power through the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Yours can be a beautiful church because of Jesus.

Lots of lessons were learned on the hill. I visited many church services where I observed ancient liturgies and hymns used on the basis of memory, places where people worshipped without any heat or even no seating, but Truth was being proclaimed. There is a beauty in that, even more so in this age of "Truth-deniers."

Men of distinction and competence were being added as staff members to serve in LHF positions. Mr. Andris Smilgdrivs (Latvian) and Mr. Konstantin Komarov (Russian) represent the future of the Lutheran church. Konstantin left a successful career as a telecommunications engineer and holds 20 individual patents, several of which are on display in the Moscow Exhibition Hall. Mr. Komarov has demonstrated that he is among the best all-around English/Russian translators available in Russia. Andris is among the top multi-language translators in all of Latvia and works part-time with the Latvian government as their chief translator in Brussels.

Rev. Martin Frusti, serving as the first LCMS missionary in Russia, welcomed our work. He taught 30 deacons, but had no handouts, textbooks or helps. He said, "My heart just aches for them. I have materials, but I can't hand it to them in their language. They are so open and willing to work, even to the neglect of their families, of which I had to give warning."

The Good News About Jesus is the title of a little 52-page booklet containing 62 statements about Jesus from the New Testament. This will be the second time published: 10,000 copies each in Estonian, Lithuanian, Latvian, and Russian.

Branch offices were established on this trip for all three Baltic countries and for Russia and Ukraine. During our work in the Baltics, we have seen the passing of bishops in each of the countries. In Lithuania we are now working with the third bishop for that church body.

In those early days we were seeing churches transformed from swimming pools back to Lutheran churches. Our first visit to St. Peters in Riga introduced us to an art museum. I probably didn't endear myself to the "box office agent" when I walked by without paying admission and later explained that in America we didn't have to pay to visit a church. This is a

Lutheran church and needs to be given back. It was a surprise to return on my next trip and find a small altar and a statue of Christ behind the altar, a sign that worship services were once again being introduced in this grand old church, with a beautiful, majestic organ and the rooster on the steeple.

The LHF is a group dedicated to the work of translating and publishing Lutheran confessional writings. One missionary called a meeting in which he commended our work. He said that he had been working as a missionary for 27 years, and it took 22 years for books and materials to be provided. I concluded, “Now is the time to be ‘rushing to Russia’ with the Gospel. There is no time to wait. The door is open, and we have the opportunity to enter. Our work is too important to be debating who or what. Our concern ought to be ‘when?’ If not today, when? If not the Gospel, what? If not through LHF, how? If not funded, why?”

March 28 – Rev. Ilars Plume transported Andris Smilgdrivs and me to St. Ann’s Lutheran Church in Kekava. We arrived early and participated in the “stoking of the stove.” A small potbellied stove stood to the side of the pulpit and provided the only heat the congregation of 50 would enjoy. The clerical garb for my preaching on this day was a suit and a heavy coat.

I noted with interest a custom that is prevalent throughout the Latvian Lutheran churches. The highly liturgical services are conducted with great dignity, and this is seen also in the congregation. For Holy Communion all participants move towards the aisles, where they kneel until it is time to move to the altar rail.

On this date I also preached at Mezzaparks Lutheran Church, in a Riga suburb where Rev. Prof. Roberts Feldmanis served as pastor for many years. This is the “Riga seat” of orthodoxy, and the church was overflowing with 150 in attendance. The 80-year-old pastor is a loving man of convictions and preserver of confessional Lutheranism. A wonderful fellowship meal followed in a crowded sacristy with about 30 people participating. In each of the congregations we visited, we left special gifts from American Lutherans to assist in renovations that most churches were undergoing at this time.

April 28-May 6 – *Joint Venture with the DLHSA*

Joint venture was a common expression in Russia after the Wall came down. We, too, embarked on a joint venture with Dr. John Herzog, superintendent of the Greater Detroit Lutheran High School Association (DLHSA) as we traveled together to Moscow and St. Petersburg. This venture began as a search for Russian high school students interested in attending Lutheran high schools in the U.S. It developed into unbelievable educational opportunities and challenges.

In Moscow, a direct link was established between the LHF branch

directors and the DLHSA. Mr. Alexander Mitroschenkov and Mr. Demitri Gvozdozov were representing the translation efforts and the processing center for international students coming to Lutheran high schools in America. These men were responsible for an international newspaper of the Academy of Science called “POISK,” with a circulation of 250,000, including the top educators and scientists of the entire former Soviet Union. The paper had just recently featured a series of articles on the Christian religion, on the LHF, and Lutheran education.

In St. Petersburg, Mr. Jim Dimitroff and Dr. Tom Sluberski, LCMS mission representatives, arranged a meeting with Ms. Faina Popova, chief (common designation in Russia) of all study programs in a school district with 43 schools, 46,000 students, and 8,000 teachers. Lutheran volunteer teachers who had been sent over on mission projects were teaching in some of these schools, and there was a general awareness of the Lutheran education expertise.

Ms. Popova underscored the importance of teaching religious philosophy, moral values, and translating materials that are more persuasive and deeper in content. She was of the opinion that much material being offered was very poor. She told of her conversion from atheism to Christianity: “I escaped from atheism’s influence by reading the little Christian material available at the time, and as long as I have time left I want to introduce Christianity in schools, as this is the most important way to change the current situation where young people think the only important thing is money. I’m confident I can have 50 applicants to you by June 15.”

In St. Petersburg the joint venture was already underway with parents of Ilena Oreshkin, a student currently enrolled at Lutheran High School North. Mr. and Mrs. Oreshkin serve as coordinators. Mr. Oreshkin owns and operates a trucking firm, which was one of the first private business ventures in St. Petersburg. He has 500 employees, many of whom have children interested in attending American schools.

While the joint venture took off with a lot of enthusiasm and excitement, an evolving secularism in the Soviet Union had a negative effect on this program and a lot of others. It became apparent that a program would be only as good as the level of commitment of the people involved. There were many lessons to be learned and individuals to be weeded out of programs for lack of Christian commitment.

June 1 – LHF received recognition as a 501(c)(3) organization by the IRS and received an official tax ID.

June 26 – LHF is informed by the State of Michigan that it is a recognized nonprofit, tax-exempt organization.

July 1 – First mailing sent out to all congregations of the LCMS, WELS and ELS.

July 31 – A letter on this date was received from Rev. Markku Sarela, president of the Confessional Lutheran Church of Finland (CLCF), in which he discussed various Russian translation projects he had undertaken with translators working with him from St. Petersburg. I had been in touch with him at the suggestion of Dr. Preus. Letters are also on file from Rev. Reijo Arkkila and Rev. Sakari Korpinen that open several chapters having to do with the LHF mission and the connection with Finland.

The Finland Connections

The connections with Finland are being reported here under the names of three individuals who are the primary sources for some very interesting work that has developed in Finland. Without giving a long history of the development of Lutheranism in Finland, it should be pointed out that this is a vastly Lutheran country, at least in name and heritage. Finland is known for some very strong mission organizations that were active, even during the time that Lutheranism was waning and following the general trend of European Lutheranism.

Finland-The Sarela Era

Rev. Markku Sarela was a strong voice for confessional Lutheranism in Finland. When Dr. Preus referred him to me, he said that I would find Sarela hard to work with, but felt that with my style of leadership we could work together. Time was spent early on establishing Russian turf. We had targeted some projects that we were working on and discovered that Sarela had the same goals – publishing *Luther's Small Catechism* and the *Book of Concord*. I think it is fair to say that the LHF efforts were singular, while Sarela's were multi-faceted. In keeping with our general principle of providing books free of charge, Sarela anticipated the sale of the *Small Catechism* as a kind of fundraiser for his church body and himself.

The CLCF was a very small church body with only three congregations. Sarela's style of leadership was autocratic. That disenfranchised some members. The church body had about 300 members, but by the time we finished the *Book of Concord*, there was only one congregation remaining. We were able to work out a program whereby LHF translators and Sarela translators could work together on the *Book of Concord*. I had prepared an elaborate schedule that was meant to feature our goal of adequate review of the work. At first, some serious tension developed as to which group could

do the best translation work. We have in the file a long dissertation from Mr. Konstantin Komarov addressing some of the negative translation points made by Sarela. When I stepped into the debate and Sarela attempted to assert himself, I told him as politely as I could that I was not Russian, nor could I speak Russian. He was not Russian, and he could not speak Russian. So the best we could do was to use our Russian personnel to make translation judgments that we could not make. Konstantin made it quite clear that his arguments were weak, because he did not have the Russian mentality and vocabulary.

We weathered the storm and work went on. However, Sarela became less involved because of ill health. We did agree that we needed to produce the best possible translation that would be faithful to the original German and Latin, even though we were also using the English text. After the Sarela *Small Catechism* was completed, we determined to do our own translation, because Sarela was charging an exorbitant price that we felt the average Russian would not be able to afford. The fact that the LCMS World Mission was willing to pay for the volumes would still not meet the need. With the help of Sarela, we did eventually publish an edition of the *Book of Concord* as a reader's edition in a softcover. Then LHF released an updated edition in a hardcover. The supply is now exhausted, and we await the third printing.

Finland – The Pohjola Era

(As reported by Rev. Juhana Pohjola:)

I learned to know about the work of LHF through my uncle Anssi Simojoki, who worked for LHF in Kenya. He got me connected with Bob Rahn. When I went with my wife to Fort Wayne for STM studies 1997-1998, I met there John Fehrmann in summer 1998. I explained him the dire spiritual situation in Finland and what need we have there in the field translating and publishing. His reply was short: Just do it!

When we returned back to Finland 1999, part of the confessional remnant started a new foundation called Luther Foundation Finland. In August 1999, there were North European Luther Academy's annual meeting and this time it was held in Helsinki. There we had discussions with John how we would co-operate with LHF. I suggested a fourfold plan that we would do in LFF. 1) Magazine 2) Pamphlet series 3) Book series 4) Luther volumes. That was agreed. I was amazed about the concept of LHF. It was not a big time consuming bureaucracy but decisions were made fast. There was a great respect and understanding of the situation for the local country and its peculiar situation. Detroit was not dictating in any way, but genuinely serving and helping. It was based on common faith and mutual trust in

serving the cause of our Lord!

We started the work by taking an extra print of Robert D. Preus' *Inspiration and Inerrancy of Scriptures*. The translation and publishing work started in the year 2000. I was named the representative of LHF in Finland. That was also the beginning of the work Luther Foundation Finland, whose main purpose was to start confessional and liturgical based mission congregations (koinonia) all over in Finland. The first congregation was founded Fall 2000. For our work, it was of great importance that we could lay our theological foundation with fast and vast distribution of solid theological pamphlets meant for laity on different doctrinal issues (baptism, Lord's Supper, keys, office, church, Scripture, worship) by well-known Lutheran scholars all over the world. Through these pamphlets the theological profile of LFF was made clear and there were invitation cards for all who yearned for confessional Lutheranism. Our magazine also paved the way for the confessional revival. In few years we distributed for free over 60,000 pamphlets. (See the book listing in the Appendix.)

They were partly the catechetical tool. This publication work was crucial for the rapid growth of our mission congregations. We started 2000 with one part-time pastor in one place. In 2011, eighteen employed pastors were serving twenty-three congregations.

From the beginning we wanted to share also the treasures of the Reformation fathers. The giant work which we started in 2000 and have in 2009 completed was the translation and publishing of Dr. Luther's Genesis commentary.

We also did together mission work with LHF by providing visiting teachers for Sudan. Important was also that LHF supports our pastors STM studies in Fort Wayne. Confessional Lutherans feel many times lonely. For us in LFF it was not only the support that we got for translating, printing and publishing. It was also the knowledge that we were part of the same worldwide network with Lutheran Christians who shared the same biblical faith and mission. It was and it still is a privilege to belong to this LHF family!

Finland – The Otiso Era

Remembering LHF with Gratefulness

(Submitted by Rev. Richard Ondicho Otiso:)

“At that time Jesus said, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children.” Matthew 11:25

Our Lord Jesus Christ says, “Father, You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to Children.” That is to say that

the Lord God has hidden from those who thought themselves wise – that is, wise according to the world's estimation of standard of wisdom. It is not to the wise, not to the intelligent, not to the discerning, but to the foolish and meek and lowly. I find myself in these Children.

Christ thanks His Father that these things are hidden. These things are the gospel truths. Somehow it might sound strange that Christ is glad that His gospel is hidden from the wise men of this world. It does not go to those who are worthy; I, Richard Ondicho, included having come from a humble background. The gospel of Salvation goes to the unworthy, of whom I am one. I can compare this with street children in Nairobi, Kenya were it not because of God's grace I would have ended there as one. God in His grace has chosen that the gospel goes to the ones who cannot stand on their own two feet; indeed it goes to the weak and neglected of the world. I am grateful that I know my Lord Jesus Christ (1Corinthians 1:26-27). But the message can be hidden if there is not translated works for those who cannot speak English or German nor Finnish language. I am humbled that LHF had enabled many poor African people who cannot invest in books to have own copy. To me it was too good to be true that the books are translated using a lot of money but distributed for free. It is grace upon grace.

In year 1995, I witnessed the coming of an American visitor to Kenya; the visitor was Professor Preus. By then I was a lay person working for Lutheran Evangelical Association of Finland (LEAF) as subordinate staff, taking care of the organization's issues such as collecting letters, paying bills, etc. Rev. Dr. Anssi Simojoki was a district pastor of Nairobi District. He gave me a room in his compound, and so I was able to serve him as a gardener and day watchman or caretaker two days a week.

It happened that Dr. Anssi was in charge of Prof. Preus before and after the Matongo Theological Convention. After the convention, Dr. Anssi asked Prof. Preus to preach at Uhuru Highway Lutheran Church, where I was a member and was humbled to listen to him. Later on they deliberated on the possibility to start translating Lutheran classical books into Kiswahili. Dr. Anssi took me to be part of the translation work although I was just a lay person. It is from here that I started admiring the *Book of Concord* and soon or later I was given a copy. It was here that I read the *Augsburg Confession* for the first time and was impressed. It is here that Dr. Anssi shaped my understanding of Lutheran theology. Later on I went to study theology in Tanzania. It was then I realized how I had gained a lot through translating and working for LHF.

Before my graduation I got married to Kirsi, and through that I moved to Finland. Before I moved, Rev. Dr. Anssi told me of the work that Rev. Juhana

Pohjola had started in Helsinki, and so as soon as I moved to Finland my wife and I looked for the venue and started participating in the divine service of Luther Foundation. As I had promised Dr. Anssi, I kept attending the divine services till I moved to Joensuu for my further studies. There I decided to hide and concentrate on studies, but then a group of young men and women collected names of confessional people and asked me to serve them. At first I hesitated but then when they came again asking I agreed to take the Call. I served congregation called Nehemiah Lutheran Congregation till I got admission at Fort Wayne to study for a Doctor of Missions.

I was unable to get funding to move to Fort Wayne, and so Rev. Dr. Rahn advised me to start the ministry of the Word in Helsinki. By the support of Rev. Juhana Pohjola, the work started 2009. Through this work St. Barnabas Lutheran Church was born. LHF is one of those mission organizations that I have a lot to thank God for. Dr. Rahn equipped us with hymn books, *Luther's Small Catechism* and office equipment. Later on we got connection with Carla of St. John's Lutheran, who together with her Sunday school sent us Bibles that we do use in our congregation.

Studying the worship of God's people throughout history has often reminded me of the treasure we have to share together as we continue the tradition here at St. Barnabas IELC Helsinki. God's Word and His Sacraments are His highest treasures, and we continue to hold them up as vital to our faith and worship life. Amidst all the struggle and attacks of the evil one, I have come to know that Christians are strongest when they are together. Common faith and worship of Jesus as our Saviour is what makes and holds believers together.

The influence that I have through the work of LHF is most helpful. I do remember how I felt when I got my own catechism in Kiswahili language. LHF started the translation work when it was not possible anymore to find *Luther's Small Catechism* in Kiswahili. I also own a copy of Ekegusii Lutheran hymnal called "Moterere Omonene." It is a wonderful tool for South West Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya and the Ekegusii speakers. The Abagusii will for sure feel the Lutheran church (ELCK) as their own, but now the hymn book enhances services and help in cementing their Lutheran identity, since the Lutheran Church is a singing church. I am convinced that without LHF's translation work my own tribe where Lutheranism started 1948 would have taken long before achieving this wonderful goal.

For those who come from America and Europe with huge bookshelves, this might sound stupid, but for sure the only books that I have in my small bookshelf back home in Kenya are the books translated by LHF. They are few but more precious than many books that are on the rich people's shelves.

In conclusion, I want to say that I am privileged to be a beneficiary of LHF translation work in Africa. The Kiswahili materials now will be needed in Finland as well, since some of the members of St. Barnabas Lutheran Congregation do speak Kiswahili.

Finland – Other Groups/Players

There are two main mission groups that have been part of the Finland landscape for many years. These two groups are the LEAF and LSRY. The LSRY is the oldest revival movement in Finland. It lacks an established name in English. It is a rather small movement; nonetheless, it is quite significant in the battle for genuine confessional Lutheranism in Finland. The LSRY has had good cooperation with some important persons in LEAF, especially Pastors Simo Kiviranta, Sakari Korpinen and Reijo Arkkila. When in the 1980s LEAF began a more liberal slide, LSRY was unable to compromise on the Confessions. They came under rather heavy pressure in Finland, because they did not approve of the unbiblical practice of ordaining women. Neither did they approve of the “Porvo Common Statement” between the Anglicans and the Lutherans, nor of the “Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification” between the Roman Catholics and LWF.

When a woman became head of the mission area of LEAF in the 1990s, Dr. Simojoki became the object of her venom and intent to remove him as a missionary from LEAF. LEAF “accomplished the agenda” and he was fired in February 1996. Elsewhere we report on Dr. Simojoki’s rescue by LSRY and LHF. We are pleased to report that a new board has been elected to LEAF, and they are once again supportive of a Biblical mission approach.

It has been the pleasure of LHF to work with others in the Finland Confessional Movement, such as Rev. Teuvo Huhtinen, Rev. Timo Laato, Rev. Reino Toikka, Rev. Pertti Helkkula, Mrs. Marja Simojoki and Rev. Markus Poyry. Enough cannot be said about Marja’s many contributions to the overall LHF mission. Early on she provided much help in assisting in keeping the financial books, providing computers that were being discarded from her place of employment (the Finnish Embassy), and playing the keyboard for Sunday services. She was always the consummate hostess for visitors and guests.

Rev. Poyry was a student whom we helped get an advanced degree at Fort Wayne, and he serves St. Luke’s Lutheran Church in Seinäjoki, a town in western Finland. This is a good example as to how the education investment has a positive return. Rev. Poyry works closely with Rev. Pohjola on translation projects and in developing a new confessional church body of Finland. He has already opened a new station in Kokkola, a town 100 miles

north of Seinajoki.

August 23 – Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraine, referenced earlier, gave a new dimension to the depth of deprivation the people of Ukraine were suffering, as I experienced it during my visit for three days. This certainly wasn't at the level that was experienced in the 1930s, when there was a forced starvation at the hands of Russian Communists that resulted in the death of some 10 million people. During the three days in Dnep, the city was without water. This was also the time when I personally witnessed what we had read about: bread lines. When we ventured out to purchase a loaf of bread, most stores had none. After finding one with a supply, we stood in a line for an hour to make the purchase.

The history of the forced starvation wasn't just something read in a textbook with some revisionism, but I learned the story later from an elderly lady who lived through it. I interviewed a Mrs. Martel in Bozeman, Montana, who told how it was when she escaped the situation where she remembered stacks of grain piled as high as a house, guarded by Russian soldiers. Soldiers would come into the homes and destroy any food that was found. One of the children in the family died, and there wasn't even enough money to buy a little box in which to bury the child. However, going out one day she found some money lying on the ground, enough to buy the lumber to build the burial box. God provided the money as far as she was concerned. In an interview that was recorded, she related how she escaped and eventually ended up in Montana. She was reluctant to tell the story, but with some encouragement from her son and around a kitchen table the story began to unfold. If you visit Kiev, Ukraine, you'll find a painted mural at the entrance of an Orthodox Church that depicts this forced starvation period of history.

Leaving the city of Dnep, we made arrangements for a ride to the airport that required leaving at 3 a.m. Of course the driver didn't show up and I was on the street trying to flag down a ride in a deserted street at that hour. Eventually a van came by and offered a lift. I threw my suitcase in the back where there was an old motorcycle. The passenger seat had been removed and I sat on my suitcase as we set out for the airport. After driving for what appeared to be a long distance, I began to wonder whether we were really going to the airport. I had heard of kidnappings and victims robbed and left in the countryside. The van began to slow down and stop out in the middle of nowhere. I was thinking that now the act would be carried out. The driver walked to the back of the van, opened the door, and took out a can of oil to be poured into an oil-guzzling wreck of a van. He jumped back into the driver's seat and the starter was barely able to function. After several attempts, the battery was becoming weaker and I was sure we would be marooned in the

dark in the middle of nowhere. Finally, with a last groan, the engine sputters and starts. I'm late for the flight and the plane was late in leaving. As I stood in line at "security," and while agents are taking their time to go through my suitcase, I pulled out a bunch of key chains and handed them out. The suitcase was quickly closed and I was waved through. The little trinket was a prized possession. There weren't many places I traveled where I felt as I did out on that lonely stretch of road, unable to communicate, at the complete mercy of a benevolent stranger.

August 31 – A meeting was held with Rev. Frank Lotichius, pastor of St. Peter Lutheran Church, St. Petersburg, to which Bishop Kretschmar invited himself. We were discussing the Bible distribution event to be held in front of the church, and Kretschmar voiced great concern and was scared of any demonstration or public distribution that might anger the Orthodox. When I left the meeting, I encountered a large parade of Hare Krishnas that required you to step off the sidewalk to let them by. It was then that my decision to have the Bible distribution was confirmed in spite of any fears that the bishop might have.

October 31 – *Reformation Bible Distribution on Red Square*

What is the religious flavor in Russia these days after the fall of the wall? This was the question I resolved to answer by a rather unique Reformation celebration. I scheduled a Bible distribution event on Red Square to determine the answer. We knew it would be risky, as it was unknown how authorities would react to such a Christian endeavor in the heart of their former Communist bastion of strength. It was my goal to stand on this hallowed Russian ground, the ground over which thousands had marched, and over which all the military might of Russia had in the past been displayed on their "holy day" of May 1. The world usually witnessed this show of might. Why not bring a more powerful weapon to this ground and share it with the people?

In the morning our delegation attended the service at St. Peter and Paul Lutheran Church, which on this day featured the confirmation of adults. It was standing room only in the little chapel that had been built next to the humongous church that the Communists had turned into a warehouse. It would in later years begin its transformation when a portion of the nave was renovated for services.

After the service we made our way to Red Square. Arrangements had been made to have a truck deliver the boxes of the side-by-side English/Russian New Testament to the entrance of Red Square. We also had a tract to distribute with the title "Seven Important Truths" and copies of Galster's *The Good News About Jesus* (GNAJ). The question would be if the truck found

its way to make the delivery of “the goods.” When we arrived, the truck was waiting, and we began to unload the boxes beneath the arches that led to Red Square. The boxes were opened, and the distribution began with people forming a line to receive the copies.

After about a half hour of activity, I saw two policemen approaching. I motioned to Konstantin and told him he’d have to talk to them. As I continued to distribute the GNAJ (the supply of Bibles had already been depleted), I kept an eye on Konstantin engaged in discussions with the policemen. It was unbelievable to see them walking away each carrying a Bible and the other materials. I told Konstantin that I’d want to hear all about the conversation after we completed our distribution.

During the two-hour event we saw only one case of any hostility demonstrated. It happened when two Orthodox priests came by, received the tract, and openly tore them and dropped them on the ground.

Konstantin explained the interaction with the police. He emphasized with them the fact that a new freedom had come to Russia, but that real freedom isn’t what the government offers, but it is found in this book. He told them, “If you read it you will find out what true freedom is, how Jesus provides it through His death on the cross and His resurrection from the grave. It’s all in there. Read it and find true peace and freedom.” Konstantin had given them the Truth, which is the foundation of our faith. He explained it in the backdrop of the power and military might that a government had for 70 years explained as the source of peace and freedom. Would a new Reformation take hold in the former Soviet Union?

It appears that in this year of 2011, there is still much work to be done to restore Lutheranism in Russia, to say nothing about America and around the world. Will we see the day when African Lutheranism will be considered the citadel of Lutheran strength? How many of the Reformation principles will we see abandoned through the efforts of LWF-related “religion?”

My final act on that Red Square Reformation Bible distribution was to go around Red Square and look into the garbage cans. What I saw startled me as an American. The cans were empty. Not one Bible, not one piece of literature was found! I’m not sure what would have gone through your mind had you experienced this, but I can say that I still reflect on this 1993 Reformation event.

December 15 – Meeting held in Minneapolis, Minnesota, with Rev. Dr. Rao Dasari of the Bible Faith Lutheran Ministries to India, Inc. (BFLMI).

January 8 – Rev. Dasari responded after the above meeting: “Thank you for the time we spent when I was able to share about myself and the ministry. The Bible Faith Lutheran Ministries to India (BFLMI) is an independent church body supported by a few Lutheran churches and individuals through the BFLMI incorporated in the state of Minnesota as a tax exempt organization. I am an Indian living in the United States since 1973. I felt the Lord leading me to establish a Bible-believing confessional Lutheran church through preaching, teaching, evangelizing in person-to-person meetings, through larger gatherings, and through literature. I am sending the needs of our church in India for your prayers and support in whatever way the Lord may lead you.”

Beginnings in India

Perhaps we could share just a few historic notes relative to Lutheran work in India as I glean them from my notes. An exhaustive history would require another book of its own, and some of them are available. There are two names that are prominent as far as the LHF India history is concerned. Rev. Dasari, introduced above, served people in Southeast India in the Andhra Pradesh region, with Guntur as a major city. The other individual, Dr. John Sundaram, had a long history of service in the India Evangelical Lutheran Church (IELC). His father and grandfather also had significant years of service.

As discussions started in regard to a translation program, it was noted that in this venture we would be reaching out to a total of 120 million people, almost one-eighth of the total population of India who speak 16 different official languages and hundreds of dialects. Malayalam is the language of 45 million people in the state of Kerala where 29 percent are Christian. Tamil is spoken in the neighboring state, Tamil Nadu, where one of almost every five people is also Christian. Tamil Nadu is a state where the LCMS missionaries started work 100 years ago. The language of the Andhra Pradesh region is Telugu, the second largest language group after Hindi. Rev. Dasari began the Bible Faith Lutheran Church (BFLC) in 1980.

With the leadership of these men, translation work enthusiastically began in the various languages of India. Those involved over the years with work in the IELC know that the church has had its share of controversy in regard to leadership. In the most recent election of a president, the election was taken to civil court to determine who the rightful winner was.

A number of significant works were completed in various languages. A reader's edition of the Tamil *Book of Concord* was completed in 2009, and the final edition is scheduled to be released by early 2012. In Telugu the LHF completed *Luther's Small Catechism*, *The Augsburg Confession*, and other writings found in the Appendix Book Listing.

One interesting project was a Reformation project to preserve the hymns of the Reformation, which had been written (text and tunes) by P. N. John Sundaram, a pioneer teacher/catechist and Christian poet. Rev. John Sundaram, a proficient musician in his own right, taught the hymns to a choir, had them recorded on CDs and distributed to the church. These eight hymns of the Reformation had been sung in the church for many years without music and text, only from memory. It was feared that these would be lost in future generations. Along with the recording, the LHF published a book, *The Life of Luther*. Thus, the hymns of the Reformation live on in the Tamil language of India.

I have made several trips to India, the first taking place in June 2005 when we released *One Hundred Bible Stories*. This trip included stops in Chennai, Ambur, and Nagercoil. Traveling by air, train, and car, we only experienced the modern modes of transportation. The teeming multitudes on the street made their way by bus, motor bikes, bicycles, ox carts, and trucks. Trucks and cars made ample use of the horn, and the cacophony of sound filtered through the fumes and pollution. Of course, there was the ever present "holy cow," with all rights and privileges. I suppose it is a common occurrence, but it was somewhat disconcerting when our driver ran into a bicyclist and damaged his bike. The police were immediately present negotiating a settlement. With all the arguing back and forth, I didn't know if it was for bicycle repairs or for the "enforcer's pocket."

Concordia Theological Seminary, Nagercoil, at the southernmost tip of India, has provided some help in the translation of the *Book of Concord*. It was here in January 2007 that LHF released the "Golden Edition" translation of *Luther's Small Catechism* (LSC) in the Tamil language. Wrapped in gold paper, it represented the 50th edition of the catechism that had been published.

On this first trip to India, I was told that a Pastor Freddy would pick me up at the Chennai airport. You always wonder, "Who is he, and where will I find him?" The obvious sign with big RAHN letters was nowhere to be seen in a sea of people. After going up and down the long line of faces several times, I implemented "Plan B." I was prepared! I headed for the phone wondering how phones worked in India (I had encountered all sorts of usages over the world scene), and as I was trying to figure out the system, here came Freddy.

I still am amazed, with the number of places and faces for meeting people, that I never missed a connection in all my travel. I thank God for that.

February 21-March 8 – Dr. Robert and Donna Preus and Mr. Dave Edwards accompanied me on a trip to Russia and the Baltics. I recall that Dr. Preus was not impressed with travel conditions by rail, as sleepers were either extremely hot or cold, and bathrooms had floors with holes. I should add that there were vast improvements made over the years that we traveled the rails, especially from Riga to Moscow.

Dr. Preus, LHF board chairman, had a series of lectures presented in Latvia, Lithuania, and Russia on the doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture. In meeting with the various branch directors serving in various parts of Russia and the Baltics he said, “I am overwhelmed with the caliber of men associated with the LHF and their youthful energy and tenacity. These men will be on the church scene for a long time to come and will make a tremendous impact on confessional Lutheranism all over Eastern Europe.”

Dr. Preus also participated in the historic release of Walther’s *Law and Gospel*, representing the first work translated and published in Russian by American Lutherans in over 75 years.

The trip provided Mr. Dave Edwards an insight into Russian living conditions as a prelude to possible service as a Russian branch director in Moscow. Mr. Edwards had had 37 weeks of intensive Russian language training with the military and had previously completed two years of seminary education. He began his service on July 1.

April 25 – *Scam Artists in the Print Media*

This date records the history of how we were introduced to scam artists in the printing business. We could relate stories of how it was necessary constantly to be on guard for the next scam offer. The printing scam was especially disgusting and embarrassing. This came as a result of the fact that we were introduced to the printing operation that a “Lutheran” represented. A Mr. Alexander Andreushkin was a prime “operator,” who made the introduction to a print company with the interesting Lutheran designation of “Andreev & Concord.”

We exposed other would be “printing artists” by visiting their print shops. We found it strange that they were always run by someone else. No printing business seemed to have their own presses. These were always people who would try to pawn themselves off as having a full operation for publishing. Mr. Andreushkin somehow “weaseled” his way into contacts with LCMS personnel and with the LLL. He was even a special guest at one LLL convention and paraded before the assembly. Given that kind of exposure and seeming credibility, we engaged him as a representative of Andreev &

Concord, as did LLL and LCMS.

Our first smaller works with Andreev & Concord were completed as planned and scheduled, but problems developed when we moved into color printing with the publishing of *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories*. This is when the “games” started. An agreed-upon contract was broken because paper prices had increased and other prices had also escalated. The books that were printed were in the printer’s warehouse, and of course warehouse prices increased and were passed along to us. We objected, as we had requested the books to be delivered to our modest storage facility in St. Michael’s Lutheran Church.

Mr. Dave Edwards, who now was serving as our branch director in St. Petersburg, became the chief negotiator. Even though he assured us of having things under total control because he knew the Russian operations, the “iron clad” contract he made with Andreev & Concord for completion of *Child's Garden* only resulted in the demand for more funds to cover “increased costs.”

Mr. Edwards did manage to get our books delivered to our storage area, but further intense confrontations finally resulted in giving our print business to a reliable printing operation in Minsk, Belarus, operated by a Baptist businessman from Houston, Texas. The final separation from Andreev & Concord came over a year after the scam started. Ironically, Mr. Andreushkin, after personal family problems, became associated with another publishing company by the name of Alethia. We, of course, wanted no part of it, as our alliance was now with Mr. Gilbert Lindsay of World Wide Printing.

May 24 – Dr. Robert Preus, LHF board chairman, visited with Rev. and Mrs. Esa Luomaranta in Lusaka, Zambia, and negotiated the beginning of the work on the catechism in the Luba language. On January 12, 1995, a wire transfer was made for the printing of 5,000 copies of the Enchiridion. The entire catechism was completed in December 1995 under the direction of Bishop Ndaye Mbwayana of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Africa. Work progressed under the bishop and in March of 1998, the LHF received copies of the completed *Augsburg Confession* and *Luther's Large Catechism*. Work continued to move forward. On February 2, 2000, the *Apology of the Augsburg Confession* was completed and distributed. Work then started on the *Formula of Concord*.

The Work Faces Challenges

The project manager of LHF efforts in Zambia related some of the difficulties we faced when he wrote on June 6, 1999: “At the moment, the situation in Congo is getting worse all the time because of the war. When

our bishop comes from Kinshasa, he has to pass lines between rebels and government soldiers. The government is also looking very carefully at churches and missionaries. For example, one Lutheran bishop was almost beaten to death because of suspicious connections to the rebels. So life behind the border is very tough, and it is affecting the work of churches as well. So what we can do is pray that the bishop can work without any problems and come here to Zambia as we have planned. But when we are talking about the Congo, almost anything can happen.”

Communication via faxes was a common problem when attempting to keep control of finances. It is typified by a message Jeff Rahn sent to Bishop Mbwanya in which he stated, “We are evidently having some problems in our communication and this matter really needs to be addressed. On several occasions we have asked for an accurate report on expenses and have outlined the ledger format for such a report. One has not been received. Even a handwritten report using the suggested format would at least give us an idea about expenses. The faxed receipts are very helpful and a step in the right direction but not enough to give us a concise overview of the current financial situation.”

Staying up with the various currencies could be a problem and Jeff stated, “If the transferred funds are converted to Kwacha by the bank, and the expenses are paid in Kwacha, the ledger should also be kept in Kwacha. Kwachas are used only in Zambia and in Congo there is Francs. Actual work is done in the Congo, and most of the costs are in Congo Francs. This makes the follow up a bit difficult, when Kwacha and Congo Francs are losing their value all the time. Almost in every receipt there is a different rate, so I decided to follow USD and put the exchange rate to every receipt.”

The Art of Wire Transfers

Much has been learned in the process of sending wire transfers to various banks around the world. Mr. Jeff Rahn has thankfully improved the process, which at first required personally visiting our bank and working with personnel to expedite each wire. Over the years, with the movement to electronic banking in the computer age, everything is done via computer. There is no longer the need of filling out individual forms for each transfer, as there is now a matter of repetitive wires. Once it is known that repeated wires will go to a certain individual, this information needs only to be pulled from an electronic file, and the process is completed in a matter of seconds from the office of the Director of Operations. This improvement in the process is almost as revolutionary as moving from a fax machine to email.

June 1 – On this trip we recorded an attack by gypsies in St. Petersburg.

Mr. Komarov and I were on one of the main streets of St. Petersburg when the attack took place, with six or eight gypsies attempting to rip the pack off of my back. We fought them off by swinging the backpacks at them as we moved to a more populated part of the sidewalk, where they eventually gave up. It was the only time in all of my travel that we were accosted on the street.

June 16 – Fax from Bishop D.P. Tswaedi of the Lutheran Church in Southern Africa. He had met up with his former professor, Dr. Robert Preus, when Dr. Preus gave a lecture in Nairobi at the International Confessional Conference. Dr. Preus advised participants to contact LHF if there was a need of translating any confessional material.

June 29 – Dr. Preus received a letter from Rev. Andrew Elisa requesting *Book of Concord* and catechisms. Dr. Preus sent the request to Rev. Rahn to fulfill. Rev. Rahn sent one copy of the Book of Concord and five Catechisms on August 8, 1995. This marked the official beginning of a relationship that helped to organize the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Sudan. Rev. Elisa mentioned inquiring of Lutheran World Federation for funding help. On July 31, 1995, I wrote, “We believe books like the *Book of Concord* and catechism are important to preserve Lutheran identity. In my opinion, the LWF does not represent that which is genuinely and confessionally Lutheran, and that means you need to discover for yourselves what is Lutheran. The best sources for you are the Bible and the *Book of Concord*. I’m sure the LWF would not deem it necessary to publish the volume since they, in general, violate the statements of faith found in those documents.”

July 14 – Fax sent to Bishop D. P. Tswaedi regarding the translation of the *Book of Concord* in Tswana, as suggested by Dr. Preus. “We would want to move forward with the translation.” Difficulty in getting fax to proper address (town not clear, and number incorrect).

August 2 – “If the Foundation will be satisfied by the work done by our pastors, then we promise that the end product will be a reliable translation,” stated Rev. David Tswaedi.

September 8 – Mr. Edwin Hinnefeld asked that the board minutes reflect the fact that Rev. Rahn will be serving as interim executive director of the Lutheran Concerns Association and utilize the office of LHF with payment made to LHF for any expenses.

September 20 – Fax to Dr. E.A.W. Weber, who had been appointed as the project director for the *Book of Concord* project.

September 28 – E.A.W. Weber wrote, “For me it is just a wonderful thought and perspective that the work of translating the Lutheran Confessions into the Tswana language finds this support by your Foundation and especially also by the new bishop of our church, Rev. David Tswaedi.”

What of our involvement in history? That was the question I posed in an article written after receiving a box containing some yellowed paper and a handwritten letter that was dated July 25, 1946, with the notation – “Do Not Destroy.” The box contained handwritten translations of the *Book of Concord* into Estonian and Latvian by a Rev. John Sillak, Medicine Hat, Alberta, Canada, missionary for the Estonian, Finnish, Lettish, Russian, English, Slovak and German people. In a letter addressed to several professors at the seminaries in Springfield and St. Louis, Sillak wrote, “This sending is not a sudden whim of mine, but a determination of a long standing resolution. What will happen to my manuscripts? In 1939 I had intended to send all my work to Estonia, but our Pastor Bauerle at Ahrensburg cautioned me not to jeopardize the precious manuscript if I had no copy of it and pointing out that a German submarine may destroy that very ship which would carry them. Should God call me away before I can carry out this intention, then all my manuscripts shall go to the Concordia Historical Institute. I intended to tackle a revision of the Estonian New Testament, too, but my age of 80 years and eight months seems to be against this idea. I have done what I could and I cannot do more. Now I let others do what they can; but Jesus Christ will give the success.”

So, history has a way of entering the scene and sometimes we are part of it without knowing it. My contention is that God uses us in his history. Do we appreciate history? Do we appreciate what others have fought and died for? The staff of LHF senses history, and with God’s guidance we can only look to Him for our direction and course. When you work under the mandate of Christ and have a sense of being used by God to establish historic work in the world, no bureaucracy, no human organization, or devil-used men will be able to alter the course.

December 1 – Mr. Phil Fluegge was elected as LHF treasurer. Rev. Rahn reports to a board meeting that the Michigan District LWML voted to fund the LHF mission in the amount of \$15,000. Rev. Herb Graf accepted the appointment as a representative of the LHF in the Texas District.

December 10 – Rev. Herb Graf, Conroe, Texas, became our first member of the Independent Regional Promotion Representatives (IRPRs). When asked what the criteria are for such service, my usual response has been, “recently retired, yet energetic.” For 17 years, Rev. Graf has been a stalwart performer for LHF throughout Texas, and even reaching to Illinois, Montana, and Alaska. After his first year of service, we knew all about his energy. Clerks at stores were known to hear about LHF as they checked him through the line.

He related on numerous occasions the joy he had in being able to represent LHF. He stated his zeal and intensity on one occasion by saying, "When I get up in the morning, the first thing I think about is whom can I contact today about the LHF mission." With his wife, Harriet, helping at the display booth and in Bible Class, they were the dynamic duo for LHF.

Other IRPRs to serve LHF included Rev. Robert Roberts, Chico, California; Rev. James Meichsner, Sauk Rapids, Minnesota; Helen Wisch; Rev. Ed Narr, Young America, Minnesota; Marv Muhlenbruck, Westgate, Iowa; Rev. Art Weidner, Fergus Falls, Minnesota; Rev. Al Luehmann, Gaylord, Minnesota; Marlin Zobel, Yorkville, Illinois; Rev. William Otten, Rochester Hills, Michigan; and Rev. Elmer Sedory+, Dowagiac, Michigan. Others who assisted as IRPRs were Rev. Bernie Lutz, Crane Lake, Minnesota; Rob Lutz, Crookston, Minnesota; Ray Maik, Brooklyn Center, Minnesota; Rev. Phil Giessler, Cleveland, Ohio; and Rev. Walter Otten, Brookfield, Illinois. All helped to build the LHF mission throughout the church here and abroad. They certainly helped to heighten the awareness of LHF. The problem was to encourage constantly an evaluation that had a balance between the publicity value as compared to the income generated.

1995

February 3 – We heard from Andris Smilgdrivs, LHF vice president for Latvia, about some personal difficulties he was facing, and we sent him the following note of encouragement: "I am concerned about you and your family after reading your letter. You and your family have been in our prayers. I have often thought about you in the context of the sermon I preached yesterday in Fort Wayne at a mission festival. My text was the stilling of the storm from Matthew 8 and Mark 4. The theme was FACING THE STORMS OF LIFE. Jesus displayed the kind of power which led the disciples to exclaim, 'What kind of man is this? Even the wind and waves obey Him.' Yes, He alone has the power to still the storms of life and bring a calm to us when we face our personal storms. The disciples came to Him in their need and crying out, 'Lord, save us. Don't you see we are about to drown?' Very often that's our circumstance in life. The disciples knew who to come to in their time of need. What hope did seasoned fisherman have in a person who knew nothing about boats and storms? Didn't He spend all His time in a carpenter's shop? That didn't bother the fisherman after they had used every resource at their disposal. They cried out for help and Jesus heard. He doesn't even have to be in the same boat with us. He knows our need and can respond to it, as He is present with us. You can count on Him

to help because JESUS NEVER FAILS. I hope and pray that He will give you His help and resolve the problem you are facing. We will pray to that end.”

Several days after my message we received a resignation from Andris and the suggestion that Ugis Sildegis succeed him. He was a member of the LHF Latvia board and described as a very gifted and promising young theologian. Andris pledged his continued help as a translator but felt it was best that he not have a leadership role. Andris wrote, “It is not because of financial reasons or any kind of dissatisfaction over the two years I have served. There are a lot of reasons, basically of a personal nature, and I really do not want to discuss them right now. Some day we will meet, have a beer, and talk about all of this, but not now. I have been thinking about it a lot, and I am sure that this is the best solution for all of us. Again, I will not leave before I make sure that it will not harm LHF and its work.”

I responded to Andris, “Thank you for plowing the tough road during these formative years. You have been the key figure for all of our work, and that’s why this is a very emotional thing for me. But you have given your pledge of standing by to help the important transition take place, and I thank you for that. Friends don’t come better than you, and I look forward to our continued association. May the Lord hear our prayers and help you to resolve the difficulties you might be facing. Jesus is the one who is able to calm the wind and the waves that comprise the storms of life. He is the one about whom we can confidently say, JESUS NEVER FAILS! I believe that to be true for you and your family, and that with His help you will chart this turbulent sea.”

February 9 – On this date LHF board chairman, Dr. Robert Preus, addressed a letter to Rev. Jean-Doris Louis and Rev. Revenel Benoit in Haiti. Having recently visited Haiti, Dr. Preus recommended that the LHF should be approached to put “certain basic works into the Creole language.” The works suggested were Luther’s *Small* and *Large Catechisms*, the *Augsburg Confession*, 30 or 40 good Lutheran hymns, and the liturgical services of page 5 and 15 of *The Lutheran Hymnal*. A copy of the letter was sent to Mr. Arnold Kemmerle, secretary, and Dr. John R. Wilch, St. Catharines Seminary, Haiti Lutheran Mission Society chairman. Thus began efforts in Haiti, especially in the Creole dialect.

Haiti Mission

In March Dr. Louis wrote to Dr. Preus in response to his suggestion, “I want to thank you ever so much for your concern for the Lutheran work down here, as it is always a real comfort for me. I will never forget that you are the first Missouri Synod Lutheran representative that I talked to before

I planted, as led by the Holy Spirit, the First Evangelical Lutheran Church in Petion-Ville, Haiti. Since you have a real concern for the spreading of the Gospel all over the world, you were quite optimistic about my great desire of starting some Lutheran work in Haiti.”

He related, “With regard to the coordination of the Lutheran work in Haiti, I uphold the idea. But I am sorry to tell you that for the time being I want to stay away from it. Let the other Haitian pastors who are already under Dr. Waldo Werning’s umbrella (and quite convinced to go his way and to follow word for word the constitution he has written for them), go ahead and work on the coordination process. I’ll be with them in the Spirit. I think Dr. Werning’s constitution is inappropriate and inadequate for the Lutheran Church in Haiti. I want to let you know that I am going to start translating Luther’s *Small Catechism* and *Large Catechism* into Creole.”

On February 7, 1996, I wrote to Dr. Louis, “I am writing in regard to our intended work in Haiti. I had asked Dr. Preus to take the lead in this as chairman of our board, and he was quite firm in our discussion that we should rely on the judgment and leadership of Rev. Wilch. We were just in the process of discussing our involvement when he was suddenly called home.”

In August Rev. Wilch wrote about a catechism project that was underway in Creole, but “is presently stalled because of a lack of funding.” He also referred to a major work, *Lutheran Dogmatics*, done in French by Dr. Wilbert Kreiss of France. He stated that it existed only on computer discs. This work ended up in three gigantic volumes that also included work on the subject of homiletics.

On June 15, 1996, the LHF provided funds to publish 25 copies of the three-volume set of the Kreiss French *Dogmatics and Homiletics*. Each volume, larger than an old Sears catalog, had approximately 900 pages. Rev. John Wilch supervised the printing and distribution of the volumes. While the Creole catechism discussions started in 1996, it wasn’t until 1999 that this volume finally came off the press. It was during this time that challenges began to arise with regard to different groups working in Haiti. In October 1997, representatives of three mission societies and an LCMS district had a meeting in which it was agreed that they would form an umbrella Haiti mission group. These included the Haiti Lutheran Ministry and Mission Fund, Santa Rosa, California; The Haiti Lutheran Mission Society, Lincoln, Nebraska; the Haiti Lutheran Mission Society (Canada), St. Catharines, Ontario; and The Florida-Georgia District, Orlando, Florida.

As another LHF contribution to the growth of the church, *A Manual of Christian Doctrine* by Wilbert Kreiss was published in the French language

in 2001. Their growth was spectacular in nature and plans were made to establish a seminary. Prior to the earthquake, many of the 92 congregations had schools with an attendance of 8,457 students. The officers of the church at this time were Rev. Israel Izidor, president; Rev. Thomas Bernard, secretary; Rev. Joseph Romulus, first vice president; Rev. Revenel Benoit, second vice president; and Jean Isaac Jacquet, secretary. Principal players here in the United States supporting the Haitian mission were Rev. Charles Reimnitz, Lincoln, Nebraska; Rev. Dave Mommens, Columbia City, Indiana; Paul Klenner, Santa Rosa, California, and others. The church in Haiti suffered a loss when Rev. Israel Izidor was called home, as was Rev. Dr. Jean Doris Louis when attacked and killed at his home by thieves.

At the present time, the church is regrouping with continued help from various mission entities in the United States, including the LHF.

February 10 – The first exchange took place with connections in Kazakhstan, when Gennadij Khonin requested a copy of the English/Russian New Testament and a sermon by Dr. Wallace Schulz that was translated into Russian. Strangely enough, the letter came from the address of St. Paul Lutheran Church in Flint, Michigan. Gennadij had come to America from Almaty, Kazakhstan, to study Greek at the seminary in Fort Wayne.

The file is full of messages from various people serving in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan, all requesting the LHF to establish a distribution branch office. These were regions that were seen as great opportunities for Gospel outreach. The LCMS established a seminary in Almaty, and there were many who were involved in the work there. The LHF hesitated to set up a translation unit, since Amy Hartwig Kashenov arrived in Kazakhstan about this same time for the purpose of setting up some translation work. She had taken Russian in college and worked for several years in St. Petersburg.

I made a visit to Almaty in Kazakhstan, accompanied by Konstantin Komarov and Rev. Tom Petersen, to assess the needs and opportunities. Rev. Khonin was our host. We also met with Rev. Otto Brillinger and Rev. Armand Boehme, who helped out at the seminary as volunteer instructors. It was the first occasion on which we were exposed to horse meat as a Kazakhstan delicacy.

More recently we have seen a change in the acceptance of missionaries. New government regulations are making it more difficult to do any kind of outreach. In Uzbekistan, for instance, if you are caught evangelizing a person, you would receive a two-year prison sentence. Preaching can only be done in a church building. We are also finding it difficult to ship books from Russia into Kazakhstan due to all the new customs regulations. We are currently investigating possible avenues to send a container of books.

The number of congregations in the region has declined considerably as many Germans, who had been deported to Kazakhstan during World War II, returned to their home country.

After we parted ways with Konstantin at the airport for our return to America, we discovered on our return that Konstantin encountered some thugs at the airport who beat him up and stole his laptop and his cash.

February 12 – Letter of thanks received from Rev. Ilars Plume, Riga, Latvia, for LHF supporting his theological education at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri. At this time Ilars was serving as the president of the LHF Latvia board of directors. He states: “I have experienced so much love from many American people while being in the U.S. that it would be difficult to put in words my gratitude, because there is so much for which to be thankful. The LHF and you personally have been a good part of it. And there is no wonder that mainly it has been through the excellent books you have provided for reading and translation already in Latvia. It is just one of your callings in the service of spreading the Gospel. I would say even more, now when such extremely important work as translation of the *Book of Concord* is carried on in several languages. It should be your main task, because of the special role this book has in the Christian church. Recently I received a check from LHF to be used for the purchase of books for my personal library, for which I am deeply grateful.” Ilars was one of a number of students who were sponsored for advanced studies at the seminaries. We saw this as a way to strengthen our contingent of translators.

It was personally disappointing to have Ilars involved in a movement that took him out of the ELCL. On the other hand, it was encouraging to see his commitment to the confessional cause. His kind heart and gentle spirit were qualities that led us to maintain a working relationship. He explained his action on Epiphany 1997 in the following way: “Let me wish you all the best in your private life and work. This day is the day of my ordination, which took place in 1990. This is the day we remember the Wise Men from the East who left Jerusalem for the sake of Bethlehem. The church’s tradition tells us that they were three. I do not know if it is true or not, but in some way it closely corresponds to the situation in Latvia, where three Lutheran congregations have left ecumenically-corrupted Jerusalem for the sake of confessional Bethlehem. In two of these congregations, I continue my pastoral work given by the Lord through the Call of the congregations. The star which guided us in the way from Jerusalem to Bethlehem was confessional theology, which really and clearly opens the spiritual wealth of the Bible. This theological thinking was started by our American brothers such as Erling Teigen, Wallace Schulz, and you, Bob. I am glad once more to thank you for that, although it is a pity that in the last year you

have not been too kind towards the plant you have planted. But I have to express my appreciation of your willingness to continue cooperation with Augsburg Institute in publishing confessional Lutheran books.” Future generations will find in the sealed files the full history surrounding the separation of LHF and Augsburg Institute.

April 5 – The ship is launched. The *Book of Concord* Project Executive Committee meets in Nairobi.

April 19 – The LHF board receives the announcement that the *Good News Journal* is ready to be published in the English and Russian languages. It was reported that although we have had a hand in the planning it is being released and funded through the Concordia Mission Society.

April 24 – *Port Harcourt, Nigeria*

Discussions began with Vicar Charles Wokoma to begin translation work on *Luther’s Small Catechism* and the *Book of Concord* in the Kalabari language spoken in southern Nigeria. He became an official staff member August 1, 1997. On April 1, 1998, we were informed that the catechism was completed and being reviewed. Later we learned that there were problems with the diacritical marks unique to the language, and there was no computerized program to insert them into the text. This began what turned out to be an ongoing problem that eventually led to our closing of the office and discontinuing the work. We encountered the usual graft and corruption with which we refused to comply. It would turn out to be one of the most frustrating chapters in LHF history.

At one point in the start of our operations we sent six “trunk boxes” of books, computer equipment and clothing to Nigeria. In typical fashion, these cartons took forever to be delivered, and Wokoma had to spend almost a month waiting for the items to arrive in Lagos, which had to be the most corrupt port in the world. They cost \$150 each to send, and it was estimated to take \$300-\$400 per trunk to have them “cleared” in Lagos. In order to get these items to Port Harcourt, Wokoma had to hire a military escort to get them safely there.

This particular project and program had to be one of our most frustrating and costly operations ever entered into. When an office structure was located and construction was being completed, the builders ran out of money and wanted Wokoma to advance funds that would provide advance lease amounts. Some funds were provided. Before Wokoma could move into the unfinished building, a guard house had to be built to protect his personal property from being stolen. Wokoma lived in this uncompleted structure without lights, water, phone, or air conditioning. You can guess what problems we encountered in the area of communication?

On September 1, 2000, the Port Harcourt office was closed, and Rev. Wokoma returned to the United States. He now works with the Texas District as a missionary to African Americans in Houston, with an office provided by Memorial Lutheran Church, Dr. Scott Murray, pastor.

May 1 – On this trip we were apprised of a growing problem in Latvia: failing banks. The closings of several major banks took place just before our arrival in Riga. At least two congregations and the Latvian Bible Society had accounts in these institutions, and their money was lost. LHF Latvia funds are carried in a bank that has been very solid until present. We are careful not to carry large amounts on deposit.

This trip again included a trip to Taurage, Lithuania, to meet with our translator for whom we had earlier installed a phone line. On this trip we presented a computer, modem for email, and a laser printer. The amazing contrast is that this was now a Lithuanian home with email capacity, but a home without plumbing. Even more interesting is that this family had to move from a more pretentious home when the husband lost his job. He now works near Moscow as an electrician for \$12 per day.

May 10 – An explanation about the difficulty of Lutheran work in Siberia was expressed by Rev. Vsevolod Lytkin: “I think LHF activities in Siberia will be very helpful. We do not have many Lutherans, and my hope is that as we work together with you, our people will be encouraged. In the past there were many Russian Germans, but at the beginning of World War II they were deported by Stalin from the western part of Russia and from the Baltics to deep Siberia. All those clusters of German Lutherans have disappeared. In Omsk, east of Novosibirsk, a new beautiful Lutheran church building was built, paid for by the German government in the amount of \$3 million. It was a shock for me to meet liberals there – my first experience to talk with liberals. I was told by a pastor from St. Petersburg that it is not important whether Christ’s resurrection was real or not. When I asked him about his view on homosexuality he said, ‘Dear friend, do not judge. Different people have different gifts.’ This Pastor is from ELCROS (Evangelical Lutheran Church of Russian and Other States). The church in Omsk is now part of ELCROS, but their people do not know how liberal their leaders are. So it is now a very pitiful situation in Omsk.”

May 19 – Dr. Ernst Wendlund is appointed as a special consultant to *Book of Concord* project in the Tswana language. Dr. Wendlund is a special translator for the United Bible Societies, living in Lusaka.

June – The work of translating the *Book of Concord* into Swahili commences with Anssi Simojoki as the project director and with six translation units organized in Kenya and Tanzania. Dr. Ernst Wendlund, a linguist and translation

specialist, met with Anssi Simojoki and gave a most positive review to work already completed. Pressure mounts from LEAF to have Anssi Simojoki removed from the project and sent back to Finland. Anssi Simojoki reports that for some time, Lutheran World Federation had caused problems by interfering with the work and spreading false information worldwide, particularly in his native country Finland. The reason for this is understandable. Anssi Simojoki is known as an uncompromising confessional Lutheran theologian and churchman. In the organization of LEAF, the mission department had been for years a liberal pro-LWF bridgehead to spread its influence in wider areas of LEAF. Profiled confessional theologians had been almost completely excluded when new staff was recruited, especially in the mission department.

As it is not possible to continue in cooperation with LEAF and as our project was left to practically die out, we have decided to take the bold step of recruiting Anssi Simojoki to our staff.

Translation Principles and Faithfulness to the Text

Dr. Wendlund not only served as a special consultant to the African translation team, but provided valuable insights to the translation principles that need to be followed by translators. In establishing his own principles, he leaned heavily on those principles followed by Luther. The two principles followed by translators are functional equivalency and confessional fidelity, the hallmarks of Luther. Dr. Wendlund has done extensive writing on this topic, and the LHF was pleased to have him serve as a special consultant to the African translation team.

This was an early reminder to us that these principles were important to be shared with all translators working on LHF projects. In one publication, Dr. Wendlund presented ten principles for confessional, functional, equivalence translating. I cite this to indicate we cannot here bring these into discussion, but that these principles were the guiding principles that were incorporated into LHF general translation work. These are enumerated in a journal titled “Notes on Translation, Volume 9, No. 1 & 2.”

Dr. Wendlund reported after one of his consultations, “I was most impressed to see how well this project has been organized by Rev. Simojoki, and the great zeal that he shows for providing confessional Lutheran materials to the membership and others in order to counteract the twin threats of liberal (LWF) and Pentecostal theology. Indeed, the translation program that he has put into place even exceed my Bible translation projects, and I am confident that if everything remains in place, Lord willing, the Swahili Classical Lutheran Literature Project will accomplish its goal of completing a

meaningful translation of the *Book of Concord*. I stress the word ‘meaningful,’ including both semantic accuracy and stylistic naturalness, because this is an important consideration in the rendering of religious texts that must be not only readily read but all understood correctly.”

Thus, Dr. Wendlund gave us the path to the best possible approach to our overall translation strategy. We keep in mind, however, that no translation is ever perfect or complete. That means critical and qualitative revision is essential. It is, in fact, a never-ending process from one generation to the next.

This also brings to mind any number of challenges we have faced with accusations of faulty translations. Our response has always been to ask the accusers to debate the issues with the translators. In many cases it wasn’t so much a case of questionable translation, as it was a case of competitors simply wanting to “get a leg up.” I remember one case where generalizations were made on the translation quality of the Zande catechism in Sudan in a public meeting. At break time the individual was confronted and asked to show the man who supervised the translation where there was a problem. He handed him the book and simply asked, “Can you show me?” At that point the accuser simply hung his head and admitted he had not read the work at all. It reminds me of politicians passing a bill without reading it.

October 11 – We were informed by Rev. Elisa that the wire of \$2,000, our first grant to the ELCS, was sent and received.

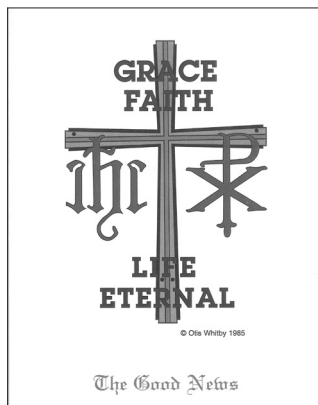
October 15 – This trip marked my 13th trip to the former Soviet Union. We started the trip with the excitement of being stuck in a Kiev, Ukraine, apartment elevator with four other people for two hours. The incident was a reminder that the change to a totally functional society will take a long time. Attitudes towards service, for the most part, still reflect the old Soviet mindset. The elevator’s system included an emergency phone for rescue. The individual responsible for elevator malfunctions told us she only worked until five o’clock and merely hung up. We took matters into our own hands and found someone with a tire wrench and pried ourselves out of the tight compartment.

Prior to entering the elevator, we commented on the Satanic signs defacing the walls. We were told they appeared after the pastor rented space in the apartment. It was a reminder that we were entering a land where Satan had been allowed to reign as a result of atheistic communism. It was also our reminder that wherever the Gospel is championed, we constantly struggle against evil powers. The trip saw us interact with leaders of the Ingria Lutheran Church, ELCROS Lutherans, WELS, ELS and LCMS mission personnel.

October 19 – Mr. O.W. from Illinois requested an opportunity to go on a

mission trip with us to the former Soviet Union. Arrangements were made for him to do some manual labor in renovations on our Riga office. On the way to Riga he picked up from our conversations that there was a *Good News* magazine published by Dr. Schulz. I'd have to say that this was the end of his trip, as he simply became obsessed, not with the magazine, but with the name.

It turned out that he had developed a very beautiful and meaningful art piece entitled THE GOOD NEWS, shown here.....



The symbolism in the drawing was explained. The black lines represented sin, purple for agape, black nails for agony and death, red for the blood atonement, gold for truth, and blue for salvation. A card explained the drawing in this way, "God loved the world so much that because of man's sin, He sacrificed His only Son, Jesus Christ, by being nailed to the cross. The death of Jesus was the blood atonement for all sins. Because of this TRUTH, salvation by grace is a gift from God, and by faith you shall have life eternal because Jesus lives."

The problem was that even though he claimed to have a copyright on THE GOOD NEWS terminology, his opinion was that Schulz had copied it and was illegally using the phrase. We tried to explain that this phrase is in use all over the world for magazines, for books, for inscriptions, and he would not be able to claim it all his own. We were unable to convince him. Because of his inability to focus on anything else, we sent him home. Dialog continued after we returned, and eventually things calmed down and he allowed the LHF to use the design however we pleased, as long as his copyright appeared.

We herewith recognize and acknowledge his good work to the glory of God.

October 20 – I like black coffee. I discovered in traveling to Russia that there was no such thing as black coffee. It came either with sugar or with cream. There

was no way I could convince them otherwise, even with Konstantin's help. Our early trips to hotel coffee shops in Russia often showed cockroaches, along with sandwiches and salads, in the glass cabinets. Konstantin and I had many meals of bread, sausage, and cheese we bought in the kiosks. Konstantin usually carried along his trusty water heater that could instantly give us a quick cup of hot instant coffee without sugar or cream.

November 4 – Death of Dr. Robert Preus. Anssi Simojoki wrote, “I had the privilege of seeing him and discussing the *Book of Concord* project with him in Helsinki at the end of September. He followed with keen interest and warm sympathy the progress of our project. Prof. Preus was a grand scholar whose studies in Lutheran orthodoxy have already become classics in the LCMS. The theology of the cross was the subject Prof. Preus never tired to proclaim. We have the good hope that he is now pursuing the theology of glory. He had in his lifetime the incredible talent of inspiring various people for the cause of the Lutheran Confessions. They are nothing less but the confession of the whole truth of the Bible, the Word of God.”

November 25 – Dr. Ernst Wendlund joined the Swahili *Book of Concord* project as a project consultant. Dr. Wendlund is a missionary of the WELS-based in Lusaka, Zambia, where he has been working as an expert of linguistics and translation with the United Bible Societies.

November 27 – Funds provided for ELCS to lease a complex to serve as the church headquarters, meeting rooms, and worship center. Later it would house a doctor's office and a pharmacy provided by St. Paul Lutheran Church, Chesterton, Indiana.

December 8 – The LHF board elects Rev. Kurt Marquart as the board chairman to replace the late Dr. Robert Preus.

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January 3 – Dr. E.A.W. Weber wrote concerning problems of communicating, “I too often have experienced with full costs error messages. And if you have grown up in Africa as I have on a mission station near the Swaziland border with the nearest telephone 18 miles away, with the mail coming only once a week (to be fetched in a private bag on donkey, back seven miles from the nearest bus stop), and where according to my conviction only Satan and sects have no time, Lutherans should do their work thinking at least of decades, where the Roman Catholic Church takes centuries, and the Lord Himself has an eternity of time which is no time. I try to make use of the most modern ways of communication, but then they must work and may not give error messages, for which I have to pay in vain. It is wonderful if others have good working communication machines,

but what should I have done here in South Africa, if one so often has to wait in vain for quick postal service? Get nervous? Even depressed? Get angry that I still did not receive any answer? It would only hurt and disturb me, and it would not better the situation at all. Certainly you know the wonderful prayer which we must alter, and those which cannot be altered, and then the wisdom to distinguish between the two.”

January 10 – Rev. Rahn is in contact with Anssi Simojoki relative to work starting on the *Book of Concord* in Swahili and initial conversations regarding Anssi Simojoki joining the LHF staff. Anssi Simojoki is invited to speak at an Association of Confessional Lutherans meeting in April and in various U.S. congregations. Work was based on the Concordia Triglotta, the Latin, German, and English edition.

January 15 – A message was received from Rev. John Shep, Thoughts of Faith-Ukraine, director: “We also wish to thank you for your gift which brings THE LIGHT to those who have truly been living in a land of spiritual darkness.” In the first issue (Fall 1998) of “The Banner,” ULC’s newsletter, Pastor Shep explained, “Many of you may recall 1980 when Thoughts of Faith was organized as a radio ministry in Ukraine and you received your first copy of ‘Behind the Iron Curtain.’ Eight years later, with Mikhail Gorbachev’s ‘glasnost’ and ‘perestroika’ in full swing, we changed our newsletter’s name to ‘Open Door.’ Today, by God’s grace, you hold in your hand ‘Banner,’ the official journal of the ULC. Our title signifies the continuation of the work begun by the ULC of the Augsburg Confession, a church body which the Communists believed they had destroyed in 1939. The Bible passage is appropriate, which appears below our masthead, ‘May we shout for joy over your victory, and in the name of our God set up our banners.’ Psalm 20:5. It was chosen by the founders of the Ukrainian Lutheran Church in 1933.” It was John Shep who on January 24, 1999, ordained Rev. Slavik Horpynchuk into the Holy Ministry and as pastor of the Kiev congregation. Slavik was later elected as bishop of the ULC.

February 1 – LEAF notifies Anssi Simojoki that his contract ends on September 30 and will not be renewed.

February 19 – Rev. Rahn sent letters to LHF donors explaining the situation under the title *BOOK OF CONCORD PROJECT - SABOTAGE OR CHALLENGE*. Quoting from the letter as follows:

The LEAF at one time was a confessional society but new leadership finds support leaning towards the philosophy and politics of the LWF. Profiled confessional theologians have been degraded or simply fired, and they have been completely excluded when new staff is recruited.

Leaf’s liberal mission department has decided to eliminate the *Book of Concord* project by removing Anssi Simojoki from his post and terminating his mission

work. We agree with Anssi Simojoki that the *Book of Concord* is an urgent need of the church in Africa, whether the language is Swahili or Setswana. This important document is not available in either language to guide the Lutheran Church in its teaching and preaching.

In recent years there has been a resurgence of interest in the confessions. This has been seen in the LCMS, Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, and the Evangelical Lutheran Synod especially. There have been many conferences, conventions, symposiums, or general sessions held in which the confessions contained in the *Book of Concord* are discussed and affirmed. The troubling aspect comes when we are challenged to put the Concord and its confessions into concrete action.

That time is before us now. The above church bodies all allege an active subscription to these confessions. In essence there are nearly 8,000 churches that claim to hold these writings as those which guide them in their belief, teaching, and preaching; at least they have done so for 416 years.

How firm is this subscription? Churches today, even some Lutheran, seem to find more affinity to the modern slogan of “deeds not creeds.” So, we are going to find that many within Lutheran congregations would not deem this as a problem. How many would stand up, speak up, and then move up with the help needed? Would there be 8,000, 6,000, 4,000, 1,000, 580, 416, 50, or 10? Would you be included? Would your church be included? Would it be worth it to make a commitment that says in effect, “We will draw the line and stand with the standard set forth in the Concord?”

I think we have come to this time. We know the agenda of the powerful LWF. That is why we are bold to make our point. We have taken our cue from the LWF itself. It would never be found guilty of conceding its liberal view in the interest of conforming to a conservative, confessional *Book of Concord* position. There is more effort given to changing the very contents of the Concord “to better fit the posture of world Lutheranism.”

I believe the confessors who sacrificed time, energy, and blood would approve of an extraordinarily bold approach to the LWF meddling influence. To that end, we are preparing to place Anssi Simojoki in the service of LHF. Because of the suddenness of this development, we do not have a budget item large enough to absorb his salary. Should this excuse us from involvement? The Bible makes it clear that Kingdom work is not chosen on the basis of its convenience and comfort, but on the basis of its challenges and opportunities.

We have counted the cost of this tower and we will not be called fools. We have seen the enemy coming from a great distance, and we know the number and strength of the opposition. We have counted the cost, and we are ready for battle.

Time is of the essence. We can put it off, or we can seize the moment. That

moment, in my estimation, is now. Are the confessions to be preserved just for us, or will we stand with those who have a desire to follow them but do not have access to them in printed form? Will we take our stand on these confessions to the extent that we will provide help so that they can be published in languages where they do not yet exist? Will we take our stand so that men like Anssi Simojoki, who have labored tirelessly, will be able to continue their work for the benefit of over 100 million Swahili- and Setswana-speaking people of Africa, including over 5 million Lutherans?

The battle is ours to win. We dare not fall or fail. This is your confession and mine. It is not to be stored or reserved for our use only, but for the united voice of genuine Lutherans around the world. Will we do our part? Will you do your part to make sure it is heard and read in Swahili and Setswana?

With your help the project will be completed. Lutherans in Africa will have access to the confessional writing to which you also subscribe. As a result of your generosity, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania will have access to those truths that bind us together in the household of faith.

March 1 – On this date we again declined the request to assist in purchasing a car for distribution purposes in Latvia. We reiterated our priority to be in the work of translating and publishing, and because of heavy demands we were unable to honor the request. We indicated in our explanation that we were assessing our funding situation: “The anticipated receipts generated by our newest staff member have not been forthcoming. His goal was to raise half a million dollars in the year. Six months have passed and the production has not reached even \$25,000, and he is frustrated and disappointed. This, of course, plays into our overall support program. While thinking that his addition would relieve me of some responsibility, it now appears that I will have to increase my activity in the fund raising area. We will continue to do what we can to find the support needed for all areas where we are working. It is a formidable task, but we are confident that the Lord will bless it as long as we are faithful to it.”

While financial matters are always an integral part of any program, the above conveys the personal philosophy on which the LHF mission is built. God provides the increase and we have often quoted the statement once made by Hudson Taylor: “God’s work done in God’s way will never lack God’s supply.” We often challenged the LHF board to consider whether we are “mission driven or money driven.” It is the ultimate question for all mission activity. It is unfortunate when any organization becomes “money driven.” We have any number of congregations that today are wrestling with this question.

March 4 – To Anssi Simojoki, “This is to confirm that the LHF is herewith offering you a position on the staff as the vice president of Africa and project

director of the *Book of Concord* project, a joint venture with LSRY. At this point we understand that the contract, which will be offered through LSRY, will commence on Oct. 1, 1996.”

March 7 – Anssi Simojoki replied, “I feel honored that I am now taken on board of LHF. I accept gladly and firmly your offer. May God help me that my service would be beneficial for the aims of LHF and LSRY and foremost for His glory. This is my humble prayer.”

March 14 – Mrs. Galena Komarov, wife of Konstantin, and brother, Alexei, request to be confirmed in the Lutheran church.

March 25 – LHF office opens in Karen, a suburb of Nairobi.



April 11 – Dr. Anssi Simojoki speaks at a special dinner held in connection with a board meeting in Chicago, and a meeting of the Association of Confessional Lutherans. He reports on the *Book of Concord* project in the Swahili language.

April 12 – Setswana translation team met with Dr. Ernst Wendlund.

April 15 – Dr. Simojoki spoke at St. Peter Lutheran Church, Eastpointe, Michigan. Exotic coffee from Kenya is sold by the cup as a fund raiser.

April 23-May 8 – Trip taken with Rev. Dr. Tim Quill as a traveling companion. This trip took us deeper into Russia than all previous visits. No matter where we went, from Ukraine to Siberia, the key word of challenge and even frustration was “registration.” Mission boards and missionaries understand well the Soviet law of required registration for religious groups. This requirement makes it difficult for an identified confessional Lutheran body to begin churches. The old trappings of “religious control” are still real. It means that Lutheran mission efforts are

caught in a holding state. It also means that groups not identified by a Lutheran name but holding to a strong Lutheran doctrine are unable to formally affiliate as an independent Russian Lutheran Church. Can you imagine being required to obtain a new visa every quarter, having to leave the country, and waiting for a new visa to be processed? Some of this is still going on today and who knows what the next ruling might be?

In St. Petersburg, Rev. Arvo Soitter escorted us to Gatchina School #26 where he teaches Bible Class to 40 students who had just passed the course. We honored them with a copy of the *Children's Bible*. After tea with the school director, we proceeded to the town orphanage where we had a convocation with 85 children and presented Bibles. Most of the children suffer with health problems and many have parents who are presently imprisoned.

In Ekaterinburg, Siberia, Rev. Sergey Glushkov serves as branch director for this region. This is an amazing region with a German Lutheran Church that is more of a social club than a church. Preserving German heritage seems more important than preserving our Lutheran heritage. We met with a pastor who serves as a supervisor of a large independent group of believers in 31 churches. He told me the story of how his father hand-copied a stack of Luther's works that stood 16 inches high. He hid them in the basement during Communist times and remembers even as a child seeing his father weep when he discovered that the works were destroyed because of humidity. Because of his background and because of an inability of Lutherans to reach people like this soon enough, they become involved with Baptist and Pentecostal churches, but they still prefer the Lutheran doctrine as it is explained in the various books we publish and they utilize. They are interested in the old liturgies and don't appreciate the creation of new liturgies.

Ekaterinburg Branch Office Established

Our efforts to have Rev. Glushkov establish an LHF office covered a period of almost two years. Glushkov was limited in his use of English, so we sent him to English language classes at the university. At this time we also began to discuss alternatives for an office. There were many variants considered, and the conclusion was that a flat would be our best option. When the search began, a four-room flat was considered so that it could serve as the Glushkov family residence for two adults and a child and also have a large living room that would serve as a meeting place for Bible classes and seminars. A small bedroom would be converted into an office. The first estimate was at a \$100 level, but each desirable variant would find the price escalating. Several times we were unable to complete a deal fast enough with transfer of funds,

etc. When a new unfinished high rise flat became available, we signed an agreement and also made arrangements to assist the Glushkovs in furnishing the flat. In addition to the office flat, the Ekaterinburg congregation has a first-floor flat in another building that is a place for worship, storage, and conference room. All correspondence in regard to matters of rent and contracts were conducted by Oleg Kravets, who was our Moscow consultant, and who today serves in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

Glushkov to Fort Wayne

In September 1998, Sergey Glushkov completed some elaborate arrangements and bureaucratic entanglements and finally found himself on the campus of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana, along with four other LHF-sponsored students. These included Rev. Andrew Mbugo Elisa, Sudan; Mr. Mark Onunda, Tanzania; Mr. Pavel Butakov, Siberia; and Rev. Oleg Sevetsyanov, Moscow. All of these men were representatives of the LHF in their respective areas. When Sergey Glushkov left for his studies, we arranged for the Alexei Trapeznikov family to occupy the Glushkov flat and serve as acting LHF branch director. Trapeznikov had attended Fort Wayne the previous year and was now serving his vicarage under Rev. Vsevolod Lytkin.

Ekaterinburg Preschool

When Alexei Trapeznikov attended Concordia-Fort Wayne, his wife, Svetlana, attended some education classes at Indiana University/Purdue University, Fort Wayne. She also attended some theological classes at the seminary as a way to prepare herself better for the opening of a preschool back in Ekaterinburg. During this time the Trapeznikovs became acquainted with Rev. William Stache, pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church, Columbus, Indiana. He and the congregation have made this their special project, and there were ongoing challenges with regard to the preschool. It has been necessary to move the preschool from time to time because it was meeting in the Trapeznikov flat, and neighbors complained about noise. Limited enrollment has been a problem, if you considered attendance other than the Trapeznikov and Glushkov children. The mindset of the Russian people is not one that embraces the idea of preschool. Because of a lack of trust, parents would generally be more willing to leave young children home alone rather than sending them to an organized preschool. Since the preschool was not registered, the Trapeznikovs were fined for operating an illegal school and had to close the school. Plans were to move the location of the

preschool to the church facility. This, in my mind, was a more ideal location.

On October 21, 2000, I participated in an historic worship service in Ekaterinburg when St. Peter and Paul held their first service in a rented room. It was appropriate that it was on Reformation Sunday and a total of nine people attended. When in 2001 I preached at a circuit reformation rally in Pittsburgh, I told the congregation of 400 that the Reformation service in Ekaterinburg may have had more historic significance than the worship in Pittsburgh. There once was a St. Peter and Paul Lutheran Church in Ekaterinburg that was located on the main street, but it was destroyed during the Soviet era, and a business had been built on the site. It is interesting that the building has an inscription that says, "Here once stood St. Peter and Paul Lutheran Church." Efforts have been made to get the government to provide land to replace that which was stolen. The first piece of ground was rejected because it was too far from the previous main street location. A more prestigious location was offered, but squabbles ensued as to who the "true" Lutherans are in Ekaterinburg. There is a German remnant that seems to be more interested in preserving their culture than preserving their worship.

What about the Lutheran presence in Ekaterinburg? It continues to be a small worshipping group. When Rev. Jim Fandrey visited the service on May 15, 2011, he reported that there were about a dozen in worship, including Pastors Glushkov and Trapeznikov and their families. Something will have to be done to put forth a stronger effort to evangelize and bring people into the church. Two or three other congregations were being served a great distance from Ekaterinburg. This impinges on the time the pastors have to actually evangelize. We are also analyzing the efforts being put forth for the distribution of the LHF books and materials, the main function of the Ekaterinburg branch. We have to determine the functionality of a branch office in relation to the overall cost of running such an office. In current economic times, there is a process for the evaluation of every branch around the world.

In Novosibirsk we attended the Bible Lutheran Church served by Rev. Vsevolod Lytkin. We were impressed with the predominant participation of young people. Mr. Pavel Butakov, who has the appearance of a grade school student, is finishing his army officer service and will become the branch director for this region of Siberia and also serve as translator.

Rev. Lytkin voiced his conviction that there should be a Siberian Lutheran Church because Russia is too big for one major group. He has traveled extensively throughout Siberia and has contact with many congregations who are Lutheran in doctrine, but not in name. He realizes that the Lutheran faith is very good for Russia because of its sacramental nature and strong liturgical base.

The LHF books help to expand the Lutheran base in Siberia. On one occasion, Rev. Lytkin received a phone call from some folks in deep Siberia. They explained that they had no pastoral leadership and were studying some books that were published by LHF. They asked Lytkin if he knew of the group. They explained that their background was Pentecostal, but after studying these LHF books, they are of the opinion they should be Lutheran. They asked if Rev. Lytkin could come to see them. He made the long trip, and today the church is part of the Siberian Lutheran Church.

May 23 – Rev. Rahn sent a letter to police authorities of Finland confirming that Anssi Simojoki would be a qualified and capable owner of a gun. Since 1993, his home had been attacked 15 times. Anssi Simojoki refers to Nairobi as Nai-robbery because of the frequent break-ins, and a gun would serve as a last resort should the robbers get past the guards and attack dogs.

May 25 – A one year report was presented to the Swahili *Book of Concord* translation units and comments were made by Anssi Simojoki: “The commencement of the work has been very promising indeed. This can be understood in such a way that all of us have been inspired by the grandeur of our task. Grand it is, indeed! The first Lutheran missionaries landed in East Africa in 1844. After a century and a half, the time has finally come by God’s grace to make the Lutheran Confessions accessible to millions of people who speak and understand the Swahili language. For what reason are the Lutheran Confessions so important as to deserve to be clothed in new languages more than four centuries after their presentation in Germany? Some might argue that the *Book of Concord* is a collection of documents which might enrich African church life historically and culturally. Many masterpieces of world history and literature have spoken Swahili for quite some time. Indeed, the *Book of Concord* and classical Lutheran literature may have cultural impact. This, however, is not sufficient to be our very reason to toil in this project. It is not either the reason why so many people overseas do sacrifice so much to make our effort financially possible.

“What we are doing is nothing less than giving a grand and reliable summary of the Bible, the Word of God, in the language which is spoken and understood by tens of millions of people in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, eastern Zaire, northern Malawi, and Zambia. A confession is a true, reliable summary of the Word of God, a strong extract and sweet juice of the fruit of the tree of life. The Lutheran Confessions are thus not only historically and culturally significant books, but they are the voice of God Himself in and through His Word. The *Book of Concord* is thus not only a German cultural and historical work, but in a true sense the catholic presentation of the one true faith. And ‘catholic’ means here

common, general, universal, both geographically and in terms of time. It is with the words of Vincent of Lerins (d. before 450 AD) the faith which is confessed *ubique, semper, ab omnibus* – ‘everywhere, always, by all, – it bears universality, antiquity and consensus.

“Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we proclaim the mystery of Christ. (Col. 4:2-3)”

June 4 – Czech Republic – Agreement was made with Rev. James Krikava to serve as a branch director for the Czech region. Later Rev. M.S. Grubbs became our contact person for the area. On January 12, 2000, the *Augsburg Confession* was translated into the Czech language and published in June. Other portions of the *Book of Concord* would follow. These projects were mostly done in cooperation with the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Mankato, Minnesota, and their mission organization known as “Thoughts of Faith.”

June 27 – A Land Rover is purchased for LHF Africa and for use by Anssi Simojoki for book distribution and introduction throughout Kenya, Tanzania, and in regions of Swahili-speaking people.

August 1 – A *Hymnbook* is published in the Zande language of Sudan.

August 22 – We made an attempt to send a wire to Khartoum on this date and after a number of different attempts, it was on October 1 that we received word that the transaction was finally completed. This shows the early difficulties in getting funds wired to Sudan.

August 23 – A check in the amount of \$5,000 is sent to Dr. E.A.W. Weber for a computer and for translator stipends.

October 4 – My CRM status comes up for review by the LCMS Council of Presidents. I requested the Michigan District President to represent me and my request for an extension. The vote was to remove me from the roster. Reports indicated that some derogatory remarks were made about my “not doing anything, just running around raising money.” It was sufficient negativity to garner votes declining the extension. False doctrine, immorality, and waywardness from the policies of the synod finds time for quick action from the leadership, but not much time or investigation is needed to remove someone who has the unmitigated gall of thinking he can do mission work outside the power structure.

October 10 – Anssi Simojoki visits with Bishop Ndaye Mbwanja to report on his work of translating the *Augsburg Confession* and *Luther’s Small Catechism* into the Tsiluba language, which is spoken by several million people in middle Zaire.

October 13 – *God’s No and God’s Yes* is released in Ukrainian. Rev. Ed Narr joined us for the trip to Eastern Europe and for the festivities in Ukraine. He

also participated in what became a tradition – pancakes at Konstantin's flat in Riga, Latvia. The pancakes are as large as a dinner plate and a stack of 15 was set in front of us.

October 16 – *When Division Requires Decision*

We have alluded to the division that resulted in a decision to organize under new auspices in Riga, Latvia. The basic decision we faced was a division that occurred in the relationship between the bishop of the ELCL and Rev. Ilars Plume, who at the time was serving as chairman of the LHF board in Latvia. There was some growing division between the bishop and members of the LHF board, who were of the opinion that liberalism was sneaking into the church. A letter that had derogatory remarks inadvertently came into the hands of the bishop. This led to Rev. Plume being asked to come to the bishop's office "and bring along your befin and clergy cross." This meant removal from the clergy roster. It was ironic that we were now dealing with a clergyman who was in the same category as the LHF executive director.

One could see the dilemma being faced with a defrocked clergyman serving as chairman of an organization that had a purpose of helping the church with confessional literature. Meetings were held privately with Rev. Ilars informing him of what we saw as a necessity – at least relinquishing his chairmanship, but staying on the board. We tried to do this in a charitable manner, and Ilars saw the necessity. At a board meeting later in the day I tried to explain as best I could why I felt it was necessary for the chairman to step down. To retain Ilars would simply fly in the face of the bishop and would lead to open disavowal of our work. After some discussion by the board, Ilars had to leave for a meeting with his congregation. He stated that he didn't think he was that important to the work and that he would step down. It was determined to leave the position vacant for the time being and the board agreed to meet and discuss this matter further at a later date. In all of this I had the good counsel of my pastor, Rev. Ed Narr and a Fort Wayne seminary professor, Dr. Waldemar Degner, who happened to be teaching in Riga at the time.

The next leg of our trip would take us to Taurage, Lithuania, and then travel to St. Petersburg. Arriving there on October 22, I received phone calls from America informing me of events that transpired in Riga after I left. Rev. Guntis Kalme had faxed Jeff to inform him that the Riga LHF board met after I left, reinstated Ilars, and then dissolved the LHF organization. The Augsburg Institute (AI) would take over all projects and property. All of this was very strange in that several years prior there had been a reorganizing of the LHF outside the Latvian Lutheran Church so that the bishop could not gain control. Now they carried out the activity that they were trying to prevent. One of my last

words to Janis Dimza of the Augsburg Institute was that I hoped any decisions they made would be carried out in a spirit of openness, with no hidden agendas, such as I had done with Ilars. He was rather quiet when he bid us farewell, as the meeting probably had just ended where they had dissolved LHF.

In walking away from our facilities we avoided any rancor relative to the Augsburg Institute operations. We continued our program and purpose of translating and publishing books and materials. Although the relationship with Augsburg Institute is somewhat strained, we still have a working relationship that has resulted in publishing works that had previously been started, such as the *Book of Concord* and other works. We especially have good interaction with Ilars and members of the Augsburg Institute staff.

October 18 – ELCS uses \$5,000 LHF grant to purchase computer, printer, table, software, and translation of *Liturgy Prayer Book*.

October 30 – The LCMS mission executive warns me that I better be careful not to use the term “Rev.” since I no longer had roster status. I wrote to President Al Barry, LCMS president, for clarification. If it were true, all letterhead and other items with the term would have to be destroyed. It turned out that it was a stretch for the mission executive to make that ruling.

November 19 – A generator was installed in the Nairobi compound. As in many African places, electricity is very sporadic. Nairobi had predicted that electricity would not be available from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., and we could not afford to have people sitting idle in the marketplace during this prime working time. A generator would allow work to continue throughout the day. Anssi Simojoki voiced his great appreciation: “Without your power package, the time here would have been a sheer nightmare. As it is, I did run the generator for more than nine hours.”

December 2 – Rev. Albert Mongi wrote from Dodoma, Tanzania, “The Lutheran Church is showing much slack. I was very encouraged to hear from Pastor Flo that you have the same burden as we do. I would like to hear from you, especially how we can help uproot or reduce the weeds being spread within the Lutheran church here. There have been quite a few anguishes in me as I see attempts here to subordinate the Word to the onslaught of the New Age. Many pastors seem to mind their paycheck more than their avowed Call to preach Jesus and Him crucified. The way of compromise and shallow ecumenical rhetoric is preferred to orthodoxy.

“I was therefore very happy to hear about the great strides LHF is making and the strength you have demonstrated. I am very interested in seeking ways to translate *Luther’s Small Catechism* into one of the thriving vernaculars of Northern Tanzania.”

The request from Albert Mongi is just one example as to how in a relatively short period of time, the LHF has exploded into new areas of the world. It should be pointed out that there was only one area of the world in which we decided to work, and that was Russia. We had made a trip into the former Soviet Union before the wall came down, and it was apparent that Russians were interested in learning English as a second language. Already at the end of my term at God's Word to the Nations Bible Society, we had published an English/Russian side-by-side edition of the New Testament as a way to reach the reading public of Russia and thereby let the Spirit work to bring people to Christ.

The more we worked, the more we became known, and the more requests that came with the basic question, "Can you come over and help us?" To this date we have yet to decline any request, and those requests surprisingly keep coming. Today we have heard from more than 70 countries with work done at one time or another in 90 languages.

December 6 – Authorization is given by the board to begin the process of securing office space. Up to this point the LHF operated out of offices in Rev. Rahn's home.

December 13 – This paragraph comes from a letter I sent to our board relative to my roster status: "This is my second draft of this letter. The first draft carried the false report that I had been reinstated to the synod roster. It was a case of mistaken communication and lasted for a night before the official news descended. Not even the strong encouragement from the president of the synod, Rev. Al Barry, was good enough for this Council of Presidents. They continued in their practice of open opposition. The gracious gift of the season, in the form of my ouster, comes from the church, which I have faithfully served for over 35 years and in which I have held membership for 60." In another letter to the board I commented, "One of the advantages of being involved in the LHF mission is that the roller coaster rides are all free."

December 15 – Isn't it interesting that only in a matter of hours after my removal from the roster of synod the Russian *Book of Concord* comes off the press?

1997

January 24 – Correspondence between Rev. John Sullivan and me was meant to compare our translation projects and plans. Rev. Sullivan was

the WELS Russian mission director located in Novosibirsk, Siberia. Each trip to Novo included a stop at the WELS headquarters to coordinate our work in Russia. A good working relationship developed in all areas of the world where we and WELS were active. Rev. Paul Hartman, editor of the WELS “Multi-Language Publication” newsletter published several catalogues that listed LHF books that were available in various languages. We continue cooperation in our work in India, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Siberia, Latvia, Southeast Asia, Czech Republic, and Russia. One of our cooperative projects was the publishing of *Bible Stories in Pictures* in the Thai language. The WELS also helped to underwrite the publishing of the Russian *Book of Concord* and other works in Russian.

February 5 – In a letter from the Michigan district president, I was informed that I had been banned from pulpits in Michigan because my candidate status was not renewed. In announcing this to the members of the LHF board, I stated that I have too many friends who will not bow to such an order until the president has the courage to state what might be the basis of my removal from the roster. There wasn’t any valid reason, so he was quiet on that but under a lot of pressure, which would only intensify.

February 10 – Rev. Andrew Elisa reports on the state of the church, “We are pushing ahead even though facing a good number of difficulties. Life, however, is seen in us and above all our faith is increasing daily. Hardship, suffering, war, poverty, displacement, militarism, racial conflict, poor economy, plus many other problems have become part of the life styles for us in Africa. In addition, there is the growing religious conflict which affects countries like Sudan, particularly where Christians are the minority. But we continue to believe that one day we shall have new life in Africa, most of all in the Sudan.”

February 13 – A photo appears in the *Reporter* of Dr. Barry and me with recent published LHF books on a table. St. John Lutheran Church, Fraser, sent a letter to all members of the Council of Presidents, asking for all action on my case to be reversed so that they can continue the process of calling me — a process that was in place when removal took place.

February 14 – “I wait and I pray” was the title on the message received from Pavel Butakov, Novosibirsk, Siberia, as he reported on a family situation. He stated, “Forgive me for being silent for such a long time. I had a very difficult month. My mother went through a very difficult surgery as she had cancer. All this time I didn’t work much and was busy with being in the hospital, finding medicines, etc. But our God of miracles, through this disease, led my mother to faith, and before the surgery she was baptized and received Holy Communion. God strengthened her (and us, too). The surgery was easy and successful and now she is recovering really quickly. All my Christian life I

was praying daily for my parents to become Christians, trusting in God's Word: 'Believe and you will be saved and all your household.' My father is next. So I wait and pray!"

March 5 – \$2,000 sent to Evangelical Lutheran Church of Sudan to enable a deposit on a worship center for Juba, Sudan.

March 6 – Expansion of Lutheranism is met with obstacles and interference in Khakassia, Siberia, when an agent of the KGB interrogated the pastor and members of a newly-formed Lutheran congregation. Rev. Lytkin stated that all things that happened are considered to be an offensive provocation meant to frighten people and to eliminate our activities. A few days later a Seventh Day Adventist pastor and his wife, who had converted a half dozen followers, were arrested for kidnapping children and selling their organs. Someone reported that the violence was incredible and long lasting. Hundreds participated, including many Muslims, and when they had not died from the beating, someone poured gasoline on them and fired them. After having been on fire for some time, our brother and sister at last died. Barbarianism is still prevalent throughout our world. The courts dealt with the Lutheran Church in Khakassia, declaring its registration as being invalid. Two months later, the Supreme Court of the Russia Federation abolished the verdict of the lower Khakassia court. Then several months later, the Khakassia court again took up the effort to close the church. Lytkin stated, "Despite the fact that all the trials ended with defeat of prosecutors, nothing has changed. It seems like Khakassian prosecutors have nothing to do besides that struggle with Lutherans. As if there are no longer criminals, thieves, and mafia in Khakassia. And as if they have nothing to do except that struggle against a small Christian mission. But Khakassian authorities with new energy began a new trial. Two Christian lawyers from Moscow agreed to help and the next effort was again stymied."

March 19 – *Prayer Book* published as the first volume in the Sudanese Zande language.

April 21-May 7 – "Be strong, all you people of the land, declares the Lord, and work. For I am with you, declares the Lord Almighty. The glory of this present house will be greater than the glory of the former house, says the Lord Almighty. And in this place I will grant peace, declares the Lord Almighty." Haggai 2:4, 9

This was a passage that headlined a trip report shared, as custom, with the board. I stated in that report, "As I thought about those words, I thought about the 2,800,000 Lutherans in 1,200 churches and the 2,100 Lutheran schools that existed in the former Soviet a mere 75 years ago. It is hard to imagine anything Lutheran ever achieving a comparative glory in Russia,

even in the next 100 years. The Russians' lack of trust, the fear, the suspicion, and even the disgust of any foreign presence doesn't seem to lend itself to a spirit of optimism. The book of Haggai, however, helps to place things in perspective. You note in his message the constant reference —THUS SAYS THE LORD.” I then listed the titles of nine books that were released during this trip in Russian, Latvian, and Ukrainian.

By encouragement of Bishop Vanags, a new LHF board was organized for Latvia with six members present. We report elsewhere of a takeover. This time it was not a corporate takeover, but a takeover of the LHF facilities in Latvia. This led to some accusations made in the U.S. by mission leaders that the LHF was causing a break in the Latvian Lutheran Church. Of course it was a baseless accusation, and the LHF Latvia board chairman (none other than Bishop Vanags) set the record straight by visiting directly with President Barry, assuring him that this was nothing but idle rumor. He told Dr. Barry that the LHF had been and continues to be a strong influence in the confessional voice of the church through its translation and publishing program. In an effort to remove ourselves from suspicion in this conflict, we permitted the Augsburg Institute to occupy our former shared facilities without challenge. Vanags wrote to me, “During my stay in St. Louis I used every opportunity to speak about our intention to cooperate with LHF in publishing books. I tried to make it very clear that we in the Church of Latvia do not have any objections against you, and that we do not regard you responsible in any way for the unfortunate development in Latvia. I said also that I appreciate your contribution to publishing a number of good books in Latvian. In all cases I got an answer that the fact of your removal from the clergy roster of your Synod had nothing to do with Latvia. It is my wish and prayer that your problems will have a positive and blessed solution.”

The Augsburg Institute (AI) board at that time was made up of members who left the LLC in protest over what they considered its non-confessional stance. Our offer to assist the Augsburg Institute in completing the translation and publishing of works the LHF started was offered. It was unfortunate that now the LHF's confessionalism was being questioned by those who now occupied our facility. Our position was that our mission could better be accomplished by working with the church rather than outside that church structure. Cooperation with AI was pledged, and there was at least a harmonious relationship.

I was accompanied on this trip by Mr. Lloyd Coppenger, executive director of Lutheran Braille Workers. Contacts were made with blind individuals and institutions. As a result, the Braille Bible became a book highly desired in every country visited.

May 10 – Sri Lanka

On this date correspondence began with Rev. John Temple, missionary to Sri Lanka. Rev. Temple writes, “I am contacting you today to inform you that progress is being made on setting up a translation program for getting the *Book of Concord* into Sinhala. This is the majority language of this country. There are 18.3 million people here and at least 70 percent can read Sinhala. The literacy rate is high (over 85 percent), and the Sinhalese make up nearly 80 percent of the population. I am in the process of having Rev. Ranjith Fernando compile data on the cost of translating and printing of the full *Book of Concord* in five stages over three years. I really believe that the future of the Christian faith and especially Lutheranism is found in having literature in the world in as many languages as possible.”

Rev. Fernando became an active participant in the project and said, “Sinhalese books on Lutheranism are badly needed. The Christians in Sri Lanka are fed up with liberalism as well as Pentecostalism. But there is no alternative. I have very strongly suggested to Rev. Temple that the time has come to make Lutheranism a catalyst to bring back the Christian church in Sri Lanka to the very roots of the Reformation. Therefore, I have decided to give my full cooperation to Rev. Temple, who during his ministry in Sri Lanka has studied well the present situation of the deteriorating church. If we miss this great opportunity of presenting a third force as a catalyst, I do not think we will ever get another chance. The time is fully ripe in Sri Lanka for the Lutheran church to make a lasting impact for the glory of God. I hope and pray the LCMS and the LHF will take up this challenge coming from Sri Lanka.”

My response was that Rev. Fernando was very persuasive, and we have heard his challenge. I told him I would be sharing portions of his letter with our donors and with our board. I would hope that the *Book of Concord* is just the beginning of works published.

Rev. Temple accepted a Call to the Village Lutheran Church, Ladue, Missouri, in November 1998, and plans were set in motion to be sure that work continued on the *Book of Concord*. Rev. Rudge Pereira, chaplain of the seamen of Columbo Harbor, of whom you will read more later, was placed in a supervisory capacity, and Rev. Ranjith Fernando continued his role as chief translator for the project. At this same time, Ranjith announced that the Augsburg Confession was ready for the press.

Rev. Dr. Wilfred Karsten was a regular visitor to Sri Lanka to conduct annual doctrinal seminars. He also became our courier to get books on the life of Luther delivered so that Sri Lankans would be able to understand what actually happened during the Reformation. Rev. Fernando indicated

that it is better to write a suitable book on the life and ministry of Martin Luther together, giving a history of the Reformation. The Sri Lankans, having a very heavy influence of ecumenism and Roman Catholicism, consider Martin Luther a traitor and the Reformation a rebellion. The next millennium is ours, as the people are frustrated over liberalism, ecumenism, and Pentecostalism. We must give the church the doctrinal foundation for the Christian life and carry on the works of the Reformation. Our publications in Sri Lanka will definitely bear fruit to the glory of God.

Ranjith wrote on September 28, 1999, "We praise God and want to inform you that the Sinhalese *Augsburg Confession* is finally out after many birth pangs. Now we move to complete our work on *The Smalcald Articles* and *The Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope*. A transition from a secretary transcribing the translator's work to a computer resulted in a more efficient and less expensive translation process. On January 2, Rev. Fernando gave full-time effort to LHF translation work, anticipating that upon completion of the *Book of Concord*, work would begin on J. T. Mueller's *Christian Dogmatics*.

Concord and Discord

The Sinhalese *Book of Concord* was completed in March in time to be displayed at the LCMS Convention in St. Louis, July 2004. During the convention, a luncheon meeting was held with the president of the Lanka Lutheran Church, Rev. Michael Sivalingham. Dr. Wallace Schulz and Rev. Ted NaThalang also participated in the meeting. Word had been received that Rev. Sivalingham was disappointed that another Lutheran church body was being developed in Sri Lanka with Rev. Fernando and with help from LHF through Rev. John Fehrmann. When we presented a copy of the *Book of Concord* to Rev. Sivalingham, he claimed it was the first time he had seen it. He provided the background of his church with 46 congregations and 3,326 members and a partner church of the LCMS. The early mission work in the country was done by LCMS missionary, Rev. James Fergin. Rev. Sivalingham received his theological training at the seminary of the India Evangelical Lutheran Church. It is another case where a partner church is a member of the Lutheran World Federation, although Rev. Sivalingham claimed they received no support from them.

Rev. Sivalingham was especially upset that 12 men had been confirmed through the Lutheran Church of the Triune God, Brooklyn Center, Minnesota. Upon the establishment of the Sri Lanka Lutheran Church, their membership was transferred and nine of them ordained, after some special theological courses taught by Rev. John Fehrmann, Rev. Andrew Simcak

of Houston, Texas, and Rev. Paul Anderson of Baton Rouge, Louisiana. According to Sivalingham, the law of the land indicated that there could be only one church body per denomination, and that a new Lutheran church would be detrimental to all bodies.

On August 4, 2004, LHF hosted a meeting with the LCMS World Mission at the LHF headquarters. Rev. Bob Roegner, World Mission executive director, and Rev. Dave Birner and Rev. Don Mattson, World Mission staff, met to discuss the Sri Lanka situation that we were trying to solve. They were pleased that we consulted with them on the problem and that they were receiving our intent to resolve the issues.

Tsunami

As the storms of discord were building on our shores relative to the work being carried out in Sri Lanka, another more powerful storm developed on the shores of Sri Lanka. On December 27, 2004, we received the following message from Rev. Rudge Pereira relative to the tsunami that occurred in December. “With much regret I wish to inform you that the president of the Gampha Lutheran Church, Rev. Ranjith Fernando and his wife, Darshini, were on the train to Galle on the day of the tsunami. This train was swept from the track by the powerful wave, and both were drowned in the tragedy. Rev. Ranjith’s body has been recovered but not his wife’s. Three compartments of the train on which the Fernandos were riding have not yet been recovered.”

It was in this manner that God in His wisdom chose to redirect our focus, as the leadership of the church was decimated. As we attempted to sort out the future direction for the church, power struggles erupted. We determined that things would be put on hold until we had an opportunity to personally visit, assess the situation, and determine our future activity. Bank accounts with Ranjith’s name could only be accessed after a death certificate was presented. Family members demanded they receive half of the amount in the account before the death certificate would be released.

After concerted effort through our printer and Rev. Rudge Pereira, we were able to confirm that our books did not suffer damage during the tsunami. We then set out to try and bring reconciliation between the two Lutheran groups, in the hopes that they might join together. Rev. Herb Hoefer and Rev. Willie Karsten agreed to assist in whatever way they could. Meanwhile, relief efforts were taking place. With all the available funds being funneled for the purpose, it was again a case where graft and greed would raise its ugly head in the midst of tragedy.

Plans were made to visit India and Sri Lanka from June 2-9, 2005. When my plans for a visit became known, there was a flurry of activity on the

part of various individuals to organize my schedule. By the time I left, I was receiving threatening messages from Rev. Srilal Larimararatma about my failure to recognize the true leaders of the Lutheran Church in Sri Lanka. It was these messages that led to a limited publishing of a travel schedule, except to Rev. Periera and Pres. Sivalingham.

One of the messages received came from a Rev. James Shanthakumar Gnanapragasam, who informed me that I should not be working with Rev. Rajah Fernando. He stated, "If you are going to function with these groups, you will be in big trouble. Please cooperate with us. We are the National Synod of the Lutheran Church in Sri Lanka Trust. We have the government registration with the above name and the bank account." Were we to conclude that there were now three Lutheran bodies in Sri Lanka? It was becoming more and more obvious that special discernment would be necessary to sort through the contending parties.

I arrived for our meeting on June 7, and there were six participants. Since it was my first visit, I spent some time reviewing the history of the LHF. The men present were pastors who all had at least 25 years of experience, but mostly in other denominations before becoming Lutheran. They explained that even though the LLC had been in existence for many years, they did nothing in comparison to what the SLLC had done in a relatively short period of time. It would be good for the two groups to work together, but the men claimed their vision was too broad for them to think about joining the Lanka Lutheran Church.

They received stipends from LHF, but it was not used for personal use. They used it to build church structures, sometimes also taking loans. They said, "Our electricity had been disconnected because bills were not paid." In some cases, the wives jewelry was put up for collateral. They further reported on their plight after the tsunami, stating that help was promised but nothing had happened. "If you abandon us we are in difficulty. We don't even have money for food in some cases, but work is still being done. We live in a Buddhist environment. There were temples all around and some Buddhists have come and broken up our churches."

The men complained that the people in the U.S. are only interested in the people in the hill country, who received \$50,000 in relief funds from LCMS but no commitment to SLLC. I was presented with a disc and actual pictures of the tsunami. I'm not sure most people could take the graphic scenes. There were bodies scattered about and unbelievable devastation that could not be published. Yet, at the time, I wondered if we got the real flavor of this disaster. There was a picture of the train on which Ranjith was killed. The train was in the background and the many bodies in the foreground.

I was told the story of a child that two men rescued, and when they saw the gold chain the child was wearing, they ripped off the chain and threw the child back in the water to drown. This act would never have been known, but someone was videotaping. It was caught on video and the persons apprehended. Talk about how sin and corruption lay hold of the heart, and how deep it is, and the even deeper need to bring the Gospel to a sin-sick world.

I asked Rudge about notifying President Michael. I mentioned that I had written to him that I was available on this date and would be willing to meet here or wherever he designated. He never responded. Rudge said that is the way he is, and then he will complain over being disregarded. Rudge taught him Greek and the president is aware of Rudge's superior knowledge. Like too many leaders of the church in places like Kenya, Sri Lanka and India, people with knowledge are seen as a threat to their leadership.

Since there was no study going on among the group, I established a "Third Tuesday Study Group" with Rudge as the leader and Raja in charge of the agenda. The agenda would be a study of the *Book of Concord* in the morning and sermon study in the afternoon. The assignment would be to study the pericope for two Sundays after the meeting. Each quarter, one of them would submit their sermon to Rudge for translation and sent to me and Dr. Simojoki for review. They were asked to publicize this study group and get LLC clergy to participate if interested. From time to time we would send a guest lecturer and on those occasions meet for two days.

Why establish this study program? Because there were reports that the pastors were heavily influenced by charismatics and tended to that persuasion. We had to have some built-in provision to test their theology. This also included unannounced visits to their church services by a designated visitor. It also would test their level of Lutheran commitment. On our part we made no promises of any support and explained to them that because of the way the Sri Lanka mission was handled in the past, the LHF board had taken a stricter route in terms of how we provide unbudgeted funds. I indicated that there would be no stipends, and that I would be more inclined to provide travel and food expenses for their Tuesday meetings. I told them I would be monitoring the attendance at the meetings very carefully, and this would have much to say about how we would help in the future.

I did meet with President Sivalingham prior to departing Sri Lanka. I asked him to name two translators from his church body who could work with the Raja group.

When I returned from the trip, I laid out a six-step program to be

followed as a way to ascertain the viability of our continued work in Sri Lanka. The “Third Tuesday Study Group” began with some enthusiasm and quickly faltered. In general, there was a vacuum in terms of leadership and we took the position that we would not function in Sri Lanka until leadership was established among the Lutherans.

As time went on we discovered just how corruption prevails in this country. Today Rudge is in a prolonged battle with the courts trying to protect his home, a property that has been in the family for hundreds of years and is a very valuable asset. It seems an attempt was being made by some mafia-type group to get the property by whatever means they can. This included harassing the Rudge family, camping out in their front yard, chaining a gate, and shouting insults. For three years, court times have been established. Every time there is a postponement, and Rudge and his family have to do whatever they can to retain their living status. It is a sad scenario that has had coverage by the press. His only request has been for our prayers that this matter be finally settled. Here was the family’s report dated July 4, 2011:

Dear friends in Christ,

Here we are again, How are you? Today we are completing 3 years of misery and harassment this man broke our front gate on the 4th Of July 2008 and has taken away 3 years of our lives too. It is hard to believe that these things are happening in our small country, but it is TRUE. We ask all of you for your prayers (only).THANK YOU. The court cases are going well. We leave everything in the hands of the Lord. He is our strength and everything.

God bless you all

Take care,

Rudge, Maureen, Kirk & Berk

May 19 – *Storage and Personnel Problems*

One of the challenges of working on a mission field is that we have to take responsibility for workers, their character, their honesty and their working relationships. Sometimes a breakdown in one of these areas necessitates the release of a worker. We have had several instances in which retaliation has resulted in an attempt to sabotage the published books by refusing to give us access to a storage facility.

When serious accusations were brought against a worker by LCMS mission personnel, we were led to terminate that worker. In those circumstances the worker may lash out and say and do things that might be later regretted. One has to have broad shoulders to take the uncomplimentary and abusive

remarks while holding your tongue in the hopes that one day the feeling might be different. The threats of lawsuits were raised while access to storage areas was refused. Who gave thought to the idea that the office in the U.S. should have keys for facilities overseas? This would have suggested a lack of trust. Once tempers cooled, access to the books was gained. Working with LCMS mission personnel, we arranged to have our books moved to St. Michael's Lutheran Church where the mission personnel were housed. Rev. Morris Olson arranged storage space at St. Michael for a modest monthly storage cost. Tatyana Kuznetsova became our distribution agent for the St. Petersburg area, and Rev. Olson directed the distribution for those who stopped by the LCMS offices.

Another such event happened with our storage area in Moscow. Gennadij Dubrovin demonstrated mental problems and had to be dismissed when he explained that God had given the books to him. Thanks to Mr. Konstantin Komarov's acquaintance with Russian ways, he was able to deal with police who had been called with the charge that we were trespassing. When he suspected that the police were "on the take" from Gennadij, he suggested that they go to the police station and rectify the situation. The police quickly changed their position and told Gennadij to turn over the keys and leave. Of course, there were a number of threats and accusations prior to this confrontation.

The question of book storage is an ever-present challenge in our work that is being somewhat relieved by becoming more technologically oriented. Putting books on PDF files or other electronic forms means that fewer books have to be printed. Early on we were printing 10,000 books on a run, and we have a fairly good arrangement with Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF), who kept an accurate account of all books and even did our shipping for us. When economic conditions caused our lease to be increased every year and when MAF finally lost the warehouse, we moved our storage outside Moscow where rates were cheaper. We still had an ample supply of books in storage in Novosibirsk and Ekaterinburg. Because custom problems were less of a burden in Ekaterinburg, many of our books and the *Good News* magazines were shipped there. We then found our rates gradually rising to unacceptable heights.

A solution has been found for all of this and a plan is being implemented, whereby our most expensive storage location is being closed and books moved to various locations in St. Petersburg, where a more active distribution plan is in place. One wonders if we have finally found an answer to the ongoing dilemma of book storage and distribution.

May 27 – LHF was directed to an open mission field in Madagascar.

Rev. David Somers, Pointe Claire, Quebec, Canada, called to ask about our possible interest in Madagascar mission opportunities. We learned that it is a country of 15 million, with French as the official language and Malagasy as a second language. Even more interesting was the information that they have had little or no Lutheran literature in the last 25 years, and yet it was one of the fastest Lutheran areas of the world. In one year the church posted a gain of 300,000. We immediately committed ourselves to the publishing of the *Augsburg Confession*.

Madagascar Connection

On April 18, I attended the Annual Association of Confessional Lutherans meeting in Chicago and met Charlie Ravelonjato, a student from the Fort Wayne seminary, whose native land is Madagascar and whose interest is translating *Luther's Small Catechism*. This led to his visit to the LHF headquarters to further discuss translation projects and translation personnel. As oftentimes happens, first connections took a while to develop and one wondered if anything would transpire. In this case it took about five years to solidify the work. This was done after Rev. John Fehrman had a desire to visit Madagascar, to connect with Rev. Ravelonjato after meeting up with him in Haiti. Rev. Fehrman and Dr. Dan Gard of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, were traveling to Port au Prince to return to the U.S., when four men attacked them and took their belongings and vehicle. It was Rev. Ravelonjato who came to their rescue. He was in Haiti at the time serving his vicarage.

The Malagasy church is in a peculiar situation. Christianity came to Madagascar in the mid 1800s with the London Missionary Society. Lutheranism started with Norwegian mission societies. Membership is some 3.2 million. Because of the money, strings or connections with LWF are hard to cut, just as in other LWF-controlled churches. Some pastors serve 15 congregations.

There are six regional seminaries in Madagascar, more like Bible colleges with a low level of course work, although Greek is taught. Graduate seminaries have an M. Div. level. Dr. William Weinrich, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, was a guest professor at one time and the 40 percent rule applied. There had to be 40 percent women enrolled in order to maintain support from LWF.

June 14-22 – Rev. Andrew sits at the feet of master teacher, Dr. Anssi Simojoki, Nairobi, to study the *Augsburg Confession*.

July 1 – Sweden – Contact was made with Rev. Lars Larson and Mr. Martin

Wihlborg, board members of the Nordic East Mission (Nordisk Ostmission) of Gothenburg, Sweden. They indicated that they have a committee known as Friends of Latvia and were wondering how we could do some joint publishing ventures to benefit the Latvian Lutheran Church. They were interested in our relationship with the Augsburg Institute after they severed their relationship with LHF. I explained that we no longer supported their efforts but maintained a cordial relationship, even though we had differing views about working with the Latvian Lutheran Church.

In order to discuss more fully a possible joint venture, I made a trip to Gothenburg to meet with the group and to establish support for Latvian publishing. Over the years, several projects were funded by the Gothenburg Friends of Latvia. After our meeting there was much correspondence to satisfy their desire to make sure the books and materials we were publishing were confessional in nature. In one message, Mr. Wihlborg spoke to this topic: “I trust you and your organization, so I’m confident the authors of your published works are truly Lutheran. Sometimes I am perhaps too suspicious. Here in Sweden we have a lot of persons calling themselves Lutheran who do not know anything at all about the Lutheran theology.”

After receiving one of the grants, I sent a message to Mr. Wihlborg thanking them for permitting us to join in this venture for the strengthening of the Latvian Lutheran Church. We have come to know how important the confessional voice is in Latvia and that it must be motivated by the Gospel and not by laws and decrees, neither should it demand complete conformity to the expression that is uniquely ours. I believe we need to hold to the Confessions but give some latitude to a church that is regrouping. If we can continue to hold friendly dialog with the bishop, it will be for the good of the future church.

Our association with them led us to an association with other small confessional groups in the Scandinavian countries and the beginning of annual confessional conferences meant to uphold and promote the Lutheran Confessions. Rev. Frederik Sidenvall would become a key player in these conferences that generally had participation from the seminaries and various confessional groups around the world. Many of the conferences were held in Klaipeda, Lithuania. For a time LHF assisted in publishing “Kyrka & Folk,” a magazine for confessional Lutherans edited by Rev. Sidenvall.

July 26 – LHF received a letter of thanks from Sergey Glushkov, stating: “The group in Ekaterinburg and I personally would like to thank you for preparing and conducting the theological seminars in Ekaterinburg and Novosibirsk. Please be assured that your time, knowledge, and finances were not spent in vain but were beneficial for each and every one of the students

and for our Christian fellowship as a whole. We would like to give our special thanks to Rev. Scott Murray, Dr. Arthur Just, Dr. Ronald Feuerhahn, and Rev. Timothy Quill for the remarkable lectures given at the seminars.” The importance of these seminars was of an enormous value for the emergence of Lutheranism in Siberia and other places. LHF was quite active in these until Rev. Quill became director of international programs for CTSFW. More recently we have concentrated on the seminars connected with the release of our books and *Good News* magazine.

July 30 – Books, Books and Books

Here is just one experience with the typical request for books to establish a library for the seminary that LCMS World Mission helped establish in Riga, Latvia. The LHF had already established a significant library as part of our office complex in Riga, after which the idea of establishing a seminary for the Latvian Lutheran Church became a reality. Our early presence in Riga was at a time when theological education was offered by a theological faculty at the Riga University. Since the church did not have total control of that faculty and found it to be left-leaning, we encouraged Bishop Vanags to consider a church-operated seminary.

This eventually became a reality with help from the Fort Wayne seminary and the LCMS. A rundown building owned by the church across the street from the main downtown Lutheran church was renovated through a Schwan grant. The seminary required a library, and the LHF became actively involved in helping to build an impressive library. Congregations became involved in collecting books, and widows of pastors also contributed.

Mrs. Dalora Knutson, Bella Vista, Arizona, and Mrs. Ralph Unger were two widows who helped almost at the same above date. It would often happen that books, vestments, and paraments were offered as special gifts. Mrs. Knutson wrote, “My beloved husband passed away April 13 this year. I miss him terribly after working side by side in God’s Kingdom for our 52 years of married life. My comfort is the reunion we will have in heaven someday. His passing was special. Sunday morning he woke me up and said he would like to make breakfast for us. It was not easy for him to do so because he has been confined to a wheelchair since 1993. He got a staph infection in the area where he had a hip replaced, and doctors had to remove part of the pelvis and a portion of the femur. On the morning of April 13, he went to church for Bible class, took an active part in the discussion and then went upstairs for the service. He shook hands with the greeters and chatted with them briefly. I pushed him no more than 3-4 feet, and he raised his hands as if he were taking hold of another hand, smiled and collapsed in his wheelchair. He died immediately in the narthex before the service

began. What a precious way for someone who had served his Savior for 48 years to go to his eternal rest. I'm writing in response to an article I saw in your newsletter about the need for books. Could Evan's theological books be used to help establish a library overseas or made available to a pastor somewhere?"

It was in this manner that the Lord worked, enabling us to not only help build the library in Riga but also the seminary in Novosibirsk, Siberia, for the Siberian Lutheran Church, and in Yambio, Sudan, for the seminary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sudan. No matter where the church exists, there is a cry for needed books.

September 10 – On this date Andrew responded to a question we posed about an update on the ELCS as it is presently constituted. Herewith is some of the early history of the church body LHF helped to organize with the sending of five catechisms and one *Book of Concord*.

"Brother in the Lord, I am writing once again to express my sincere gratitude to you and LHF for all the support given to ELCS and above all to its people who are living in a country of conflict and struggle. This will never go out of our records of establishing and building our church, particularly when we think of how we got the first hymn book printed. Secondly, to share with you a bit deeply our concerns, expectations, and feeling as to how our church should exist and root itself among the Sudanese people. As a growing church, all God's loving people expect ELCS to succeed, progress, prosper, expand, and teach Lutheran confessions in Sudan. Today even Christians from other denominations do wish us success in Khartoum and Sudan in general, that God should help us come in the midst of Islamic threats and its vigorous campaign against Christianity in Sudan.

"ELCS started in Sudan, a country which is the largest in Africa and famous for its religious conflict between Muslims and Christians. This vast country is divided into two geographic and political parts, namely, North and South. North is predominantly Muslim-Arab, while the South is mostly Christian-African. In reality, either of the two has predominantly faithful believers, only that whoever falls into each geographical zone is classified with the religion of the area. South Sudan, from the years before the colonialists could invade and rule, has been undeveloped. Its people are not well educated, its resources not utilized, and its political aspirations remain to be the cause of conflict between North and South.

"Today all over the Arab world, South Sudan is named the gate to Islamizing Africa, because it borders with four African countries. In order for the South Sudanese people to realize their political aspirations, it is expected and prayed that the South gets its independence and be a free country from

Arab-Muslim pressure or rule. This will help the majority of the southerners to live in their culture and religious freedom, not subjected to Arabization and Islamization.

“When the idea of starting ELCS came into people’s minds, we thought of southern Sudan as the home of ELCS. This remains to be so in our plan. Our existence in the North today is quite temporary, waiting for peace to come to southern Sudan. At the same time, we did not have enough information which could lead to establishing a strong Lutheran Church in Sudan. Thanks to those who helped us from the very beginning. Among them were Dr. Robert Rahn, Dr. Anssi Simojoki and Dr. Reijo Arkkila. As we were moving to build congregations and increase the number of Christians, we began to realize the difference between confessional and liberal Lutheranism.”

Noting the Background of Rev. Andrew Mbugo Elisa

Being inserted into this report from Andrew is the author’s recollection of Andrew’s background. Rev. Elisa came from an Anglican family. He has a brother who is an Anglican priest. I had the privilege of visiting the home where he grew up, some 40 miles from Yambio in South Sudan. It was a large parcel of land, which Andrew was just beginning to develop as a pineapple plantation just before his death. I had the privilege of planting some of the pineapple that was to become an income producing enterprise for the church. He also grew some ground nuts, banana trees, and other crops. I can say that I enjoyed a sampling of the rich flavor of the pineapple grown there during one of my later visits to the farm.

As a teenager, Andrew was caught in the war that was waging in the region. He escaped his village with only the clothes he could carry while running to elude the army. He ended up in one of the displacement camps around Khartoum in the North, and eventually made his way back to the South. Being graced by God with great leadership ability, it was no surprise to learn that he advanced in the ranks of the Anglican Church, and at one point held a high office in the World Council of Churches, working in a regional public relations position. Andrew shared with me on one occasion that it was during his service in the WCC that he began searching for a new religion, as he came to the conclusion that he would never belong to any church that was affiliated with the WCC. He had seen the corruption and politics involved and it was offensive to him. The lecture of Dr. Robert Preus in Nairobi, Kenya, was the spark that interested him in the kind of Lutheranism Dr. Preus embraced. The rest, as they say, is history.

Rev. Elisa wrote to the author, “Though you used to indicate the issue of true confessions in some of your correspondence since 1995, I did not understand what it meant until I came to Dr. Simojoki and we studied together the *Augsburg Confession* and catechism. The ELCS, which is exactly like a small child, ought to be brought up in a way it can grow and still be a good confessional church. The teachings, liturgy, preaching, singing, and all other church activities should take a confessional trend, to guarantee the future of ELCS in Sudan, and, above all, differentiate it from other denominations.

“Having realized the dangers of liberal Lutheranism, particularly for a young church surviving right now among Muslims, we are turning our eyes, trying to look for a place where we can get confessional teachings. This will help ELCS lay a strong foundation building its Christian membership with people who either in the church, outside the church, in a different country, can still proclaim Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord – people who will put God’s Word in its right place, not to deviate from Biblical teachings in the interest of other communities.

“In looking further to the future of ELCS, we do expect to develop the church in Sudan using available resources good for extending development work among the needy. As mentioned in several of my letters, the congregations in Khartoum are composed of displaced persons, who themselves depend on others for food, and that is why the ELCS cannot rely on them for support. The training of pastors and catechists stands to be very urgent for Sudan. We ask you to assist in seeking funds to pay for a course for me overseas and a catechist who can study at Matongo, Kenya.

“ELCS Khartoum congregation has three preachers, and there are three young men being trained in the same line. The Center in Jebel Aulia is taken care of by the same people, although one person is already being prepared for Jebel Aulia center. The size of ELCS in Khartoum has increased. We have registration forms which have been filled out by many Christians, and yet many Christians feel that they want to first study the ELCS before deciding to fill out the form. But they are full active members in the church and some are involved on committees. Right now the membership is at 371. Jebel Aulia has 72 people, but no registration has started yet among them until we see them for six months. Juba congregation has a total number of 310 people who are committed to the building of the church in Juba.”

September 29 – A report is sent to Andrew that LHF contacted President Barry and Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana, regarding the gathering of information to enable enrollment at the seminary. In the request for help in supporting Andrew, he also asked about forming an official partnership with LHF or LCMS. We responded by saying we would

be more than happy to establish a partnership, but it should be a partnership with the LCMS. It was at this time we picked up on our advice we gave Andrew when he asked for the second grant from LHF. At the time of his second grant request, we told him that we were now going to make our own request. Our request would be that he come to America for some theological training at the Fort Wayne seminary.

October 7 – This was my first trip back into Russia after our disgruntled worker attempted to have me banned from travel in Russia. His contact with the immigration department proved futile as we encountered no difficulty. On this occasion we also named Tatyana Kuznetsova as branch director. We provided funds so she could take a course to improve her English.

October 9 – A property we were interested in purchasing in Clinton Township, Michigan, was taken off the market, and the search would continue for property or a building to serve as an LHF office. On this date we were flying deep into Russia, some 13 hours removed from Detroit. Our fellow traveler on this trip, Rev. James Bauer, found the half-full plane interesting. We took off with half the overhead compartments still open. Everyone should have had the experience of flying Aeroflot during those early years. We were picked up at the Novosibirsk airport by Pavel Butakov's father. The long drive back into the city was slow and boring during the nighttime hours.

November 18 – In doing some taping for a new video I was planning to make, I had trouble catching up with Rev. Lytkin and ended up meeting with him at the airport when he returned from a trip to Estonia. It turned out that the recording was not useable because of background noise, so I wrote out the text and asked for it to be recorded again. It was an interesting segment that gave a picture of Siberian Lutheranism. This was the comment made by Lytkin: "Maybe you know that there are many small German and Polish Lutheran congregations in Siberia. But when I meet people in the villages, I usually feel guilty because we are living much better here in Novosibirsk. We have many good books. We have Bibles, and the people they have nothing. The life of the Polish Lutherans in Siberia was terrible. About half of these people were killed by the Communists because of their faith. They described to me, for example, how in the final years special people were going around to houses of believers every day and looking in the windows to see what the believers were doing inside. If they saw that they prayed or read the Bible, the next day a special car would come to take them to the camp. It was very terrible. But they kept their faith, their Lutheran faith. The last time a pastor visited the village was in 1935. People in the congregations lived without Holy Communion for 60 years – imagine for 60 years! I met a

woman about 60 years of age. She never received Holy Communion. But her mother described what Holy Communion is. And when she said this, she also said all the Words of Institution from memory. She exclaimed to me, 'I have seen the pastor, I have received the Holy Communion, and now I can die in peace.' " It's hard to envision this when we debate the question on the frequency of the Lord's Supper.

November 24 – The LHF basement/den offices move from the Sterling Heights Rahn residence to leased quarters in Clinton Township, Michigan, on Garfield at Moravian.

December 4 – Mr. John Wittenmyer, board member and legal counsel for LHF, reports on the ongoing saga of obtaining Recognized Service Organization (RSO) status with the synod, which required a letter of endorsement from the Michigan district president's office. The district president had written the Board for Mission Services that "he felt it was not in the best interest of the LCMS to grant RSO status to LHF." Mr. Wittenmyer indicated that when he called the former district president to discuss the matter, he could not obtain a specific reason why a letter of endorsement could not be provided. The board suggested that we contact WELS and ELS to obtain some type of recognized status.

Rev. Dan Preus submits a proposal to the LHF board that LHF and Luther Academy hire a shared executive who would serve as director of Luther Academy and carry out work for LHF. The request was denied because of the growth of LHF and the need for additional full-time help.

December 8 – Pavel Butakov reports on the completion of the first seminary building in Novosibirsk and moving students into the building. Pavel had been given permission from LHF to serve as the construction manager for the building project. He observed, "This was the best reward for me to see the results of my nine months of work. This building had really become my child, and the last three months were the most difficult. Now I'm proud of my baby. It turned out to be strong and healthy, and rather tall and big, too."

December 12 – A letter was received from Andrew indicating he had been hospitalized for 26 days in three different hospitals without doctors finding out what specifically ailed him.

December 15 – Rev. Paul Muench joined the LCMS mission staff as a missionary in St. Petersburg, Russia, at a time when LHF celebrated a quiet fifth anniversary. Paul Muench referred to our upcoming visit and indicated a desire to meet "and discuss the future directions that our onsite people might take with translation, and how that can blend with what LHF is doing." In our meeting I asked what plans the Mission Board had for translating materials.

We found it a little ironic that the Mission Board had called Don Pock from LBT to set up a translation team and work with LCMS for five years. When Pock was hired, I asked the Russia secretary why this was done. The question of concern was why \$100,000 would be spent in duplicating what LHF had been doing for five years. The question was why they didn't just give us an extra \$1,000 and ask us to add another translator to help meet their needs? Paul Muench demonstrated a desire to work with LHF as his service on the field developed. This may have been evidence of an uncooperative position that, at the time, was held by certain individuals in the mission department. In one public meeting, the mission executive was asked about the work of the LHF. The reported response was, "We are going to bury the LHF." Was my removal from the synod roster at this time part of the desired fulfillment of that decree? As a new organization we had to continue to demonstrate that we existed to help, not hinder, the church's mission.

December 24 – A message came from Janis Dimza, commercial director of Augsburg Institute, that summed up a year of challenges and difficulties. He wrote, "The year 1997 will soon end. For us in Augsburg Institute, it was a time when we tried to settle things which blew up at the end of 1996. Actually it was a new beginning, when a new confessional Lutheran movement started. At the beginning of 1997 no one thought much about six independent Lutheran congregations, two of which tried to register with the state. Augsburg Institute supports those congregations with newspapers, journals, and books, but not only them, but also all the others who might be interested in true Lutheran belief. We see in Latvia no other clear voice who feeds those people with the Word of God according to the Lutheran Confessions. Maybe in the future something will change. Our task is not to guess that, but to work diligently spreading the message God has put into our mouths. Thanks for your prayers, good wishes to us, and for the cooperation in the work of our Lord."

In spite of our differing view on the LLC, the LHF continued to support their publishing efforts as well as our own under a new Latvian structure and board. We especially established a joint effort in completing the Latvian *Book of Concord* project.

1998

January 7 – Jeff Rahn, director of operations, sent this message to Andris Smilgdrivs and Konstantin Komarov, outlining procedures for handling all accounting issues, "Thanks again for all of the time and effort taken to carefully document and report all of the expense activity. It is a

very necessary and important detail that we cannot take lightly. It is very important for us to be able to show clearly that we are making use of the highest stewardship principles in all that we do. Andris, please send the registration documents and the signed receipts when you have them ready.”

The above paragraph demonstrates the meticulousness with which LHF handles the financial concerns of accounts in many offices throughout the world. Each year at audit time we have heard a very familiar refrain from auditors in small to larger firms. Because of the thoroughness of the records, there were no major discrepancies to report. They also expressed the sentiment that they wished all their clients were as thorough and had the kind of positive cash-flow picture that LHF demonstrated. In order to retain that status, the LHF has a very active finance committee holding monthly meetings to which Jeff gives the same kind of thorough financial report. Jeff’s work is of an unheralded magnitude, and the LHF as an organization owes him a great debt of gratitude for 20 years of excellence in fund management. We are pleased to have auditors stand behind our declaration of confidence.

February 16 – Jeff Rahn, in keeping with efforts to be on the cutting edge of international finance, obtained a registration number from the U.S. Treasury Department that allowed LHF to send funds to Sudan during a time when the U.S. had sanctions against Sudan. Test funds of \$1,000 were sent on February 23 with Andrew confirming receipt of the funds on March 3, and an official account was opened in Citibank of Khartoum. This avenue of fund transfer was subsequently utilized by the synod and other Lutheran agencies.

February 28 – Rev. Andrew sent an application for admission to Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne and began preliminary enrollment discussions with Rev. Scott Stiegemeyer.

March 9 – LHF granted \$15,000 to ELCS to assist in leasing a facility for church offices and worship center.

March 12 – *France*

“Thanks for your letter. LHF is indeed performing a very important job in translating and publishing sound Lutheran literature for pastoral training and Christian education around the world. This is especially important for Francophone countries, because very little material is available in French that can be used by Lutherans, especially if they earnestly desire to be faithful to the confessions of their church,” stated Dr. Wilbert Kreiss, president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of France and Belgium. Dr. Kreiss is a solid theologian and prolific author. It has been our purpose to publish some of his writings, including a very thorough *Christian Dogmatics* volume.

It was only in May of 2011 that Rev. Fandrey stopped in France to meet with him and discuss the utilization of the many writings he has done over almost 50 years of ministry, some of his years spent in the employ of the LCMS.

The French work had us also connected with Rev. David Somers, Pointe Claire, Quebec. One of our projects was to do a French voice-over on a video by Dr. Arthur Just, Fort Wayne seminary faculty member. The twelve-part series was on the subject of Lutheran liturgy and hymnody and was produced for approximately \$25,000.

April 18-May 12 – This trip report was written as I traveled by train from Ekaterinburg to Novosibirsk, Siberia, the last leg of a three-week trip to various areas where we have expanded our translation, publishing, and distribution work. A highlight of the trip occurred in Moscow. After nearly six months of investigation and paperwork, we met with Moscow lawyers and affixed signatures to documents that gave the LHF recognition as an official organization in Russia under the title “The Lutheran Heritage Foundation of Culture and Education.” Coinciding with our registration was the establishment of the LHF Russian distribution network through the opening of a new central distribution office in Moscow and satellite distribution center offices in Ekaterinburg and Novosibirsk, Siberia. Our distribution operation in St. Petersburg, under the direction of Tatyana Kuznetsova, will continue to operate out of St. Michael’s Lutheran Church, where the LCMS World Mission and LLL are also located. The Russian distribution network was to operate under the direction of Mr. Gennadij Dubrovin in Moscow.

At this time facilities were also leased in Ekaterinburg under the direction of Rev. Sergey Glushkov. The facilities would serve as an apartment, office, living quarters for the Glushkov family. It also had a combination guest room/lecture hall. These quarters would allow Sergey to organize home Bible study groups.

At this time we also met with Rev. Pavel Bock, supervising 40 independent churches with Pentecostal/Baptist leanings. He utilized every book LHF published. He invited us to enter a joint venture to open a Bible school in the educational facility he was building. We declined the offer because we know how time and personnel changes can quickly alter the landscape.

This trip included a stop in Novosibirsk and an opportunity to visit our new distribution center under the direction of Mr. Pavel Butakov. We also visited the seminary with Alexey Strelstov, president, giving us a tour of the completed building. We had released Mr. Butakov to serve as construction manager for the building process. Mr. Butakov then took a leave of absence from his LHF position in order to attend the Fort Wayne seminary.

April 20 – Word is received that the Council of Presidents had reinstated me to the clergy roster of the LCMS after a two-year effort on the part of many, including President Al Barry, the LHF board, the council of St. John Lutheran Church in Fraser, Michigan, and finally the newly-elected president of the Michigan District, Rev. William Hoesman. My position during this two-year ordeal was to concentrate on publishing another volume and let the work speak for itself. Most finally agreed that the removal was made without proper cause. Individuals, congregations, districts, and the president of synod had lobbied for my reinstatement. One of the earlier votes by the Council of Presidents fell just one short of the three-fourths majority required for reinstatement. (The sealed record may be opened in 25 years, which will detail the full story for anyone interested.)

I wrote the following to board members when making the announcement of my reinstatement, “I can tell you that whatever the weight of the luggage I carry to Russia on Saturday, I will not be weighed down with the baggage of this injustice. It has been a long road, and finally the decision confirming the fact that justice can be served has been received. I thank God that He provided the patient endurance during this long struggle. Obviously, this weighty matter did not deter us from our efforts being carried out around the world. In spite of the attempted effort to slow us down, the Lord provided the stamina to move forward with our eyes on a larger goal.”

April 29 – My visit to Riga, Latvia, again included a visit with Rev. Roberts Feldmanis. He told me that my visits encouraged the spiritual life of the church. I told him the opposite was true; he provided a spiritual and historical point of reference for an entire church. He had been slowed down because of severe eye problems, and this was the reason given for his resignation as pastor of Mezzaparks Lutheran Church. He thought he was going blind, but the doctor had been providing some help and his vision seemed to be improving.

Feldmanis reported on a Latvian Lutheran Conference he had just attended the day before. There the reminder was given that the LWF meeting in Hong Kong had advised Vanags to get in step with the Lutheran world view, especially in regard to the ordination of women. Vanags took offense at their strong-arm tactics. Feldmanis spoke at the Latvian conference and asked attendees to remember that “we are an independent church. We have always been such, even in times of imperialism and Soviet domination. We should not let an imperialist church or social order dictate our doctrine. We should not fall for this ‘progressive socialism’ that has been part of a Swedish, English church. It is nothing more than the ‘socialist catechism’ in action. It is the old struggle of the world against the cross. No reason we have

to submit to the same rule as the Swedish Church or English parliament. It would be childish thinking if we begin to think we have to submit.” Seems to me, the elderly Feldmanis learned a great deal when he was forced to attend “Stalin university,” as he called his imprisonment in the Soviet era. It was his historic perspective that we arranged to capture by publishing his dictated Latvian church history.

March 11 – Andrew wrote to Rev. Ken Greinke, LCMS World Mission Secretary for Africa/Middle East, after we put them into contact with each other. Andrew wrote, “I came to know Rev. Dr. Simojoki in 1994 when he was the pastor of Uhuru High Way Lutheran Church, Nairobi. In the same year we began correspondence first with the late Dr. Robert Preus and later with Rev. Rahn. Thanks to almighty God, these contacts have resulted in the actual birth of the ELCS, particularly with the concern and support received from LHF and Rev. Rahn. We always ask God to give him more wisdom and talent so that the relationship between ELCS and LHF can grow further.”

March 18 – I quote from a fax sent by Rev. Elisa that points to an ongoing problem for the residents of Sudan. “We could not communicate with you because there was no electricity in our area for the past two days. I am now writing at night because for sure tomorrow there shall be no power supply during the day time. We have entered our summer time whereby we expect very limited supply of electricity around Khartoum city.” Eventually this problem was solved when LHF and LCMS World Mission combined sufficient funds to purchase a large generator that provided power for fax use and air conditioning.

April 24 – Permission was granted and funds provided for a missionary exploration trip to South Sudan for Rev. Elisa and Dr. Simojoki.

May 7 – A meeting was held at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Moscow, after visiting an orphanage with 85 children and 125 staff. Some blankets, toys and health kits were distributed for the children. It was among the cleaner institutions that we had visited. At the church we were thanked for helping with their restoration. It was interesting to see new doors on the church and then another set of doors set up inside. When I asked about it I learned that the doors that were first carved did not exactly match what the original doors looked like, and consequently “officials” informed the church they had to be redone. I took pictures of the doors and shared with people the hypocrisy of it all. First the Communists steal the building and use it for some secular purpose, and when the church wants to repair the damages done, some bureaucrat makes some ruling about preserving the original look. How bizarre is it?

Our stop in Ekaterinburg included a meeting with Rev. Pavel Bock,

an interesting pastor with Lutheranism in his background. He, however, calls himself a “non-orthodox Pentecostal.” He supervises 41 Pentecostal congregations but uses a lot of LHF books. In reviewing some of our books, he tells us that the children color the pictures in the *Good News About Jesus* booklet. This helps them to remember the story better. He has a daughter, age nine, and she has read through the Bible and has some questions. He says, “Your book *Bible Difficulties* by Arndt is already good for her and *Luther’s Commentary on Galatians* has really good explanation of the Bible text. Take me, for example. I agree with the book and it is very interesting for me to read.”

Rev. Bock said that because of the martyrdom of his grandfather he was led to become a pastor and to serve in the same place where his grandfather served.

We had a close relationship with Rev. Bock and even considered a joint building project where our LHF branch office could be located. When he was transferred to Moscow as bishop of the church, he continued to receive our books and materials.

Pavel Butakov, Novosibirsk branch manager, reluctantly brought up the subject of him attending CTSFW in the fall. He was hesitant to bring it up because he believed in keeping commitments and obligations to LHF. I told him that when it comes to seminary education and preparation for ministry, he should not even think of LHF as an obligation, as I would see this decision more important than service with LHF. This would become a rather routine development where men working on the LHF staff would end up at one of our seminaries. It was always considered a “positive loss” when this would happen!

May 28 – In a meeting with Rev. Hoesman, Michigan district president, we discussed a letter of endorsement that would enable us to once again pursue a Recognized Service Organization status. He suggested that I put a formal request for the letter of endorsement in writing.

June 5 – Rev. Rahn reports to the board that two grants totaling \$385,000 had been received and designated for an office purchase or building. The board reviewed a number of sites that were available. It was recommended that we continue our search for possibilities. The board also heard a report from Mr. Richard Hallgren in regard to preliminary investigation into starting a Lutheran credit union. Eventually the concept was dropped.

June 5 – A message from Dr. Simojoki told of a failed mission to get into South Sudan. First there was a problem with Sudan People’s Liberation Army security that blocked Andrew from entering. After permission was finally given, there were then no available seats on the flight. His intent was to visit

Azande, where the time was crucial for Lutheran church work. The Lutheran Church already had a good reputation in Sudan, and it was more desired than the various Pentecostal groups that were infiltrating to the South. They were much less welcome than the Lutherans. With firm commitment and reasonable investments, the Lutheran church could acquire land in key places for future work.

Dr. Simojoki writes, "It is possible that the grip of the government in Khartoum will hold less and less in the near future. I am convinced that the division of Sudan will take place in the future. It would mean that hundreds of thousands of Christians would return to the South from the Islamic North. If there would be no churches and ecclesiastical structures ready to receive them, a historic opportunity will be lost. Right now we are standing on a stepstone of grand Lutheran missionary future, if the existing opportunities are seized timely by the right people. It is high time to concentrate missionary efforts. It is a 'kairos' chance, indeed. Gen. Alyson Magaya, a Lutheran high government official in the Sudanese parliament, agrees with our goals and objectives. He mentioned your name 'Robert' several times with considerable warmth. You are the man who has believed and invested in their cause. I, too, must say that the time working with you has been one of the best in my entire life. My wife Marja quite often makes a happy comment about our good working relations that can be felt at home. Will it continue in the future? Our grand project in Kenya and the Sudan alone would be a Call for life."

June 8 – A letter is sent to St. Peter Lutheran Church, Macomb, Michigan, indicating our strong interest in their piece of property that had a school building on it. This property was located at the SW corner of Romeo Plank and 24 Mile Road. A meeting was later held to discuss the request and the decision was made by the St. Peter council not to sell the property.

June 8 – Our visit to Latvia involved a meeting with the top two officials in the Office of Religious Affairs, Antons Seiksts and Juris Salitis. These men thanked the LHF for publishing information on the Jehovah Witnesses, Mormons, and Eastern Religions in the "How To Respond" series of booklets. Mr. Seiksts is also a member of the Latvian Saeima (parliament), who informed us of current discussions on the final draft of laws pertaining to religious groups. He indicated that in 1990 there were only 11 types of religion in Riga, and after three years there are already 30 and "many of them are breaking our laws." Both men were atheists but gladly accepted the religious tracts and books we presented.

Each trip to Latvia has traditionally meant a personal meeting with Bishop Vanags. On this occasion Rev. Vanags was lavish in his praise of our work.

“You can’t imagine how very poor we are as a church,” he said. “We were in a very bad situation. Now it is really like a wonder to have the LHF making a very great contribution distributing the really necessary things. Now we are going to learn again the ‘real literature’ that has been lost. It has always been my strong belief that Lutheranism is not such a thing that belongs only to Lutherans. A Reformation should be started again for the whole Christian church. We need to uphold the Scripture instead of undermining it, as is being done, especially by the issue of women’s ordination. If we are going to cut Scripture and replace it, this will mark the end of Lutheranism and Lutheran conscience.”

This June trip included a Bible distribution event with members of the Ingria Lutheran Church in front of St. Peter’s Lutheran Church, where nearly 2,000 copies of the side-by-side, English/ Russian New Testament were distributed. Each Bible contained an insert that announced the time of services for all Lutheran churches in St. Petersburg.

During our visit with Vanags, we presented a check in the amount of \$5,000 that was to become seed money for starting a seminary. Vanags, who served as chairman of the LHF Latvia board prior to his election as bishop, wanted to wait and see how things played out at the Riga University and the Faculty of Theology. It was later that major funding was provided so a building near the Dome Lutheran Church could be renovated and serve as the seminary location.

June 23 – Visas

On this date Andrew requested documents so that he could process a visa to the U.S. He indicated that it could take from five to eight weeks to obtain a visa. This is readily understood from the experience we had getting a visa to enter Khartoum. It seems there was a program of “reciprocity.” If they delayed the process out of Sudan, our government would delay the process into Sudan. One had to develop some strong nerves in dealing with the Sudan embassy in New York. In the first place, they aren’t open on Fridays, it being a Muslim holiday. And it didn’t make any difference how much in advance you began the process; the visa would more than likely be delivered the day before departing, at the earliest. Our experience was to receive it the day of departure and one time the day after we were to depart. We got to know the embassy personnel by name, and as friendly as we found them, it never impacted the timely delivery of a visa.

August 7 – The bombing of American embassies in Nairobi and Dar El Salaam impacted the process of obtaining visas, since the embassy in Khartoum was closed following the bomb attack. Andrew was advised that all U.S. visas would now be processed in Cairo and that he should personally

appear in Cairo to apply. This also impacted the banking system, in that the only American bank in Sudan was now closed. This meant other routes must be established to get funds to Sudan.

September 15 – Rev. Elisa arrived in Fort Wayne after much difficulty in obtaining his proper documents and spending days in Cairo to expedite his travel. He writes, “Though I’m yet to learn what is being taught here, one thing I have discovered is the Lutheran worship.” His messages reflect that he is concerned about his family back in Khartoum and that they be taken care of in his absence. It was a concern that LHF was able to eliminate by giving the proper support in his absence. “Right now I am faced with many problems from home. Every night I am called and all sorts of problems are presented to me. My prayer is that the efforts I have exerted for the past years should not be destroyed while I am away.”

October 13-25 – This Eastern European trip involved restructuring of the LHF mission with more responsibility being given to three faithful, seasoned, veterans in LHF service. Mr. Andris Smilgdrivs, Mr. Konstantin Komarov and Rev. Slavik Horpynchuk were named as vice presidents for Latvia, Russia and Ukraine respectively.

Another highlight of the trip was the opportunity to attend the Ingrian Lutheran Church Convention in St. Petersburg. I was pleasantly surprised by the stir that was created when it was announced that copies of J.T. Mueller’s *Christian Dogmatics* was available in the Russian language.

October 15 – Mrs. Linda Leinhos was added to the LHF home office staff as administrative assistant. It was also announced on this date that Rev. John Fehrmann was being added to the staff, with his work commencing on November 1 as the director of mission advancement.

October 21 – A Reformation mailing was assembled with volunteers in Rutkowsky Hall at St. John Lutheran Church, Fraser, Michigan. The King’s Royal Order of Stuffers (KROS), as they were designated, continue to be a regular fixture for all LHF mailings. Made up mostly of St. John members in the early going, the group expanded to include representation of other Lutheran churches in the area. This group has been recruited primarily through the efforts of Donna Rahn and now numbers some 100 members. We were pleased to designate a space in the building as KROS Hall, and the task has become easier with all activities taking place in our World Mission Center. The mailing process has become more and more sophisticated from the early days, when all mail was placed into bags properly labeled and properly tagged. Now they are placed into trays and banded prior to a mailing company taking them to the post office. At one time, address labels had to be attached to envelopes, kept in order and placed in a proper tray. Currently a

mailing company prepares mailing envelopes with an ink jet address already printed. The fellowship of the KROS is a much-appreciated and sought-after opportunity. The tradition always includes a “full pizza lunch!”

November 2 – Earlier in the chapter we referred to the quality of financial records here at the LHF World Mission Center. On this date we were reminded that other offices are not conducted with the same fiduciary accuracy. When our office in Riga, Latvia was taken over by the Augsburg Institute (AI), Mr. Janis Dimza had been serving as the office manager. At one time we had some rather serious discussions about some of our people not paying their proper taxes. Our posture was that this was an individual’s responsibility and not something to be policed by us. We made our agreed-upon payments. At any rate, several months after the Augsburg Institute took control of the LHF office, they were informed by the Ministry of Justice of a tax debt that was owed, along with the penalty assessed. The matter appeared in the main Latvian newspaper. The Augsburg Institute was now willing to fully cooperate with LHF and apply to us an amount of the debt that we were to assume. Even though it was a failed responsibility on the part of an Augsburg Institute fund manager, we agreed to assist them in payment, as we were not interested in controversy with government authorities. We were interested in the larger picture of making sure that we could complete our joint venture of publishing the Latvian *Book of Concord*. What was a little disturbing in the scenario was that at this time, several members of the Augsburg Institute were driving nice new automobiles.

November 19 – Correspondence with Rev. Oleg Sevastyanov, pastor of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Moscow, referred to the release of Gennadij Dubrovin as distribution director and the hiring of Marina Solodova as the Moscow branch manager. I wrote in the message to Oleg that we now could concentrate more directly on our mission, as we already saw evidence of our books being distributed all over Russia. Marina had accomplished more in three days than Gennadij did in six months. At this point Oleg is at CTS-FW for theological course work. After pleading his case for the completion of a heating project for Holy Trinity, which we honored through a Sunday school project, he now requested an advance of \$600 to repay a loan he owed a member of his church. Our response was that we would not loan him any funds, but that we would make an education grant for him to use as he saw fit. The sad final chapter in this whole account was when he completed his studies, he abandoned his wife and child. On his flight back to Moscow he left the plane in New York and became MIA. We tried many avenues to try and track his whereabouts, and he surfaced a year later. He requested reinstatement to the good graces of LHF. I informed him it could not be

done until he repaid his debt to CTS-FW. I understand he is back in Russia, but there has been no contact between him and LHF at this point.

In retrospect, one should not only have had training in theology, but in the work that goes on around the world, it would have been helpful to have had training as a loan officer. You really can't imagine all the requests that have come our way. The biggest challenge is still the ability to distinguish between the legitimate and illegitimate need.

November 25 – Closing on the property purchased at 51474 Romeo Plank Road is announced by Mr. Richard Hallgren. This begins a rather tedious effort to secure the appropriate permits from Macomb Township. We discover in the process that our plan for situating the building on the property would not be accommodated because of property line codes and regulations. A house, which stood on the property to our north, had been offered earlier at an attractive price, but the purchase was declined. When it was discovered we needed more property to have our office situated parallel to Romeo Plank, we offered to make the purchase. The price had then been increased, but still below normal prices, because there were septic problems connected with the property. We would eliminate these problems by hooking up to the township sewer system. To purchase that property meant that we would first have to clear our property of two homes, shut down the wells and septic (with permits of course) and also pay for the widening of Romeo Plank Road along our property. We received the offer from General Materials, Inc., a Jackson, Michigan lumber yard, operated by Lutherans, to provide all material at one percent over cost. They also agreed to deliver all materials free of charge. The next problem to be addressed was zoning ordinances. We had received a commercial zoning on the property purchased, but zoning officials told us we would have to rezone to residential, buy the residence north of us, and then rezone back to commercial. Mr. Hallgren became a regular visitor at township board meetings and zoning committee meetings, and finally all the necessary zoning requirements were met.

The next big issue we had to confront was the zoning board's requirement that we have two retention ponds to handle water run-off. After some debate over our objections, the decision was made to install one larger retention pond in the back of our property along the small branch of the Clinton River. This requirement immediately added \$50,000 to our overall cost.

December 3 – \$2,000 was sent to Sudan to provide relief for the Lutherans who were experiencing hunger. In sending the funds we said, "We are using this means as a way to demonstrate our Christian concern and commitment to the confessional Lutheranism you have a desire to bring to your people."

December 4 – Work began on a major Russian project with Mr. Alexander

Inshakov, the translator assigned to work on the *Concordia Self Study Bible*. The project entailed translating the notes, maps, book introductions, and all special helps – everything but the actual Bible text. This would eventually become the first Lutheran Russian commentary on the whole Bible. It took several years to complete the project. When published with a larger print size, it was larger in size than your average Sears or Penney's catalog and widely used throughout the former Soviet Union.

December 5 – The start of our work in Southeast Asia was another indication as to how the Word works. This gave rise to the title of the LHF newsletter called "The Word At Work." Culling from many pages of correspondence, we can piece together how work begins in a specific area of the world and how people are conscripted to serve.

How Work Begins and How Help is Recruited

The beginning of LHF work in Southeast Asia demonstrates cooperation between missionaries on the field, LCMS mission supervisors in St. Louis and Southeast Asia natives. At this time, Rev. David Birner, LCMS, was serving as Asia area secretary and Rev. Ted NaThalang and Rev. Jeff Ehlers were missionaries on the field. Two years prior to this date, a pastor by the name of Charles Edwards requested Lutheran catechetical material and how he might be ordained into the Lutheran church. Charles had a congregation of approximately 70 members among extremely poor people living on the outskirts of Yangon, Myanmar (previously called Burma). In addition he had established four preaching stations. He was given training and eventually served as a Lutheran pastor.

Dave Birner stated, "Jeff and Ted have a bibliography of materials which should be translated in the future to prepare candidates for pastoral leadership. Rev. NaThalang will also continue to take the lead in establishing relationships in Burma on behalf of Lutheran Christians in Thailand. Both Rev. NaThalang and Rev. Ehlers have done a remarkable job in identifying opportunities for an LCMS niche in Burma. Rev. NaThalang is a key player in representing the Lutheran church as an Asian (Thai) Lutheran Christian."

The focus of another report was on Thailand and Rev. Birner assessed the situation stating, "Rev. NaThalang has accepted the challenge to build the foundation of a Lutheran Church Association in Thailand. We were delighted with the strong fraternal cooperation between Rev. NaThalang, representing the emerging Thai Lutheran Church, and Rev. Ehlers, the missionary counselor for LCMS. These two men are developing a vision for the establishment of a well-rounded and self-sustainable association of Lutheran churches. They have taken the lead to establish a mission vision

for Myanmar, Laos and Thailand. We have asked Rev. NaThalang to serve as a consultant for church development in Southeast Asia, working together with Rev. Ehlers.”

There was then a key sentence in the Birner report that said, “We will contact the LHF to explore their participation in the translation of Lutheran material.”

On March 22, 1999, I sent a message to Jeff Ehlers. “Last week I had a long conversation with Dave Birner in regard to involving the LHF in setting up a translation program for Thailand, Burma, and Laos. These discussions started last November when the LHF was granted RSO (Recognized Service Organization) status with the LCMS. Dave felt that with our rather extensive work in 30 other regions of the world, we would be best equipped to begin some work, especially on *Luther’s Small Catechism*. He mentioned that Ted NaThalang might be of great help. I do not have an email for Ted so I am hoping you might inform him of our desire to help.”

On March 30, 1999, Ted’s message was brief: “Thanks for your interest in translation work in Thailand. We would be very happy if you wanted to help us in this very important area.” After this, there were a series of messages where we talked about setting up a translation center and the recruitment of workers, how much they would be paid, and how they would be supervised. On April 14, 1999, I titled a message sent to Ted – MOVING FORWARD IN THAILAND! In this message Ted was invited to become the project director for the work, open a project bank account in a reliable bank, and set up an expense ledger.

Ted NaThalang grew up as a Buddhist, born in Bangkok, Thailand. When his father died at an early age, his mother married Mr. Herbert Gernand, who decided to move the family to the U.S. in 1968. Ted was baptized at Concordia Lutheran Church, Fort Wayne, Indiana, graduated from Concordia Lutheran High School, and then went back to Thailand to study at a university in Thailand for two years in the field of business. Later he went back to Fort Wayne and graduated from Indiana University with a B.S. in business. He worked for Baxter Labs in Deerfield, Illinois. In 1982 his grandmother asked him to come back to Thailand to run her private school (K-6) with over 1,000 students. In 1983 he married Gunya, a native Thai, who had a master’s degree in education from the best university in Thailand. She was the director of the Lutheran Hour office in Thailand. Ted attended the St. Louis Seminary and graduated in 1990. From 1991-1996 he was called as an evangelistic missionary to Thailand. From January 1999, he was not on the staff of the Board for Mission Services, but served as a consultant for church planting. On his own, he also oversaw a church and its

mission in Bangkok.

Rev. NaThalang pointed out that when he graduated from the seminary and desired to return to Thailand, his native land, he was told that it was a policy of the mission board not to send a candidate back to his own country. Later on the decision was reversed, and he would be sent to Thailand. Rev. NaThalang instructed and baptized people in his home. In 1994-95, the Thai Lutherans asked the Board for Mission Services to help them start a church. The BFMS stated a policy that could not support a building for worship. The Thai Lutherans decided to rent a space from the Lutheran Hour and asked Rev. NaThalang to serve as their pastor.

In 1996, Rev. NaThalang asked for a peaceful release from his Call. It was a sad day for him, and there was a feeling of rejection by his church body, but at the same time he was free to serve God's people in a Word and Sacrament ministry as he was taught to do. Even though they did not have much support, he and his wife decided that they could not leave the Thai Lutherans by themselves and kept working with them.

The first project we suggested was a small one, a booklet with the title *The Bible: God's Handbook for Living*. This project demonstrated the difficulty of finding capable translators. Ted wrote, "I had assigned a Lutheran man to translate the booklet you sent. He is working with the Board for Mission Services Concordia Gospel Ministry and wants to learn to translate. I thought I would give him a chance. He is not a good translator, but he said he was willing to try. He finished the translation. The problem I am facing is that because there are so many mistakes, it would take me more time and headache to correct his work than start the whole thing over. The situation here is that we do not have many good Christian translators (not to mention a Lutheran)."

This, then, states the problem that we face in many areas of the world, and the requirement that we search diligently until we find the right person. On December 6, 1999, I stated in a message to Ted, "It is my hope that either Rev. John Fehrmann or I will be able to visit Thailand and the surrounding area to get a feel for the work being done."

On May 11-14, 2000, Rev. John Fehrmann visited Ted in Thailand on behalf of LHF. Employment was offered as a part-time representative. It wasn't until January 2006 that Ted was given a Call/Solemn Appointment with Contract to serve as the LHF coordinator for Southeast Asia. Already by this time, the translation of a number of books and materials in the Thai, Vietnamese, Khmer, Burmese, and Lao languages had been initiated.

On September 23, 2003, Ted sent a report indicating the work that had been done in various places. His report indicates the growing expansion

of our work in Southeast Asia. The Appendix lists all books published in these regions in the years following. In this report he referred to Thailand as the place where *Luther's Small Catechism* was sent to the printer. In process were *The Story of Luther*, *Augsburg Confession*, *Law and Gospel* and *Summary of Christian Doctrine*. In Laos, the catechism was in the printshop to be completed in two months. In Cambodia, he reported translation errors that had to be corrected. That work was slow because of the lack of good Christian translators.

Here he also reported on a van ride from Phnom Penh over the “worst highway in the world” for over 100 km to visit young independent churches that would like to be trained with Lutheran teachings in Batdambang and Siem Reap (by Angkor Wat). In some areas, every inch of the highway is full of potholes that were left from all the wars. There is no way to avoid them, and they were going about 60-70 km/hr. “During the trip I was wondering if I really needed to make this trip. But when I got to meet those young church leaders who were glad to see us, I was glad I made the trip. I was trying to set up a Lutheran Association in Cambodia so that they can support and help each other to grow in the right direction,” Ted reported.

In talking about Burma he stated that the work is very slow. About 70 percent of the work on *Luther's Small Catechism* was done and then lost because of computer and font problems. “It is hard to believe that we don't have even one good Burmese Lutheran to help us on the project,” he said. In Indonesia, Ted had an opportunity to visit with LCMS missionaries, a leader of the Batak church, and a translator. A translation team had been formed and work was progressing. In Vietnam, a reliable printer is needed to publish *Luther's Small Catechism* and the catechism workbook.

December 11 – LHF is granted Recognized Service Organization status under the LCMS World Mission. The effort began on July 31, 1995, and took a total of three years before a decision was reached. Shortly after our request was made, a synod convention changed the regulations that required some adjustments. We also faced the decision of having the district president of the Michigan District holding up our process by being unresponsive. When pressed for an endorsement that was required by the LCMS, the Michigan District Board of Directors, upon advice from the district president, refused to give the endorsement. We then requested endorsement from the English District president, Dr. Roger Pittelko, and it was granted immediately. The ruling, however, was that it had to be from the Michigan District. That finally came when Rev. Dr. William Hoesman was elected president of the Michigan District. We also had help from Rev. Dr. Robert Kuhn, LCMS president.

One of the interesting comparisons in this whole process of getting the RSO

status was that it ran parallel to our request to have the LHF as a registered organization in Russia. This was accomplished in a period of six months, in spite of the fact that just prior to our request, a law had been passed in Russia restricting religious activity.

The question was asked several times during this rocky process if there was some kind of conspiracy between high officials to keep the LHF from gaining RSO status. The LHF board lost interest in “playing games” and recommended that the status request be put on hold until my roster status would be resolved. Questions now became even more frequent from supporters as to whether the LHF was too Lutheran. I indicated the conviction that the status would eventually be granted in view of what I saw in a minority elite caught up in pure politics. Some questioned my refusal to bring this openly to the church. My usual response was that I found it more energizing and rewarding to publish another confessional Lutheran work to be used by missionaries in the field, and that we had the support of the synod president, which was sufficient enough while waiting. (The full file can be opened in 25 years to view the evidence in correspondence and documents.)

1999

January-June – LHF supported the Mark Onunda family while he was attending seminary in Fort Wayne. We also began planning for a workshop on “Hymnody and Liturgy” in preparation for publishing a Swahili *Hymnal* for Kenya.

February 8 – Andrew visited St. John, Fraser, Michigan to share the Sudan story with the congregation by preaching for the services and by teaching the Bible class. During the course of his presentation he made a very interesting statement: “I am just a very small person saying something big.” This philosophy could properly describe the heart and soul of Andrew’s service and commitment.

February 12 – “I have to first explain who I am. My name is Rudi Bluemcke and I am the Lutheran pastor in Krasnojarsk, Siberia. I am from Germany, and the German Lutheran Church sent me here to serve in the ELCROS. A week ago I visited Novosibirsk and met my friend Jeff Thormodson, who serves there for LCMS. He told me about your ministry in Russia and gave me your address. I got to know the LHF when I served as an intern at Our Savior Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls, South Dakota. The ELCROS has a long history in this country, and today we serve about 200 congregations just in Siberia. When I had a look at the list of the books you have available, I was

amazed because we are in need of good theological Lutheran literature. I talked to our Bishop Volker Sailer, who is located in Omsk. It would be very helpful for us to receive books in the Russian language, for example, to our Synod meeting in Omsk, because there will be about 70 leaders of Lutheran congregations meeting together. Maybe it would even be possible to have a distribution center in Omsk in our church. You could help so much in our congregations.”

With that ringing endorsement of our work and that expressed need, one would think that the LHF would have sprung into action and fulfilled a strong request out of our distribution center in Ekaterinburg or Novosibirsk. It seems that this was one of those episodes where there never was any traction developed to fulfill this need. Was it that the LHF branches failed in their responsibility, or was it one highly motivated missionary pastor who didn't have the same value placed on the theological works by the rest of the pastors and the bishop of a liberal church body? At any rate, our books were never highly desired in the ELCROS.

As I write on this July 2011 day, we are preparing, at some expense, to empty our warehouse in Ekaterinburg and Novosibirsk and send the books to St. Petersburg. There, Rev. Leif Camp has arranged free storage and is developing a strategy to distribute the books within the Ingria Lutheran Church congregations. There is also a good supply of books warehoused outside of Moscow that will be brought to St. Petersburg for active distribution. This is the distribution plan. Whether it works remains to be seen, but some measures had to be taken to diminish the supply of books as we enter a new age of digital and electronic storage and fewer volumes printed.

February 26-March 12 – On this 20th Russia trip we participated in the release of the second edition of the Russian *Book of Concord*. We termed this a new and improved edition, including a concordance, paragraph numbers, and over 1,000 text changes based on suggestions from a large number of users. A special autographed copy by chief Russian translator, Konstantin Komarov, was presented to Professor Ron Feuerhahn, who was lecturing at an LHF-sponsored seminar in Ekaterinburg, Siberia.

In Riga, Latvia, we met with Bishop Vanags, Rev. Guntis Kalme, and Dr. Reinhold Szalenska to discuss the new seminary program in a new building that was being refurbished from top to bottom. Dr. Szalenska, seminary rector from Germany, requested that LHF provide additional books for the library to be housed on the main floor of a five-story building.

Luggage coming back from this trip to the former Soviet Union was packed to capacity with sample copies of recent releases in Russian, including the

second edition of the *Book of Concord*, *Christian Dogmatics* by J.T. Mueller, *Studies in Creationism* by Klotz, *Dying to Live* by Senkbeil, *The Lord's Supper* by Chemnitz, *God's No and God's Yes* (2nd printing) by Walther, Koehler's *Catechism* (2nd printing) and *Selected Writings by Luther* (2nd printing).

March 23 – Rev. Elisa made an interesting comparison when thanking donors, Ron and Wanda Beck, for their special gifts. He said, “Among the Zande people, if you give birth to a boy, you are to bring him up making sure he is well trained. Upon reaching his teenage years, you will first buy him a bow and arrow to begin shooting small animals and birds. As he grows older, you will buy him a spear which will be his defense, as well as a tool for killing animals. The spear can protect him and at the same time feed him. Finally, you will assist him in building a house and getting married. After his marriage, it will be his responsibility to produce children, while you retire very happy in heart.

“Coming to know you, Ron and Wanda, has reminded me of this old Zande father described above. First, you gave me the *Lutheran Worship Liturgy Book*, which in the above context symbolizes a bow and arrow. Secondly, you gave me my New King James Bible, which symbolizes the spear to defend me and feed me spiritually. Thirdly, you have decided to donate money which can build a house for me. It is now my responsibility to use the tools you have offered to produce (i.e., to fish people into Christ's Church).” It is a very interesting analogy for the support LHF receives from thousands of partners around the world. Let it be Andrew's way of thanking you as his special memorial.

March 23 – *Ethiopia (Amharic)*

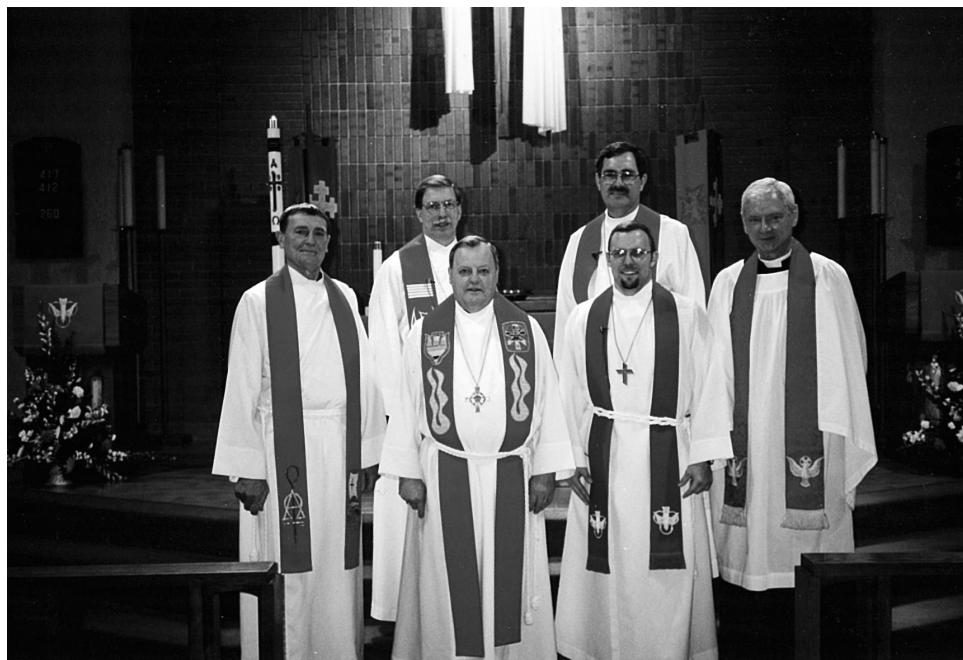
Discussions started with Dereje Tilahun and Johannes Mengsteab relative to work in Ethiopia, which later in 2002 was picked up by Tilahun Mekonnen. This led to a visit there by Anssi Simojoki on May 21, 2002, and again on December 5, 2005, to provide seminars on the Lutheran confessions.

April 13 – This date served as a stopping point to make reference to the many people who had contact with our office relative to translating and distribution of LHF books. These contacts came in a variety of forms and in a variety of settings. An example of such is the contact made with Andrei Ivolga, a student from Tomsk, Siberia, attending the seminary in Fort Wayne. I met him after a concert we attended at St. Luke Lutheran Church, Clinton Township, Michigan. I mentioned to him that since he was from eastern Russia, he might be able to help us with book distribution in the far east of Russia. He responded, “This looks to be a wonderful opportunity to spread confessional teaching to places like Vladivostok and Khabarovsk, where Rev. Elmer Steenbock has been personally working.”

Another one of our contacts in Moscow was Mr. Oleg Kravets, a super sleuth in getting through Russian “red tape.” He endorsed the idea of establishing a distribution center in Tomsk. The effort to distribute Lutheran materials in very remote places where the Gospel has never been heard would bring a great impact and be very worthwhile. Other names surfaced as people requested to be considered as translators and needed to be tested in their ability. One of the very gifted translators in our fold was Rev. Valery Volodin, St. Petersburg, whom we became acquainted with while he was a student at the St. Louis seminary. The seminaries at St. Louis and Fort Wayne became feeder grounds for translation/distribution personnel. They were also places where we helped to provide theological education for a number of students. The wife of one of the students at Fort Wayne, Olga Bornschlegel, did Russian translation work for us from their vicarage assignment in Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraine. Many of the offers of help were declined due to a marginal translation talent.

April 25 – An installation ceremony was conducted during the regular services of St. John Lutheran Church, Fraser, Michigan. Rev. William Hoesman, president of the Michigan District, preached and the installing officers were Rev. John Merrill, pastor of St. John, and Rev. Kurt Marquart, LHF board chairman.

It was announced that Rev. Fehrmann would be installed after his move to Michigan in the summer. Rev. Fehrmann later petitioned the board for permission to remain in Minnesota.



May 19 – LHF received this request: “Come over and help us in Bulgaria!” “At the last meeting of our Mission Advisory Council the question was asked, ‘What can we do to increase the output of our current translation program?’” John Roebkie stated that he was asked to get in touch with Mr. Larry Marquardt, a former member of the LHF board, and see if the LHF could provide help. “We already have several Bulgarian translators that could be utilized.” In December the LHF committed itself to help with three projects: the *Augsburg Confession*, the *Bulgarian Lutheran Hymnal* and Koehler’s *Christian Doctrine*.

May 20 – Andrew finished his study at CTSFW and Rev. Rahn wrote: “As you close this American seminary chapter in your life, I hope it will be a case where you can look back and view it as a positive experience. Now you begin another part of the journey. As you do, I want to commend you for your untiring zeal for the Lord’s work and also want to pledge our continued support. We want to do what we can to support your efforts during this time of planting Lutheran churches in Sudan.” Andrew was sent back with a six month \$20,000 commitment. This amount was provided since Andrew during his studies at Fort Wayne was very active in promoting the work of the LHF. The amount included funds to purchase a \$15,000 pre-owned vehicle.

May 25 – “Faith & Hope” is a newsletter published by the Siberian Evangelical Lutheran Church (SELC). The edition on this date featured an article on the formation of a new Lutheran church in Chita under the direction of Igor Kisjajev, a first-year student at the SELC seminary in Novosibirsk. It was interesting to read how he was influenced to convert from Pentecostalism to Lutheranism. Igor was an active and thoughtful member of his religious group, so in the course of time, deep theological questions arose in his mind that couldn’t be answered by the group. The leaders of the church insisted on unquestioning obedience. In the spring of 1999, Igor by chance had bought a book (enterprising people get our books free and then sell them – a common problem) entitled *Selected Writings of Luther*, published by LHF, which he immediately read five times. After reading this book, a strong desire to find Lutherans in Russia arose in him. He managed to do this through LHF in the U.S., where he got the address of LHF in Novosibirsk. From there he got the telephone numbers of Rev. Lytkin and Rev. Stretslov.

Igor was invited for the annual summer theological seminars held at Lytkin’s church, with the result that he decided to enter the seminary. He was immediately excommunicated from the Pentecostal group and anathematized. His wife fell under hard pressure from the group’s leaders,

and Igor's name was constantly discredited.

Those who knew Igor quite well could not believe the lies that were told about him, so serious questions arose in their minds. The result was that in the winter of 1999, about 15 people left the Pentecostal group and started to gather in their apartments for worship. Igor continued to interact with them and bring them books and answer their questions. Beginning in 2000, people from the new group started to come for monthly theological seminars in Novosibirsk and eventually organized as a Lutheran congregation.

Another mission congregation was organized in the city of Irkutsk, and Rev. Lytkin talked about mission work and how difficult it is. "Sometimes you lose heart when you see how many people live around us who have never in their lives have heard about Christ. We visit many villages and small towns where there are no churches at all. We meet children who have never in their lives even heard the word 'God.' But certainly there is also a need for preaching the Gospel in big cities. Big university cities are always the aim of the preachers of different religions, especially eastern and New Age religions. Our responsibility is to preach the pure Gospel to these people."

Lytkin cited the difficulty of helping people in places like Abakan, Sayangorsk, Tuim, and Kirovo. "Our church has a parish in the small village of Kirovo. Frankly speaking, I don't know why Pastor Pavel Zayakin began the missionary work there about ten years ago. There is no asphalt, jobs, stores, hospitals, post office, or police there. Drunk people are walking on the streets right in the mud. Children are playing in the same mud, wearing so old and dirty clothes that sometimes you practically have to push yourself if you want to touch them. Kirovo is 40 miles from Tuim, and the last ten miles just don't have a road. Working here doesn't give us money or glory. And people ask us why we are working here where there is only mud and misery."

Can you imagine that the most frequent cause of death is poisoning by methanol? This is a wooden (methyl) alcohol that you are not supposed to drink at all because it causes blindness and overdoses causes convulsions and death. People don't have money for vodka. It is expensive so merchants from Abakan bring methanol mixed with water. People drink it and die. But who cares? Even the police let trucks with methanol into the villages so that people can die sooner and have less suffering.

Who knows what to do? Only the church knows how to save these people. Save them from what? From hopelessness and drunkenness, save them for the life everlasting. That is the reason we are here. That is the reason the LHF books and materials can help us to serve these people.

August – Visited orphanage in Matongo, Kenya, supervised by Ms. Anja-

Marija Vanhanen and support provided for the orphanage by Immanuel Lutheran Church, Altamont, Illinois. The pastor of the congregation, Rev. Fred Muenchow, was brought up in an orphanage and encouraged the support.

August 15-20 – A six-day intensive “Liturgy and Hymnal Workshop,” sponsored by LHF was conducted in Nairobi for members of the hymnal committee. The workshop had an attendance of some 30 participants, and the hymnal committee itself was made up of some 15 members of the ELCK and KELC and led by Vicar Mark Onunda. Presenters included Dr. Timothy Quill, Prof. Richard Resch, Dr. Anssi Simojoki, Dr. Naaman Laiser, and me. Internal committee controversy led to a dismissal of the committee and postponement of the project.

August 26 – Rev. Elisa welcomed special guests to his ordination festivities. Included in the delegation were Rev. Ken Greinke and Dr. Allan Buckman, representing LCMS World Missions; Dr. Dave Adams represented Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri; Dr. Tim Quill represented Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne; Rev. Dr. Anssi Simojoki, LHF vice president for Africa, Nairobi, Kenya; Rev. Japhet Dachi, general secretary, ELCK; and Rev. Dr. Robert L. Rahn, LHF executive director.

Andrew gave a historic overview of the ELCS from the time of its formation stating, “May I on behalf of the Executive Council and the entire membership of ELCS welcome all of you to Sudan to participate in the historical occasion of ordination. We look forward to your faithful participation.

“You have come like the three men who came from the far East to see the Son of Mary, who was the very Savior born in Bethlehem. You have come like the man whom Jesus spoke about in His parable who left 99 of his sheep, tracing the whereabouts of the one sheep which got lost. Indeed, all of you who are in this country today have left your dear ones, your faithful Christians entrusted to you, your staff, to come and stay with the Sudanese people, who by God’s grace have become Lutherans, who are now seriously waiting and expecting to realize God’s miracle among them.

“Our Executive Council members are especially excited to see Rev. Robert L. Rahn among us, most importantly attending the first priestly ordination taking place in the ELCS. Rev. Rahn has made history in building ELCS tirelessly since 1994, starting with five catechisms, one *Book of Concord*, and \$1,500 for printing 1,000 hymnals, followed by funds for purchasing chairs and tables. Rev. Rahn has done more than just that. We all thank him for his real commitment to the Sudanese people and promoting confessional Lutheranism in Sudan. The work in Sudan was started by Rev. Rahn during a time when the late Dr. Robert Preus was chairman of the LHF board.

“In 1995, LHF, as a young organization, took upon itself the task of building another church. Again thanks to Rev. Rahn for introducing the ELCS to the LCMS Board for World Missions to join hands and support the work in Sudan. Rev. Dr. Anssi Simojoki, who is always referred to as the father of the ELCS, is very much welcome. You are all welcome to Sudan. May God bless you.”

August 27 – An invitation was given to meet with Hassan Osman Dahawi, state minister of social planning. He was most eager to give us the full police escort to the pharmaceutical plant bombed by President Clinton. They wanted us to see the debris and to observe that this was not a nerve gas plant. They are waiting for the United Nations to come to confirm that the United States made a grave error. We found out that evening, when we were shown on TV, why all the video cameras were present. While we could not understand the language, it seemed evident that we were the objects of some government propaganda for their networks.

After being whisked back to the city, we were taken to the Sudanese Parliament to have an audience with the speaker of the parliament, Dr. Hassan Abdullah El Turabi. In both cases, we were first given almost an hour of what I call propaganda. In essence, their theme was “there are no problems in Sudan.” Most stories were contrived by news media. In a meeting with the General Secretary of the Council For International People’s Friendship, along with several other clergy, our questions about religious persecution were neatly skirted. On our return to America an editorial in the “International Herald Tribune” had a title: “Sudan Must End Its Brutal War Against Civilians.” They accused Sudan of engaging in a “charm campaign.” I think that is what we experienced. Being in the highest offices of the land, it was perhaps good that we had in our company Dr. David Adams, from the LCMS Government Office in Washington, D.C. It was interesting to see their reaction when we introduced him as being from the Office of Religious Affairs.

After all our meetings, Rev. Elisa told me he was astounded over the fact that I read from the Bible in one of the highest Muslim offices in the country when I was explaining the Lutheran understanding of the power of the government and read Romans 13:1-8. Even more astounding to Rev. Elisa was the fact that they wanted me to send copies of Luther’s position on government. Upon returning to America, I did send pertinent articles to those government officials.

August 28 – Andrew received a Call document from the Executive Council of the ELCS and it stated, “In faithfulness to the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions, the Executive Council of the ELCS met on August 28, 1999, and elected to call you as pastor of the established congregations of the ELCS. It is our fervent prayer that you would accept this Call from God

and shepherd the Lord's flock, over which the Holy Spirit will ordain you as overseer." It was signed by 11 members of the ELCS Executive Council.

These members of the council met on this date with the World Mission delegation and LHF representatives. During the meeting the electricity went off, which was an ongoing problem addressed previously with a request for a generator. As we sat in the darkness and increasing heat, I looked at the mission representatives and told them that this was certainly the hand of God. Andrew had previously asked for \$11,000 to purchase a generator, and we could only provide half the amount. Perhaps the other half could be provided by the World Mission. In the presence of the Council, how could their answer be anything but "yes." A very large and functional generator served the church well and the daily outages could be better managed.

The next major question addressed to the World Mission representatives was, "Can you help us start a seminary?" The response was that the mission direction these days was more along the line of leadership training. It was an answer that was a bit disappointing to the ELCS leadership. After the meeting, the council asked if the LHF delegation could meet on Monday.

Ordination

August 29 – Rev. Andrew Mbugo Elisa was ordained and installed as president of the ELCS. The event took place in Khartoum on the street in front of the ELCS office complex and church headquarters. The street had been closed to traffic (vehicle but not donkey) and a huge tent erected to accommodate over 300 congregants, who had arrived on foot, on bicycles, on mopeds, and chartered buses. They represented eight congregations that had become part of the official ELCS church body.

Service participants included members of the World Mission staff, Rev. Dr. Allan Buckman (preacher) and Rev. Ken Greinke. LHF Vice President for Africa, Rev. Dr. Anssi Simojoki, served as ordinator; Rev. Dr. Robert Rahn (liturgist), Rev. Dr. Timothy Quill (reader), Rev. Dr. David Adam (reader), Rev. Japhet Dachi (representing Ev. Lutheran Church of Kenya), and Rev. Edward Nzeme (ELCS general secretary).

Participating also were several choirs from the congregations providing African songs in a manner that still rings in one's ears; the clear crisp voice of a soloist can still be heard.

This historic six-hour service was conducted in three languages: English, Arabic, and Zande. Following the service, a typical full African meal was served that had been cooked the previous day, including a goat that was butchered on site. The rice and goat meat with gravy was served on three-foot trays that were set in the midst of some six to eight people, who used



the traditional African finger style to consume the food. Visiting dignitaries were ushered into the mission complex and provided with plates and eating utensils. Africans think of everything.

After the meal special music was played on homemade drums and violin-like instruments. With this music as a background, an African dance began with dancers surrounding all dignitaries and involving them in the celebratory dancing. When darkness began to set in around 9 p.m., the long day of celebration that had begun at 11 a.m. had come to an end.

We became friends with the man who served as the Arabic translator, and on an ensuing visit I asked of his whereabouts and was informed he was no longer in Khartoum. He had to move to Cairo, Andrew explained, because of persecution. His children were removed from school and he lost his job. My response was a lament - that's too bad! Andrew said it wasn't all bad because he had already started a secret Lutheran house church in Cairo.

August 30 – Members of the ELCS Church Council in their specially-called meeting asked LHF if we would help start a seminary for the church. Our immediate response was that we could help and that we would even suggest a name: the Concordia Lutheran Institute for the Holy Ministry

(CLIHM). It was a lengthy name but there would be no question as to the purpose of the school: to train pastors.

A short time later Andrew again approached the World Mission and asked if they could help with leadership training as the seminary was operating with two tracks. One was a track for training pastors, and the other track was for training church leaders. The LHF ended up providing the funds for both tracks, as the leadership training track also trained people to be translators.

Thus ended a very historic weekend for the ELCS. It included the ordination of Andrew, the installation as president, the opening of a seminary, and later the program of leadership training.

August 31 – Andrew wrote a letter to the then-president of the LCMS, Dr. A. L. Barry: “As pastor, president, and founder of the ELCS, my church body is herewith requesting to enter fellowship with you.” He explained, “The ELCS was organized on its own initiative and received significant early help from the LHF. The late Dr. Robert Preus, Rev. Dr. Robert Rahn and Rev. Dr. Anssi Simojoki were instrumental in helping to shape the confessional Lutheran position of the ELCS. In more recent times, the LCMS Board for Missions also provided help.”

September 6 – *Turkey*

On this date Rev. Risto Soramies wrote, “I got your email address from Dr. Simojoki and wanted to introduce myself as a missionary of the Finnish Lutheran Mission, working among the Turkish Muslims in Germany, Bulgaria, and Turkey. I will be traveling in America toward the end of September and beginning of October. I would be very pleased to meet with you during that time.”

This was the beginning of the LHF translation work in Turkey. After Risto returned to Finland, he met with Rev. Simojoki to discuss the translation of *Luther’s Small Catechism* and to publish a mini *Book of Concord*, as was done in Swahili. Dr. Simojoki indicated that he personally knew the men who would be involved in the project as being solid confessional Lutherans. Rev. Risto would be moving to Istanbul and was willing to be the project coordinator, along with help from a Mr. Ari Salminen.

Mr. Salminen, in reviewing his project participation, said, “This project started in a situation where I already had enough things to do. But because it was agreed that this project has to be a priority, I just had to adapt myself to that. I have become more of an office worker than I was before. Before this project got going, part of my work was to visit mosques and other places where I could meet with the kind of Muslims who take their religion seriously. This I cannot do any more to the extent that I could without this translation project. But at the same time, through this translation process, I think I’ve

learned more of the sort of language that I should use when in contact with religious Muslims. What we are doing here is ideally a pioneer kind of work. We are doing something that's never been done in this language, not to my knowledge at least."

Rev. Soramies talked about the value of the catechism in working with the Turkish-speaking people. "Last year six locals were baptized in our church. The catechism proved to be a very important and valuable tool, even though at that time we only had parts of the text in Turkish. In Bulgaria, in another Turkish speaking congregation, the same material has been in use and 40 people were baptized. Around 30 adults were instructed using the catechism. I, for my part, preach practically every Sunday to our Turkish-speaking church. Doing this I am constantly confronted with the problem of sorting out theological and spiritual terms. I am making a collection of them as they will be beneficial for our translation work. As for the future, I think more material about baptism would be very important, since all other Protestant churches in this land have a very superficial and rationalistic teaching on the sacraments. We are in a constant, good spirited battle in these matters. I am looking forward to leaving a solid set of basic Lutheran works in Turkish behind as I retire, God willing, in eight years."

So the work continues in Turkey on various parts of the *Book of Concord* and other works that will be helpful in bringing the Gospel to the people of Turkey.

October 27 – On this date we were in Kiev, Ukraine, to release another book in the "How to" series: *How to Respond to Satanism*. Since this was a growing problem throughout Ukraine, other churches and government officials requested copies. Of the 16,000 published, 500 were distributed to public libraries and schools, 3,000 copies for all Christian churches, and the remaining copies for the Ukrainian Lutheran Church. People found out about the book when the ULC had a booth at a city-wide exhibition of publications by all Christian bodies in Kiev. On this same trip we heard from our Latvia staff that Emberg's book on ethics had interest from the Minister of Education and they were given 1,500 copies to be placed in all libraries, another indication that LHF books also have interest outside of Lutheran channels.

October 30 – A visit with Rev. Roberts Feldmanis led to some notes made in my travel log as follows: Janis Smits walked with us to the bus line and shared some insights that are significant in regard to the will of God and the plans of men. There is a link between "the old man" in Mezzaparks and the "young man" in Khartoum (Andrew Elisa). Smits told us that by all medical standards, Feldmanis should be in his grave. The reason he isn't is God's will

and design. It just so happens that there is a medical doctor who has taken a very personal interest in Feldmanis, in that he visits him every day and provides proper medicine as needed. Had he been in a hospital, he would have been left to die. After all he is an old man. God has a plan and has kept him alive for a purpose. The plan of God was also seen in another remote part of the world, Khartoum, Sudan. Andrew was on a sick bed with malaria. There was no hope, and preparations were being made for his death. Dr. Simojoki came to visit with several others and prayed for God to spare him in the interest of preserving a young church body. There was no obvious improvement, but Simojoki said as he left that he will recover, the church desperately needs him. It was the will of God to grant him health. It may seem that our puny efforts aren't getting the exposure they deserve, but it is always a matter of perspective. God's will is done through the puny efforts of His servants who remain faithful to His Word, regardless of what might spell success in our own eyes. We can only keep on. God will be the judge and history will tell, maybe in another age or era.

November 5 – We added distribution agents in Saratov and Dnepropetrovsk for our books and *Good News*. In each case the men were attending the seminary in Novosibirsk. We now have an entre into the Volga River area and the various Lutheran groups. The name of one agent is Sergey Jekel.

November 17 – Rev. John Fehrmann and I visited with Makito Masaki and Dr. Won Yong Ji on the campus of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, to discuss work in the Japanese and Korean languages. The results in Korean were immediate, as *Luther's Lectures on Galatians* was published in two volumes and an autobiography on the life and work of Dr. Ji, *By the Grace of God I Am What I Am*, was published in both English and Korean.

A classmate, Dr. Hilbert (George) Riemer and his wife, Joan, spent 50 years of their ministry in Korea. Much of that time George served as president of Luther University/Seminary. He was an ardent supporter of the LHF work in Korea.

December 3 – Mrs. Ilona Kuchta, LHF building campaign committee chairperson, announced the "Pathway For Truth To The Nations" paving brick campaign. It would feature names of individuals and be placed in the sidewalk and patio area. This is an ongoing effort even today and the cost to place a brick is \$200. The building campaign slogan, BUILDING FOR TOMORROW, TODAY was announced. It was reported that \$900,000 had been generated and another \$700,000 would be needed.

2000

January 26 – LCMS World Mission provides \$27,500 for a portion of the five years of rent on the ELCS Mission Center in Khartoum.

January 31 – Lease of office complex in Karen (suburb of Nairobi) from the African Evangelistic Enterprise (AEE).

February 9 – Rev. Andrew Elisa wrote, “Since the beginning of this millennium, it has been my daily prayer that the year 2000 should be more special making ELCS to receive God’s blessings in abundance. And this for sure will happen with your prayers, full support, and commitment to assist the ongoing development efforts. I am exerting in Sudan at this critical moment to preach Christ to those who have lost hope. My fears, worries, and troubles are always waved away when I read God’s Word. His unfailing promise to those who trust in Him, and knowing that you are a true brother in Christ who prays for this church day and night, making all possible efforts to assist me to accomplish God’s will in Sudan.”

Along with the above letter, he sent a document outlining why the ELCS decided to establish the Concordia Lutheran Institute for the Holy Ministry, along with a copy of a proposed curriculum for the CLIHM. It has a track for deaconesses, evangelists, deacons, business, and pastors. Prof. Tim Quill was mentioned as one providing assistance in developing the curriculum. Andrew discussed the opening of the seminary with the Director of Church Affairs in the Ministry of Social Planning, who has given his approval. Andrew says, “This letter shall help create a file for CLI to be recognized as one of the higher institutions in Sudan. As things stand now, we hope to open CLI officially on April 17, 2000.”

March 9 – Benin branch office approved. Work on the Fon catechism started and was completed April 21, 2008. Fon is the language of Benin.

March 22 – (Nicaragua) Rev. Roger Humann, Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary, St. Catharines, Ontario, and Rev. Ed Lehman, president emeritus, Lutheran Church Canada, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada for a number of years received Spanish books from LHF that were published by CPH. These books were used for leaders of the developing Lutheran Church in Nicaragua and by students studying at the seminary.

April 3 – (Rwanda) First contact was made with Rwanda Lutheran Church. Rev. John Fehrmann visited Kigali in June 2001, and Dr. Simojoki visited in October 2004. He described the Lutheran presence in Rwanda in one of his reports, stating that he was invited and received by the bishop of the Rwanda Lutheran Church (RLC) and also met our representative,

Alexandre Rudatsikira. He gave a brief overview of the RLC indicating that German missionaries from Bukoba and Tanganyika worked in Rwanda until World War I. After the war, Lutherans joined or had to join the Presbyterian church. This was the end of the first Lutheran mission effort in Rwanda.

After the first major massacre of Tutsis in Rwanda in 1959 (10,000 people killed), tens of thousands of Tutsis fled to Tanzania. Many of them came to join the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania. After the genocide of around 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus in April-August 1994, Tutsis began to return to Rwanda under its present government of President Paul Kagame. There were 6,000 Lutherans and six Lutheran pastors returning from Tanzania who formed the RLC. The membership is around 16,000 in 57 parishes. Only two church buildings are permanent. The church is active in five of the 12 provinces. Pastors receive no salary but are provided with a house and a piece of farm land with animals.

Their major problem is theological training. In this respect they are looking to us very much. Theologically they are very conservative and would like to align with LHF. They have already translated from our Swahili translation of *The Freedom of a Christian*. Alexandre has done good work gathering people and carrying on the translation work. *Luther's Small Catechism with Questions and Answers* is already prepared in the Kinyarwanda and Kirundi languages.

April 5 – LHF arranged a meeting between President Al Barry and Bishop F.N. Onderi (ELCK) after his visit on the Fort Wayne seminary campus. His main purpose was to open the discussions on church fellowship with the LCMS.

April 14 – I met with Bishop Onderi at the Detroit airport on his way back to Kenya.

Hmong Beginnings/LHF Endorsements

April 19 – Rev. Keith Boheim of the Schwan Foundation responded to a request made by Dr. Robert Holst, president, Concordia University, St. Paul, Minnesota asking for help to translate the *Book of Concord* into the Hmong language, starting with the catechism and the *Augsburg Confession*. Rev. Boheim wrote, “The committee believes that rather than beginning this project with Concordia, a better approach would be for Concordia University to work with the LHF. Under the leadership of Rev. Rahn, LHF has a distinguished record of providing excellent translations of Lutheran confessional materials. It would seem that their expertise, coupled with the interest of Concordia and Pastor Kou Seying, would greatly enhance this project.”

Prof. Robert Kolb, Institute for Mission Studies at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri, was closely associated with LHF as we published several

of his books. We also were interested in using the Kolb-Wengert edition of the *Book of Concord* in some of our translation work. In regard to this project, he wrote, “Every so often I have occasion to thank you for what you are doing and never get around to writing, so this opportunity cannot go by. What LHF has done in the part of the world I visit from time to time can never be measured or estimated. Your work has brought lasting and significant blessings to Lutherans and to others outside our tradition, in ways that no one could have guessed possible a decade ago. Thank you!”

Kolb further stated, “The Hmong project is exciting, and I stand ready to help in whatever way I can. I am also ready to help you with other projects as the possibility might arise! It pleases me that you are bringing a few of my little things into print in various places and I am most grateful for that.”

The above referral by the Schwan Foundation led to an eventual discussion with Dr. Holst, in which the LHF agreed to engage Rev. Kou Sying as Hmong project coordinator, with LHF paying part of his faculty salary. In the first meeting on the Hmong *Small Catechism* project, we had Hmong representatives present from East Lansing, Michigan; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; and Oshkosh, Wisconsin. Rev. John Fehrmann was given responsibility to oversee the work of Kou and the translation committee. Work was completed on the catechism, and a review edition was published about the time Rev. Kou accepted a Call to a California congregation.

Work on Hmong projects was somewhat sporadic after that but there was an effort to publish a Hmong hymnal without LHF involvement. When the individuals were ready to publish and requested LHF funds, we asked to first do a review. Individuals who worked on the project took offense at the request, and LHF simply refused to publish. As of this writing, the group is still looking for a sponsor for a hymnal that definitely needed improvement. Rev. Ted NaThalang, profiled in other parts of the LHF history, now works with Kou and other Hmong leaders on various other projects, including a revised and improved edition of the *Small Catechism*.

May 3 – Word was received from World Mission that if a proposed merger with the Lutheran Russian Mission Society was implemented, we could lose our RSO status. Rev. Scott Benjamin, who was the founder and director, was a former missionary and there were “control” issues involved from the past that lingered. We simply postponed the action.

May 5 – This was the date for the official dedication of the refurbished building that would house the Luther Academy (LA), the seminary of the ELCL. It is located right across the street from the Dome Lutheran Church, Riga, Latvia. The festivities began with a service in the Dome Lutheran Church and ended with a special hotel reception at 9 p.m. In between there

were many speeches in which the work of the LHF was several times noted. A special gift in honor of the occasion was given to ten foreign dignitaries. If you come to the LHF World Mission Center, you will find there a four-volume book set that features all the Latvian Lutheran churches. The cover is exquisitely and magnificently done, and all churches depicted in full color. These volumes were presented to LHF over a period of years in gratitude for our work in Latvia. They are treasured mementos from our special friends in Latvia. During the reception at the hotel, windows had to be closed because of street noise emanating from Latvians celebrating their hockey victory over Russia. I mentioned that this made for a good contrast. The celebration at the Luther Academy will last for eternity, the hockey celebration for a fleeting moment. The world little knows the lasting value of the eternal Word taught at the seminary. The LA was actually established on September 9, 1997, and housed in the Konsistory. It now had its own facility with 18 students. The library of LA had earlier received 25 boxes of books that had been shipped by LHF.

May 10 – We visited in Ekaterinburg, Siberia, and discussed with Sergey Glushkov the future of Lutheranism and the question of establishing a church with a building so that there is a Lutheran identity. Sergey was planning to take courses to become a deacon so that he could do some preaching and conduct a service. He talked about rent versus purchase in the usual context of it being more expensive to rent. But when you have a situation where you really don't know what the future holds, it is better to rent. Their intent was to become affiliated as an association with Lytkin's church in Novosibirsk. It was pointed out that it is not good to meet in homes, as this is too often construed as a practice by sects. The group is negotiating with the city government for a church location and has been offered a site that has been rejected, because the Lutheran church that was destroyed stood on the main street. They want a similar location, not an alley where the church is hidden on a small parcel.

May 12 – Novosibirsk, Siberia, where we are 12 hours removed from Eastern Standard Time, meeting with Rev. John Sullivan of the WELS and discussed Russian *Book of Concord* issues. We then met with Rev. Alexey Stretslov, head of the seminary, for a tour of their new building, a bank that went "bankrupt." This is somewhat bizarre. In a town of some 1.6 million, Lytkin's group and the WELS both closed a deal on a seminary building. It turns out they are situated right next door to each other. The former bank is beautiful with marble throughout. It has three floors, enough room for a church and its education needs and for the seminary to occupy the entire second floor. It is here that the LHF office was also located, along with a

storage area for books.

Pavel Butakov and I discussed some personal problems he was having in his family in regard to personal relationships within the seminary family. I reminded him that we can't guarantee an easy ride and smooth sailing in the good ship church. Let it be a lesson to all of us to keep our own houses in order and keep our own church and agencies God-directed. The forces of evil are always gathering at the doorstep. While we see God's work being accomplished in so many ways, we are always brought to reality by the machinations of men.

May 16 – Nigeria

Dr. Nelson Unwene, former president of the Lutheran Church of Nigeria, completed the doctor of missiology at Fort Wayne and asked to help with translating confessional materials into Efik, spoken by six million. "There is still a great and burning desire in me to pursue what I presently see as a great and promising ministry that will enhance the conservation of genuine Lutheranism among my people. Most Africans and third world countries lack the resources (books) for the teaching and instructional task of the Christian churches in their midst. Your foundation is doing just what is required for the churches, the supply of the bread of life in the language of the people. If you consider me 'fit' to be part of your foundation's limb for the enhancing of our Lord's Commission, I will give my best for this."

May 18 – The LHF board considers six bids for construction of the World Mission Center and chooses Frank Rewold & Son. The final bid submitted was in the amount of \$1,000,000. Rev. Bill Brege, building committee chairman, announced that a Church Extension Fund construction loan is being applied for with a maximum limit of \$800,000. Once LHF depletes the building fund account, LHF will start drawing from this loan and pay interest only on what is drawn. When the building is complete, the construction loan will revert to a mortgage. The board discussed how to handle excess donations if the campaign exceeds the cost.

May 23 – The Republic of Kenya Register of Societies gives LHF-Africa official status in the country.

June 5 – *Luther's Small Catechism* is published in the Arabic language of Sudan (10,000 copies). Andrew reported on a request that came from Bodosh with a population of 300,000 in the northern region. He received word that no church had ever visited the town, and the Chief of Bodosh requested Lutheran services start there.

July 13 – Tom Blackwell, John Hatteberg, Dr. Scott Murray, and I arrived in Khartoum, Sudan, the headquarters in the early years for the ELCS. This was to be a working visit, with Dr. Murray serving as a seminary instructor

and the rest of us serving as painters. The goal was to paint both the inside and outside of the very large ELCS headquarters. The following report was filed in my trip journal:

“It has been a great day so far. Started with ‘opening ceremonies’ only like the ELCS can do it. It is most humbling and cuts away all the nonsense we had to put up with in getting visas and making the plans and to experience their joy in having people from America interested in helping. I told them the LHF philosophy may be best summarized in two parts—‘we don’t know what we are doing and where we are going,’ and then had them turn to Psalm 27:14 and 2 Chronicles 15:7. We reminded them that the Lord knows, and that is what is most important as they begin their journey to start the Concordia Lutheran Institute for the Holy Ministry. “Wait for the Lord; be strong and let your heart take courage; yes, wait for the Lord.” Psalm 27:14 “Be ye strong, therefore, and let not your hands be weak, for your work will be rewarded.” 2 Chronicles 15:7

Scott started his lectures and we toured the building to map out our strategy. We decided not to invest too much, as it was not going to be a permanent location. Already at this time there were thoughts of eventually moving to the south. We would have to receive permission from the landlord for any major changes. We decided to finish one room as a library and do the painting while we were there. The upstairs balcony would be enclosed with bamboo to serve as a classroom. A second balcony area would be enclosed for another classroom, leaving the roof area to be available if needed.

We estimated the paint quantities and colors, and someone went off to the shop to make the purchase. They returned with seven five-gallon cans of paint. Some scaffolding was erected (have you ever seen that done by a bunch of seminarians?). They did eventually get it assembled, and the lower patio area was tackled. All the bamboo was taken off the roof and replaced. This is the area where the church services are held. The next interesting sight was to see the only man who claimed to be a painter take a five-gallon pail up 30 feet of scaffolding, the pail being handed up level to level, and go to work.

I brought a paint roller and pan, and this was a new phenomenon to this crew. The painter took the roller and plunged it into the five-gallon pail and began rolling with paint flying in all directions. We had put down some plastic to protect the floor, which still had gobs from the last painting done. There were about 20 guys giving instructions until we got brushes into their hands and put them to work.

On Sunday I was to preach at several refugee camp services that surround Khartoum. A problem developed Sunday morning in getting an appropriate

stamp in the passport that allowed visiting the refugee location. The process was changed (a regular occurrence), and it now required visiting four offices. Laymen were dispatched early Sunday morning (a regular work day in a Muslim community) to obtain the passes. We waited for them to return. When they finally came at 11 a.m., Andrew had left because the service was to have started at that time. We went back to the guest house disappointed, and had our own service for the four of us rather than the 200 who gathered for Andrew's substitute preaching.

I thought I misunderstood that there were 170 candidates for baptism at the camp services. It would have been more had the weather cooperated and had Andrew gotten to the several locations. He baptized 64 in one place, and when it rained, the gumbo (mud) wouldn't allow traveling to a place where 90 were waiting. Twenty more waiting at a third location went home when Andrew didn't arrive long after the designated time, and there was no way to summon their return.

Can you envision someone walking 23 miles to be baptized, or members of the congregation walking seven miles to fetch the closest water for the baptisms? How many would volunteer for Altar Guild duty if that were the normal practice? Not a problem for the Sudanese.

July 17 – Work continued on the headquarters with the report given that shelving had been purchased for the library that will be constructed and put in place on Thursday.

July 18 – The painting work usually started slow in the morning and picked up in the afternoon when we got a flurry of activity, as the students are released from class at 12:30 p.m. and many of them got to the painting. Today we had to do a major revision in our work, as there was something under the old paint that causes peeling when it is dampened by the new coat of paint. All of it had to be wetted down and peeled off before the new coat of paint was applied.

When we got back to the guest house around 6 p.m., the thermometer read 101. The electricity, as was common, went out and we moved a table outside for a "candlelight dinner." Every day in Khartoum there was a period of blackouts and the generator kicked in. Would that such a mechanism were available to us as a church when the darkness of sin crowds out the light! In reality there is such a generator available, and our problem is getting people plugged in so that the Light can enter. I wrote to one of our workers along these lines in another country where he was experiencing difficulties with his church body, "I know these are dark days for you, and I would encourage you to stay connected with the Word that generates light and power. There seems to have been a complete severing of the power source

for key individuals, and this is damaging the church. It seems the plug has been inserted into the wrong power source and sin is being generated. JESUS NEVER FAILS is more than a slogan on a bookmark. There is no blackout possible with Him. In the darkest hour, He is still able to be our source of power and light. Hopefully you can dispense some of this power in the right places through the energized Word of our Lord.”

August 30 – *China Interest and Development*

“I want to discuss with you the China opportunity. We have been waiting for this.” This was part of a message that was sent to Dr. Waldemar Degner of the Fort Wayne seminary faculty, and it was the beginning of various efforts to reach out to China.

China has been an intriguing place, which led to a number of LHF projects over the years. First, a word about my personal view of China. In my communications I differentiate between Hong Kong and “mainland China.” My visit to Hong Kong convinced me that Hong Kong fits more into a Western world category because of its upscale standard of living. More of the larger cities of the mainland are quickly achieving the Hong Kong level, but still have massive slums surrounding those major cities.

Some of the early work was established in connection with Mrs. Vera Sweet, director, Lutheran International Center at the University of Texas at Arlington. She had encountered Chinese students on campus, and she wanted materials like the *Small* and *Large Catechism* that could be used in campus work. I wrote to Mrs. Sweet, “I definitely am interested in getting the *Small Catechism* printed. I don’t want to get into a situation where all of a sudden we have to wait on a word from a board or group before proceeding. That is why we are independent and have the capacity to act quickly.” Work was progressing on a side by side English/Chinese edition of the *Small Catechism*. During this period we had contact with a Charles Liao in Maryland, who attended Concordia Seminary in Hankow, China, in 1931, and that led me to do some research on the early history of Lutheran mission efforts in China.

Mission Work – Hankow 1930s

The LCMS work in China started in 1913 under the auspices of a mission society organized within the synodical conference by Rev. E. L. Arndt and other pastors. Rev. E. Riedel joined Rev. Arndt in Hankow in 1915. At the 1917 LCMS convention, the LCMS decided to take over the work of the society. Rev. L. Meyer was the first pastor sent out by the LCMS. Since the beginning of the work, three missionaries had to resign on account of illness.

Statistics for 1925 show that the LCMS mission had 12 pastors serving in

the field at the end of the year. Ten were married, two were women teachers, one graduate nurse, 18 children, and one married missionary on furlough. Work was taking place in 12 chapels, seven of which are in Hankow. The number of souls was 478, with 309 communicants and 164 voting members. In 1925, 101 adults and 64 children were baptized. Nine men were studying for the ministry at the seminary.

The early history of the Hankow station would be worthy of a book itself. The regular Sunday services were well attended and the monthly communicants swelled by the girls from the girls' boarding school.

Student Liao wrote, "The Lutheran missionaries were just going to open a full-scale seminary in the northern suburbs, ten miles from the city of Hankow. They had constructed new houses in the compound that were considered among the most modern of the time. But alas, in 1937, the Sino-Japanese war broke out in a small town near Beijing. Soon it developed into a war of eight long years, and the seminary was under threat of air raids by the Japanese. The dean, Rev. Max Zschiegner, decided to close the school pending further notice. Although one missionary remained in Hankow well after the Communist victory in China, keeping an eye on the seminary compound, it eventually became clear that there would be no return. It was the first project of united Lutheranism and the place where many of the pivotal early meetings on Lutheran work in China had taken place. It was reluctantly abandoned to the tides of history. That seminary building eventually was taken by the Communists and used as an army headquarters."

"There shall come a root from the stump of Jesse" is the Scripture that comes to mind when I tell you that this is the very region I visited in August 2000.

Lutheranism Returns to Mainland China

The temptation would be to say that it was ironic that I should visit the very area where Lutheranism had its start in China. It would be more accurate to state that this was the Lord's doing, and that this small Lutheran beginning might very well be the "root that comes from the stump."

Because there is a house church that meets in this area where Lutheranism began, I am not divulging the name of the town or individuals connected with this church. Our connection began when a student at Concordia, Fort Wayne, Indiana, decided he would delay his vicarage and do a stint of teaching English as a Second Language in China. It is a clear demonstration as to how the Lord works in spite of the plans, policies, and machinations of men. Chinca (name used to protect individual) started teaching English in a Chinese grade school. On Sundays he would attend a Roman Catholic church within walking distance of his apartment. At the church he was

befriended by a family who invited him for Sunday dinner. This became somewhat of a regular schedule, and Chinca offered to buy the meat for the dinner as his contribution.

(Speaking of dinner, I am including this side comment about my experience with a Chinese dinner. When I visited, Chinca and I went to the meat market and saw what was quite different from America. It was plain to see that many parts of an animal that we discard are part of the diet in China. That is why at the dinner celebrating my arrival in China, chicken was served, and it was my first experience at eating both the comb and the feet of the chicken.)

During this time he became friends with one of the priests from the church and also with the daughter of the family inviting him to dinner. The young lady's husband had died, and she was a widow with two small children. The Lord led both parties to a closer relationship. He ended up marrying the lady, and he ended up giving the priest instructions from the catechism and the *Augsburg Confession*. The priest was eventually removed because he, too, married.

At this point, Chinca decided to prepare a Chinese Lutheran liturgy and conduct services in the home owned by his wife. First it was only members of his family, but eventually it grew to eight people being regularly involved, including the priest.

While visiting with Chinca, we organized an official LHF chapter, but it is difficult to translate the LHF name into Chinese. Chinca proposed we call it something like Lutheran Principles of Truth, Inc. It was a similar problem we had in many languages when we tried to translate the bookmark JESUS NEVER FAILS.

We investigated the possibility of having Chinca do his vicarage in China, but supervision was a problem. After several years of my connection in China, it was suggested that I get permission to ordain him because of this unusual circumstance. The Council of Presidents declined this request. It was later that we learned the policy of the LCMS World Mission was that our mission effort in China would only be carried out in cooperation with the government-sponsored church. Somewhere in the Council of Presidents' minutes you will find a speech by Dr. Wallace Schulz pleading that this policy be abandoned. What do you do with a church we did not plan, a church we did not project or propose? God delivered it in His own way, and it was our responsibility to support and undergird it.

At that point in time, the LHF had engaged Chinca as a translator and coordinator for work in mainland China. Furniture and equipment were provided, a computer and printer purchased. When his wife became

pregnant, they were facing the newly-established one child per family Chinese policy. The ruling was made that she would have to have an abortion. Being strongly opposed to abortion, Chinca arranged for the child to be born as an American citizen. They would return to the U.S. to have the child. The Chinese government made this difficult when they said his wife could go but not the children. After some intense negotiations, they were given permission to travel to America as a family. When they came to the airport, the airlines would not permit her to fly because she was in the final stages of her pregnancy. As soon as the baby was born government officials were right there making sure the child would be American.

Eventually they returned, and Chinca was given a vicarage assignment in a Chinese-speaking area of the United States. It was here that he was also ordained. The congregation back in mainland China was left under the supervision of the converted priest, who serves the congregation even today. Seminary training continues to be a question for the former priest, as he does not speak English. To have him go to Hong Kong would have him exposed and subject to the persecution still going on today, especially in the smaller towns where it is easier to have it go unreported.

In order to provide encouragement and added theological training to the worker priest, several individuals were sent to visit and conduct services, including Rev. Dr. Glen Proechel and Rev. Edmund Lim. They also investigated seminary training possibilities for the worker priest.

At one point in the life of this congregation, larger quarters had to be found for the worship service. Several baptisms have been performed. Chinca still serves as the communication link with the congregation. As late as May 8, 2011, we were discussing avenues of theological education for the worker priest. Although not the ideal route, we are talking about him attending one of the nearby Protestant theological schools and having him pick up some additional general Biblical knowledge. We would rotate some pastors and professors into China for private Lutheran theological courses leading to ordination.

China Disappointment

Why was it such a disappointment when on this same trip we visited The Great Wall, Tiananmen Square and Hong Kong? It wasn't The Great Wall or Tiananmen Square, even though they too have their historic disappointing aspects. It was disappointment as to what for years has been promoted as one of the great LCMS achievements—The Hong Kong International School.

Bear with me if you will, as I go back to that first parish in Wolf Point, Montana, as a young graduate from the seminary promoting to the people

of the parish the mission material that came from the synod's Department of Missions. I remember doing special 15 minute mission presentations prior to Lenten services, using the materials sent in special folders. This work was indelibly inscribed in my memory, and now I was finally going to be able to visit this crown jewel of LCMS missions.

To be sure, the school was everything I envisioned and read about and even more. The disappointment came when I participated in the Sunday worship. It was a disappointment even more than that of having a woman serving communion. The disappointment was looking around and seeing very few Chinese families in the congregation. Wasn't this a school of over 500 students, a school where Lutheranism was emphasized each day in the curriculum, a field that was a gold mine for evangelistic opportunity? Was it just my preconceived notion that the chapel would be filled to capacity with Chinese faces in this Lutheran atmosphere?

My deeper disappointment came the following day when I met with the president of the Lutheran Hong Kong Synod, and I expressed my disappointment. Rather than defending the situation in any way, he expressed his own disappointment. I remember him lamenting that the school was the Chamber of Commerce of the Hong Kong Synod. He explained that most students were coming because it was a premiere school in all of Hong Kong, and the students knew that by attending they would have better access to the universities in America. Can you see why this was such a blow to my deeply-engrained mission perception that had its roots in mission material provided by the church, 40 years previous? If we are building more schools in China, let the materials and publicity give us the true picture. I suppose you could say that the Concordia International School that is attached to the Hong Kong Synod is more mission driven. Poorer children attend this school, and the enrollment is around 80 students.

In Beijing, I visited a shopping center that had seven floors. It wasn't too far from the hotel where I was staying, but I decided on one trip to take one of the popular rickshaws that were always around. By now I knew the way to the shopping center and wondered why the guy was going every direction except the direction of the store. Unfortunately at this time I only had a \$100 bill. He was going to give me \$50 in change and I objected. I'm not sure what he understood of my English, but our loud conversation attracted quite a crowd of people. I insisted that the ride was not worth more than \$20. He ended up giving me another \$10, so this short "round about" ride cost me \$40. The lesson learned was that you should always carry smaller bills.

The other more positive experience was with a taxi driver who was taking me to Tiananmen Square. It was obvious he either didn't know where I

wanted to go or he was lost. I pulled out my map and pointed out where I wanted to go. He turned around, and when we arrived the meter said what amounted to \$20 and when I gave him the amount, he returned \$10 and apologized for not knowing where I wanted to go. It restored my confidence in the Chinese transportation arena.

October 25 – I met once again with Rev. Roberts Feldmanis for what I termed my regular history lesson on Latvian Lutheranism. This time he recalled for us a story about a Rev. Turss, who was bishop of the LLC during the Soviet era. According to Feldmanis, he saved the church by making personal visits to the small parishes and working “invisibly.” I mentioned the contrast today with LWF bishops, who with great pomp, regalia, and entourages, parade around as if they are the saviors of the world, when in reality they are moving Lutherans further and further away from the Truth.

Rev. Feldmanis had profuse gratitude for the work of LHF. He called our work a “secret Reformation” because it upsets the minds of the people. He mentioned our publishing of J.T. Mueller’s *Christian Dogmatics* as the first dogmatics ever had by the church.

One had been written, but the name of the author gave rise to a play on words, because his name and the word “false” were synonymous in Latvian. He became known as the one who wrote a false dogmatics.

On this visit to the Feldmanis apartment, we found it rather bare as compared to previous visits. His wall-to-wall library had been given to the seminary. I made the note that there was such a strong link between



Feldmanis at 90 years of age and the LHF at eight. I don't know if we can ever properly measure the large contribution Feldmanis has made to world Lutheranism. We felt that we were in the presence of a Lutheran giant.

In the evening, we met with the Latvian/Russian translation team. In this listing of the participants you can see the flavor of Latvian and Russian names. Those in attendance were Maris Sarma, Ingrida Augustane, Janis Smilgainis, Ivan Boryagin, Liene Sarma, Arnis Redonis, Alexy Komarov, Zhanna Grigorova, Alexander Bite, Konstantin Komarov, Adis Vaiekovsais, Janis Smits, Vladimir Boryagin, Andris Smilgdrivs, and Agate Muze. Among other things discussed at the meeting was the electronic transfer of stipends directly to each translator, with reports filed every quarter to show transactions. It is the modern era, and we are trying to keep up with technology.

October 26 – We spent the night on the train. Each time there was an interesting twist. This time it had to do with insurance. We experienced it on a previous trip. This time we were prepared when the person came and asked Konstantin if he had insurance. He said yes and she asked, “How can you prove?” Konstantin took out a receipt he got when he bought some shoes, and then she asked if I had a card. As I fumbled around getting out a credit card she left.

We were in St. Petersburg with our Russia staff participating in a Christian Book Exhibition. We displayed all of our Russian books and were part of many other displays in the cramped space. Judging of books takes place during the exhibition. At the end of the day, recognition is given in various categories. The two top books in a religious category went to the LHF for *Luther's Commentary on Romans* and *The Foolishness of God* by Becker. The previous year, LHF got top ratings for the *Book of Concord* and J.T. Mueller's *Christian Dogmatics*.

October 27 – Extensive talks were held with Rev. Scott Benjamin, who was interested in joining the LHF staff. He was serving in Russia under LRMS (Lutheran Russian Mission Society), an organization which he formed to establish Lutheran schools in Russia. The agreement would be that the LRMS would disband and he would work under the auspices of LHF.

October 29 – We arrived in Ekaterinburg, Siberia, at 3 a.m. After a short rest we took a taxi downtown, where space had been rented to conduct a Reformation service. It would be the first service for St. Peter and Paul Lutheran Church after the original church was destroyed by the Communists. A total of 13 people were present, including Konstantin and me. When we arrived, Sergey Glushkov was practicing the liturgy with the folks gathered. After the service there were some speeches on the part of some who were

expressing appreciation for the many books available to them from LHF. One elderly woman had tears when she said that she hadn't known the likes of so many books during her entire lifetime.

October 30 – Departing from a Russian city has some requirements that can only be met by proving you were actually in the city. It means that before we went to the airport we needed to stop at a hotel and go through registration motions, whereby they stamp your passport as though you were a guest. A small amount of money enables them to accomplish this task and we establish our legitimacy as tourists. It's known as "red tape." I didn't see the room that was rented but it was only \$3, so it could not have been too deluxe.

November 1 – I explained the history of the Golden Spike for Marina and Konstantin and likened our distribution network as having been completed when we established distribution centers in Irtusk and Vladivostok, along with Novosibirsk, Ekaterinburg, Saratov, Moscow and places beyond and between. It was an event similar to the railroad established to be the connecting link in the United States between the east and west.

2001

January 5 – Rev. Scott Benjamin is issued a Call/Contract to join the staff of LHF in the capacity of director of public relations.

February 13 – *Denmark*

LHF agreed to support the Danish Lutheran Free Church in publishing their bi-monthly newsletter for several years on a trial basis. The newsletter is called "Kyrka & Folk." Rev. Fredrik Sidenvall was one of the editors. We had gotten to know him through the annual confessional conferences that were sponsored in Lithuania, and through the contacts we had at the Nordisk Ostmission in Gothenberg, Sweden. We visited in 1998 with leaders of that group, which included Martin Wihlborg, Egon Olsson and Lars Larsson. These men were instrumental in giving help to our work in Latvia and also in Sudan. More is written about the role LHF played on the world scene, upholding and promoting confessional Lutheranism in regard to the work in Finland.

February 15 – The Swahili mini *Book of Concord*, containing portions of the larger volume, was released in Kenya.

February 19 – On the way to Sudan on a circuitous route because of airline snafus. We arrived two hours early at the Nairobi Airport and were told we had no reservations, and that the flight was overbooked by 18 passengers. Our question was, "How can this be? We not only have reservations, but

we have seat assignments.” I had never experienced activities demonstrated by irate Kenyans. They jumped the counter and engaged the agents, and even filed into offices making demands. We watched with interest. The head ticket agent tried to calm everyone down and had a solution. We could fly to Muscat, which we discovered was in Oman. Our suitcases were at international arrival and the flight was soon to depart. I told Mrs. Simojoki to wait at the counter for the boarding passes and I would run to the baggage area. I gave the attendant the baggage stubs. He disappeared and the flight was leaving. I left the luggage area, ran to the departure area with the ticket agent running with us past customs and security. Naturally the plane was the farthest one away on the tarmac. No jetways to the plane here. I gave the steward our boarding pass and requested first class because of the run-around. He directed us to the coach area, but he kept our stubs. There were six of us trying to get to Khartoum, all strangers. We were told that a plane would leave at 7 a.m. for Khartoum. All was well until we got to Muscat. We were now on our way to Khartoum and had no luggage tags, no tickets, not even stubs saying we were on the plane. They tried to figure out what to do with me, especially, and finally with some vouching from the others, I got passage. They gave us a “pink slip” we could use to pick up tickets in the morning. There was no plane at 7 a.m. but one at 11 a.m. They did give us lodging at a Holiday Inn, arriving at 2 a.m.

We discovered the flight from Muscat would go to Khartoum via Dubai, a six-hour flight arriving well after the service we were planning to attend. We did manage to get our tickets, but not in simple fashion. Lots of “just go over there and be seated, wait over there, just wait and be patient.” Of course, by this time all of that was ignored and we maintained an “in your face” style of waiting. We were not going to be denied. By this time the six of us had developed a pretty good camaraderie, with a lot of imitating of the agents.

Muscat was impressive and could be called “the oil city.” I have never been on a road such as the one from the airport to the hotel. There were mile after mile of beautifully manicured boulevards and ditches. All the stucco homes and businesses were elegantly painted, looking like a page out of a fairy tale. They were pleased that the price of oil had recently doubled. This was not too far from Baghdad, which came up in the news while we were traveling. My fellow traveler and guest seminary instructor, Rev. Andy Simcak, was amazed at the hoops we went through to get to Khartoum where a big delegation was waiting for us. This was the occasion when I was introduced no longer as the “father of Sudan Lutheranism, but the grandfather.” They learned of the birth of our first grandchild, Mackenzie.

Just before leaving on this trip, a phone call was received from the LCMS

World Mission Executive Director, requesting a meeting. The underlying hidden agenda seemed to be the LHF RSO status. A number of issues were listed and the Benjamin name was mentioned. It seems they did not approve of us taking Rev. Benjamin on staff. I wrote a message to him before boarding the plane, informing him as to how disappointed I was with the phone call and leaving with this burden. I suggested he prepare an agenda so that we would be ready to address all concerns. There was an attempt to block Benjamin's installation until matters were resolved.

This was the time when a new term surfaced in connection with our work. It's another one of those "t" words. Recently the "t" word becoming more and more prominent is the word "tolerance." For the World Mission at this time it was the word "transparency." The point of the entire scenario was that LHF delayed calling Benjamin until all matters had become "transparent." This was a case where an LCMS pastor was sent as a missionary and became frustrated with the direction being taken and resigned, but stayed in the country to do mission work. It wasn't the last time this very same action was taken by a missionary who was clergy-trained.

February 22 – Container shipped to Khartoum, Sudan, 220 boxes (80 books and 140 clothing) weighing 15,000 pounds.

March 9 - *The Word of the Lord Grows and Goes – Australia*

This was an example as to how a book published in the country of one language, like Sudan, finds its way to a place like Adelaide, South Australia. It was also evidence of the fact that THE WORD WORKS. The following message was from a Pastor Bryce Clark whose email was not working, and the message was forwarded by a contact we had for Australia, Rev. David Buck.

"We recently had the privilege of ministering to several families from Sudan who have arrived in our country as refugees. These are strong Christian people from a Presbyterian background. Their English is poor but their desire to worship and grow in the faith and in the Australian culture is very great. I came across a newsletter of yours, and to my delight discovered that you have published, or are publishing some material in the Nuer language.

"I am in need of any Christian material in their language. Ideally I would like to feed their faith at least as much as Australian culture is going to feed their flesh. The local Bible society has advised me that it would be at least four months for any material from them, and that would only be the Nuer New Testament.

"I look forward to your prompt reply as we have at least 30 people from Southern Sudan and more arrivals due very soon, from what I have been able to understand."

There was also a lady in Australia by the name of Susan Robertson who received one of our JESUS NEVER FAILS bookmarks. She went on to remark about its charming quality, and reporting how it hangs on her wall in front of her desk among some other pictorial treasures. She heard about LHF through *Christian News* and told me of her regrets in regard to the Lutheran drift and the consideration being given to women's ordination.

I wrote to her to thank her for reminding me that "the deal is not done" on women's ordination. I related an incident of a pastor friend serving in England, who was verbally attacked by the wife of a church leader just prior to a service of Holy Communion. He informed her after her tirade that she should not attend communion until the matter was settled between them. She chose to come anyway and he refused her communion.

I wrote, "He is now dealing with the fallout. We have encouraged him and commended him for keeping the Lord's Table from becoming what I called a mere 'Happy Meal.' Little consideration is given to the significance of the Supper and the manner in which it should be received. We seem to thrive on our individual preferences and likes, we operate on the basis what feeds our egos, we circle the table of smorgasbord offerings from the world, and then we act as if it is religious. Little wonder that our souls are starving while surrounded by food that lifts and lasts."

I stated further, "Is it not true that some of the same sentiments rule the hearts and minds of those who want to follow the agenda prepared for the church by the world in regard to the question of women's ordination? How much of it is really a commitment based on the Word of God, and how much of it is dictated by the world's agenda? In America we wring our hands over a recent killing of 20 school students. We wonder how this can be.

"We point the finger at parents, at the movies, at the generation, at the school, but we fail to see the moral degeneration of a society with a commitment to non-commitment, a world of free choice. We kill the babies, we kill the elderly, we flaunt the sex to satisfy the cravings, and cry out against the radical religious right's call for moral adjustment. Certainly judgment will never again come like the flood as signaled by the rainbow, but what about the fire and brimstone of a judgment to come upon a sinful world?

"This is a wacky world into which Jesus came with an offer and invitation to follow Him, to hear the Gospel and to have faith created as a result. It will mean suffering and trials as promised, but there is also the blessed end."

Through our correspondence and sending of books, newsletters, and *Good News*, the result is that we have three close friends in Australia supporting our work: Rev. David Buck, Rev. Bruce Adams, and Susan Robertson. Financial support comes for our mission from these quarters as well. David

Buck says, “I’m keen that as many people as possible in the Lutheran Church of Australia might know about the work of LHF.” It was Pastor Buck who also requested a copy of the catechism in the Sinhalese dialect of Sri Lanka to be used by a member in his church. And it was Pastor Adams who wrote, “You have no idea of the joy it brought me to receive your email. For this aging pastor emeritus in his 84th year, you have inspired me to carry out a special ministry of making better known the witness and ministry of the LHF. I assure you that I shall distribute copies of your newsletter and copies of *Good News* to make LHF better known.”

May 1 – Ms. Suzanne Zobel receives Call/Solemn Appointment to LHF staff in a position as mission education coordinator. Her outlined task was to promote and increase awareness and support of LHF through mission presentations to individuals, schools, and groups. She was to conduct international workshops for children and women’s groups to strengthen their faith and understanding of Lutheranism.

May 11 – The groundbreaking ceremonies are held on the site of our World Mission Center. Rev. Bob Kasper, pastor of St. Peter Lutheran Church, Macomb, Michigan, served as the speaker for the event attended by 100 participants. Each member of the board was given an opportunity to turn a shovel of dirt. Following the groundbreaking, a lunch was served at the Partridge Creek Golf Club.



May 16 – Nigeria

Dr. Nelson Unwene, former president of the Lutheran Church of Nigeria, completes doctor of missiology at Fort Wayne and asked to help with translating confessional materials into Efik, spoken by six million. “There is still a great and burning desire in me to pursue what I presently see as a great and promising ministry that will enhance the conservation

The Rahn family farm



Farming, early days



Work on the farm





Some current family landmarks in
Eagan, Minnesota



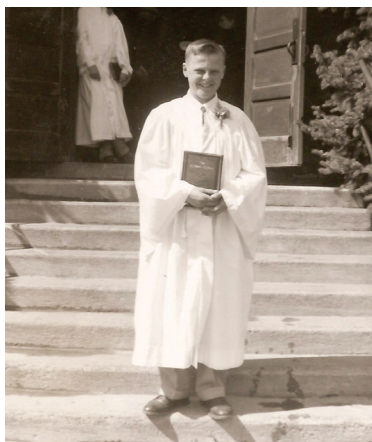
Christ Lutheran Church and School, attended grades 1-4



School District 104, attended grades 5-8



Confirmation – April 10, 1950



Rev. Carl & Pat Friedrich,
front row left, influential pastor



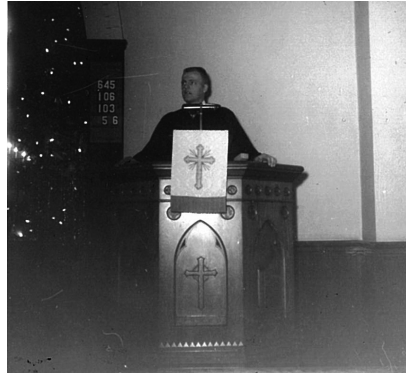
Dressed for the Annual Prima Secunda banquet,
Concordia College, St. Paul, Minnesota



Rahn Family on parents' 50th wedding anniversary



Conducting service and preaching for the first time in my home congregation, St. John, Rich Valley, Minnesota



Painting with the Heisze Contracting Company, St. Paul, Minnesota, a firm we organized to cover seminary education expenses



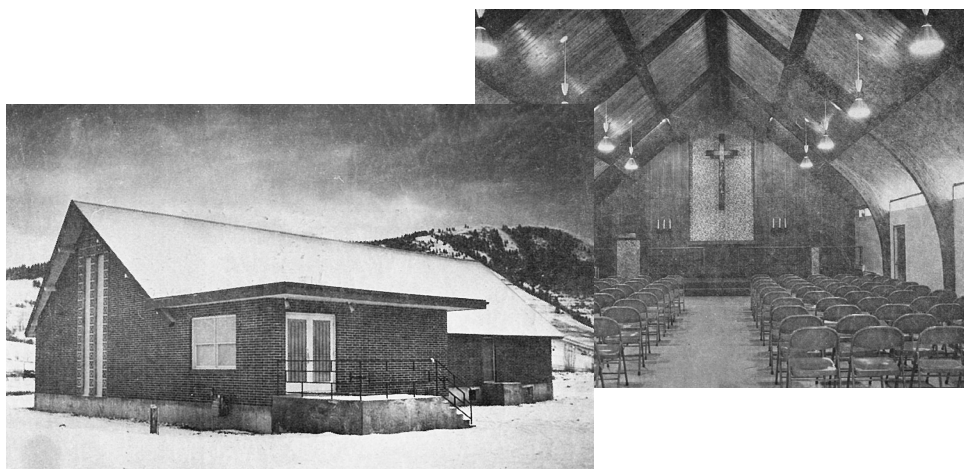
Married to Donna Danner after eight years of courtship – June 24, 1961



First Call – Trinity Lutheran, Wolf Point, Montana



New mission church organized in Messiah Lutheran, Missoula, Montana



Early trip to Russia with Dr. Ben Armstrong,
head of National Religious Broadcasters



First offices in home den and basement, Avon Lake, Ohio
and Sterling Heights, Michigan



Volunteers work on mailings, Rutkowsky Hall, St. John, Fraser, Michigan



First LHF leased office, Garfield Ave., Clinton Township, Michigan



Bible distribution on Riga, Latvia City Square and Red Square, Moscow, Russia.



Most beautiful church in the world located in a cemetery, St. Petersburg, Russia



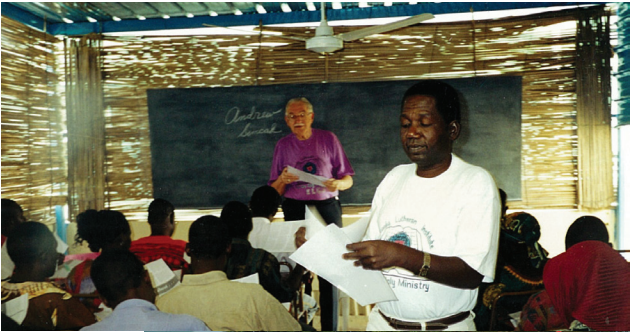
Awarded Honorary Doctorate from Concordia Theological Seminary,
Fort Wayne, Indiana and the Confessional Lutheran of the Year from
Association of Confessional Lutherans



LHF Board applies for Recognized Service Organization (RSO) status with
LCMS and Michigan District President, Rev. William Hoesman, issues charter



First seminary class taught in Khartoum, Sudan. Third class of 16 graduates from Concordia Lutheran Institute for the Holy Ministry, Yambio, Sudan



LHF World Mission Center, 51474 Romeo Plank Road, Macomb, Michigan built and dedicated on October 13, 2002



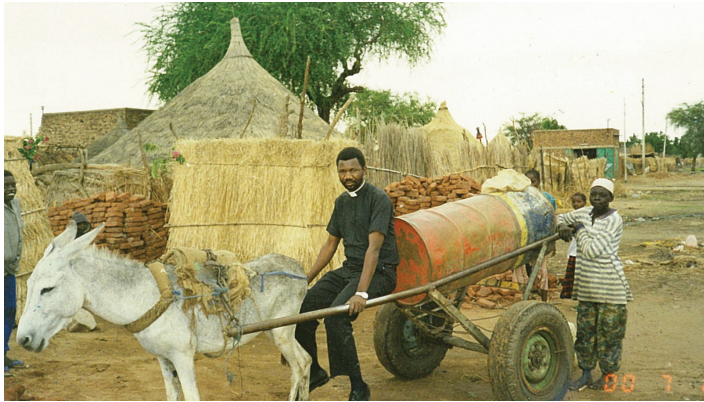


Volunteers now do their mailings from the Hugh and Jennie Cotton Memorial Wing, KROS Hall (King's Royal Order of Stuffers)



Regular and ongoing meetings take place with bishops of the church internationally and nationally





Some of the international students LHF has sponsored at seminaries in the U.S. and abroad



IRPRs (Independent Regional Promotion Directors) who have been part of the LHF mission corps



All transportation means are used to distribute books to the Maasai in Kenya, students at seminaries in Siberia, Russia, Kazakhstan, Cambodia, Sudan, South Africa, Congo, Latvia, and other places in the world.





Rev. James Fandrey, LHF executive director, officiates at the closing ceremonies of the first convention of the ELCS/SS in Yambio, Sudan, on October 14, 2011



The Russian *Book of Concord* is one of over 600 titles, including 60 catechisms, that have been published globally because of the prayers and support of you, our mission partners.



of genuine Lutheranism among my people. Most Africans and third world countries lack the resources (books) for the teaching and instructional task of the Christian churches in their midst. Your foundation is doing just what is required for the churches, to supply the bread of life in the language of the people. If you consider me 'fit' to be part of your foundation's limb for the enhancing of our Lord's Commission, I will give my best for this."

May 18 – An Honorary Doctorate was bestowed by Concordia, Fort Wayne, and the following news release was filed:

"Pastor Rahn Becomes Doctor - Concordia Theological Seminary bestowed an Honorary Doctorate on Pastor Rahn for extraordinary service to world Lutheranism. He also served on this occasion as the graduation speaker for the seminary class of 2001."



Some have asked if there was a connection between the 40th anniversary of my ordination and the award. The answer is that it was a mere coincidence. The general procedure for awarding an honorary doctorate is for a faculty to make this choice. In many cases there are multiple awards, but in this instance Pastor Rahn was a single recipient.

Dr. William Weinrich, academic dean, read a lengthy service description that led to the faculty decision. Especially cited was Pastor Rahn's service to the LCMS in a variety of capacities, including 15 years of ministry in two Montana congregations, service on the faculty of Concordia, River Forest, Illinois, on the staff of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort

Wayne, Indiana, and executive director of God's Word to the Nations Bible Society, Cleveland, Ohio. Also cited was the successful launching of the worldwide work of the Lutheran Heritage Foundation which has had a profound influence on Lutherans in many areas of the world.

Pastor Rahn addressed the graduates on the theme: THE WORD WORKS. LET IT WORK IN YOUR WORK. Various illustrations were given as to how the Word has worked in the LHF mission.

"This award is not something I accept on my own behalf, but on behalf of my family," Rev. Rahn stated. He further pointed out, "This family also includes the larger family of all those who made the LHF work possible. The Lord has chosen to lead many of you into a partnership that made this degree possible, and I thank all of you."

A video of the actual bestowal was shown at the 40th anniversary dinner on June 24th. The staff and members of St. John, Fraser, Michigan, saluted Dr. Rahn on his achievement and continued worldwide ministry.

June 8 – Rev. Edmund Lim assisted in getting the English/Chinese (side-by-side) *Small Catechism* enchiridion completed, and we engaged Bob Bao to work on the rest of the edition in the simplified Chinese style.

June 24 – LHF board conducts service and dinner to celebrate my 40th anniversary in the ministry and doctorate recognition. The service was held at St. John's Lutheran Church, Fraser, Michigan, and the dinner was hosted at the Sterling Inn, Sterling Heights, Michigan. 200 guests attended the dinner. Dr. Wallace Schulz in his sermon stated, "The LHF is the most prolific producer of confessional writings in the history of all Lutheranism."

August 25 – Pastor Tom Petersen, Bishop Slavik, and I took a trip to the Crimea of Ukraine to visit churches, workers, and sites, one of which had an American connection. In Yalta we visited the Livadia Palace, where the infamous meeting took place between Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill. We saw where Roosevelt had his special bed placed, where he ate his meals, and where he studied. There was also a connection between the Palace and Ekaterinburg, Siberia. Nicholas II spent his summers at this palace. I have pictures of the Ekaterinburg site where this last czar of Russia and his entire family were executed.

In Sevastopol, we have a storage place and mailing center that serves this Russian area of Ukraine. This is the area where we helped Rev. Baidak get situated after becoming part of the ELS and being assigned to serve four Russian-speaking congregations in the region. Pastor Baidak thanked me for the opportunity to serve in this area and for encouraging him to join the ELS.

We also visited the ruins of the ancient Greek city of Kersonesus, built

around 5 BC. The site included St. Vladimir Orthodox Church, built in honor of Vladimir who brought Christianity to Ukraine. In Kiev, there is a large statue of Vladimir holding a sword and looking out over the Dniepir River, commemorating the many he baptized in those waters.

Our trip included a drive up the mountain side, where at 2,400 feet a Russian Orthodox church was built by a general as a thankoffering after he was spared shipwreck in a storm on the Black Sea. Rev. Petersen commented, “The LHF is accomplishing more through the publishing of its books than will ever be accomplished by building a church on a mountain.”

August 28 – From Kiev we traveled to Riga where we were met by a large delegation, including the staff of the Augsburg Institute. The fanfare involved the release of the Latvian *Book of Concord*, but there was a resulting problem because the Augsburg Institute had withdrawn their cooperation on the project. As we entered the terminal, I was handed a copy of the *Book of Concord*, and I spoke appreciatively of the completed work. Later in the day I found out that they had included two forwards in the book. This was a problem that developed because we were not permitted to do our requested review. The first forward talks positively about our joint work, but the second (written by the Augsburg Institute director) is quite lengthy and critical of the ELCL, insinuating that the CLCL is the only faithful group.

We discussed our approach, since this forward would drag the LHF into a possible appearance of collusion. Their claim was that the bishop was invited to write a forward but declined, and we wanted to wait and hear from the bishop ourselves. There was also a major flaw discovered in the translation whereby “communion of saints” was translated as “communion of holy things.” All of this dampened the spirit of the release. We had earlier proposed that it come out with no introduction. Now we were faced with damage control in regard to how we could keep it from causing more discord.

We talked about taking our 500 copies and simply cutting out the pages but felt this would be deceptive. Another option was to write our own disclaimer and ask readers to disregard the pages. We do have the advantage that it would be used primarily at the seminary and could be introduced under a controlled atmosphere, and maybe even taught as a lesson in what constitutes confessional Lutheranism, or how a Concord can become a “dis-concord” when modern men attempt to improve or become lords over a text.

All of this resolved itself when we met with the bishop and the plans were to introduce it at a Reformation event that was already being planned by the ELCL. It was also determined in consultation with Rev. Guntis Kalme, LHF Latvia’s board chairman, and Dr. Slenzcka, seminary rector, that this would be considered a review edition, and that we immediately begin to

work on a new edition that would include paragraph numbers, footnotes and appendix. The Augsburg Institute will be asked to provide the electronic edition, and the new complete edition will be completed as a joint project between LHF and the Augsburg Institute.

September 2 – The crawfish were boiling in the kitchen and the drinks were cooling, so the party was beginning as the festivities (official) of the day had ended. Suits and clericals had been removed in favor of sports attire. It was truly an historic day here in Novosibirsk. It began in the morning with us departing from the old seminary and gathering at the entrance of the “new seminary.” Bishop Kalvanas and Pastor Lytkin performed the rite of dedication for the building. Processing in with the clergy, deacons, students, and faculty, the service began with the consecration of the lectern, pulpit, altar, classrooms, and offices. Two students were ordained as deacons, and four deacons elevated as pastors. Included in the group were Sergey Glushkov becoming a deacon and Alexey Stretslov becoming a pastor. During the reception, many conversations were had and decisions were made. I spoke at length to the Irkutsk branch director, Rev. Slavik Pljaskin, who served six congregations around Irkutsk. He gave me a picture of the main church showing a Baptist pastor in the front row who said, “I left a religious organization and joined a church. I am correcting all my mistakes made while being a pastor of a religious organization and now can teach the sacraments correctly.” I was informed that the book distribution in this region had already shown a positive effect when a small group of Lithuanian Lutherans were discovered to exist in the region. They are now part of a congregation receiving more of our literature.

September 4 – Almaty, Kazakhstan was our destination to meet with Rev. Gennadij Khonin, LHF branch director, and to visit the seminary being operated by the LCMS. Gennadij complained about the Protestant-type material translated here. More LHF materials were needed on which to build the foundation. Gennadij hosted Rev. Petersen and me for dinner with a salad much like a pea salad, tomatoes with garlic, various sausages, and cheese. The big special of the night was horse meat. Yes, they consider it a delicacy. I had several pieces and must admit it wasn’t as bad as expected. Joining us also were Rev. and Mrs. Otto Brillinger, who spent a lot of time here teaching at the seminary. It turned out that Otto and Rev. Petersen were old friends in Texas who didn’t recognize each other at first, but found they had a lot of catching up to do.

We visited a mountain lookout, including a large earthen dam that protects the town from another possible mud slide like the one that killed thousands of people in 1972. We also saw the skating rink where Eric Heiden

set his world record during the Olympics.

September 7 – New Guinea Work Begins

Rev. John Fehrmann spent hours with Dr. Willard Burce, who had been a missionary in Papua New Guinea (PNG) from 1948-1988 and was living in retirement in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. It was at this meeting that a plan was devised to publish six works:

1. *Luther's Small Catechism* (LSC) with explanation in the Enga language
2. LSC with explanation in Pidgin
3. LSC with explanation in English (translated from Enga in simple English)
4. 70 New Testament Bible Stories in Enga
5. *Bible History* in Enga
6. *The Lutheran Liturgy* in Enga

After the meeting Rev. Fehrmann wrote, "I cannot put into words what this means to me personally, almost 45 years to the day, to be a part of continuing what my father and other pioneer missionaries in PNG started."

During 2001, a new PNG Mission Society was started with the main purpose being to send "old missionaries" back on a regular basis to teach and lecture using the materials published by LHF. Two schoolmates and former missionaries in PNG served on that Board, including Rev. Harvey Kath and Dr. Robert Holst. I had several meetings in Wisconsin with Rev. Kath and Rev. Burce to continue the work that was started. Rev. Kath was sent back to PNG several times to introduce LHF books that included, in addition to the ones cited previously, *Tok Bilip Bilong Yumi*, which was a "Statement of Faith" prepared by The Committee on Theology and Inter-Church Relations of the Lutheran churches in PNG, LCMS and Australian Lutheran Mission. This volume is a 325-page diglot compendium in Melanesian Pidgin and English on the teachings of the Lutheran Confessions.

September 17 – Panama

Rev. Scott Benjamin discussed a fundraising project for Panama with Jim McMiller, brother to Dan, LCMS missionary in Panama. He mentioned Dan talking about the need for more Spanish materials and he stated, "So, we will see where we go from here." It actually took some years and some effort before we published the first major work in Spanish. On March 14, 2002, Rev. Tom Petersen and I visited Panama in connection with a visit to the Lutheran Church of Brazil. At the time there was a lot of interest in establishing a seminary program and purchasing a building. The need for Spanish Bibles and catechisms was highlighted by the fact that missionaries hide them for use with "bonafide" church prospects.

During this time there was much negotiation with the Panama Bible Society and with our printer in Minsk, Belarus, relating to the cost of printing and shipping such a Bible.

October – Uganda

It was during the Reformation season that the LHF released the Ganda catechism at special ceremonies also involving the Lutheran Hour Ministries office in Kampala. Representing the LHF at this event was Rev. Japhet Dachi, staff member from the LHF Nairobi Mission Center. As in many events of these kind held in Africa, it is not only the officials of the church that attend, but also high officials of the government. The Deputy Mayor of the City of Kampala participated in the event, and on this occasion stated, “I encourage Christians to return to the pure doctrine taught by Christ and His apostles. These books will help the Lutheran Church to enhance its role of nurturing and edifying Christians.” The President of the Lutheran Church Mission, Rev. Henry Baliddawa, said, “The translation and printing of the catechism was an achievement of the church after work started in 1994. This is a positive step in the right direction as we mark another milestone in our journey with Jesus Christ. The catechism translation is a cherished dream come true.” A total of 5,000 volumes were published by the LHF and, like most volumes, has been distributed free of charge.

Taking Stock of Ministry

Mission effort isn’t always a never-ending success story. Losses and failures are also part of the landscape. It was in Uganda where we had to take stock of the ministry and curtail operations until the church could analyze its own problems. Shortly after publishing the Runyankore edition of the catechism in 2009, it was concluded that our work in Uganda should take a different direction.

We were working with a pastor who was a self-appointed bishop of a small Lutheran church body. He had visions of grandeur that he assumed we would fund. Perhaps no situation is more difficult than being a brief visitor to a mission field to really know what is taking place. Do you know that it is possible to be deceived even in an arranged church service? We were somewhat annoyed to be driven into a slum area and to wait in a car while the bishop arranged for the service. Two hours later, we were summoned to a tent where people had gathered and a dozen children awaited baptism. It was a service of confusion, but the baptisms did take place. We later ascertained that people had been rounded up as if for extras on a movie set. We even taught some students whom we assumed to be in a pastoral program, but aren’t sure if they weren’t given payment to be present for the class.

When elaborate building plans included the laying of a cornerstone for a church on some hundreds of acres of land that it was assumed we would fund, it was time to take stock and withdraw “for a season.”

With the arrival of LCMS missionary Jacob Gillard in Kampala in 2010, we have found a reliable man on the scene to analyze the state of Lutheranism and follow his lead in terms of translation work needed. We are thankful that in 99 percent of cases, we have reliable and authentic individuals serving with us. There is always a danger that people see missionaries from the West and view them as great sources of finances.

A reliable worker for us in Kampala has been a Sudanese student, whom we have sponsored in a business program (hotel management) from Yambio. He served as our liaison officer for all travelers on their way to Sudan. He provided the services needed while visas were obtained to enter South Sudan. As I write he is on his way back to Yambio, where he will serve as the ELCS director of the guest house and compound.

2002

March 17-20 – First trip made to South America to respond to their request for our publishing help. Rev. Carlos Winterle, president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Brazil, was our host. Discussions centered on providing works in Portuguese. It was the beginning of our work in South America. On this trip, accompanied by Rev. Tom Petersen, we also visited Panama where we met missionary Dan McMiller, who requested help in publishing a Spanish Bible with a catechism. This request wasn’t fulfilled until some years later. Its publishing will be referenced later.

Rev. Jim Fandrey made a more extensive trip to the area in March 2011, visiting Argentina, Brazil, Chili, and Uruguay. Both Rev. Fandrey and I were impressed with what is the largest Lutheran university in the world, ULBRA (Lutheran University of Brazil). The main campus with 20,000 students is in Porto Alegre, and there are 13 other campuses offering the full gamut of education. The campus has a huge hospital that is tied in with a full medical program.

Each year we have adopted one publishing project for the IELB as a joint venture with their Concordia Publishing House, with works published in the Portuguese language.

When Rev. Dan McMiller left Panama to become a mission executive for the South Wisconsin District, several attempts were made to keep the project active. It wasn’t until the LHF received a major grant from Rev. Tom Petersen for the Spanish *Bible with Small Catechism* that the project got back on track.

The difficulty was to keep the price at a minimum. It meant looking elsewhere for an edition of the Spanish catechism, rather than paying a copyright fee that would have increased the cost of each volume by 50 cents. With help from Rev. Doug Rutt, a former missionary in Central America who is fluent in Spanish and at the time served on the faculty of CTSFW, we were able to engage Rev. Walter Ralli in Seville, Spain. Rev. Ralli had produced a Spanish catechism but it needed updating. The LHF engaged Rev. Ralli in the task of producing a new edition with help from catechists Juan Carlos Garcia, Seville, and Javier Sanchez, Toledo, Spain. This led to the first publishing of the LHF Spanish *Bible with Small Catechism*. The American Bible Society (ABS) was kind enough to provide the Spanish Bible text in the Reina Valera translation, and the Ralli catechism was added as an appendix.

The ABS also agreed to be the LHF shipping agent to places requesting the Bible in Central and South America, on a door-to-door shipping basis. LHF assumed the cost of shipping and used the expertise of the ABS to deal with ports, customs, and fees. The first print run of 20,000 was quickly depleted, with copies finding their way to places like Panama, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Argentina, the Dominican Republic, Spain, and many U.S. locations. Even 1,000 copies found their way into Cuba by using the Canadian Bible Society as our shipping agents, due to the fact that the United States has an embargo against Cuba and nothing can be shipped from America.

Word started filtering back to the LHF office that the edition proved to be helpful in many mission fields, and there were requests for more copies. Some additional improvements were made in the catechism text between Rev. Ralli and Dr. Rutt, and a second edition was at the press with another run of 20,000 copies in both a hardcover and softcover edition. This time more countries in Central and South America were included.

This project continues to be highly appreciated. By the end of 2012, it is expected that a third edition will go to press. Rev. Tom Petersen's gift of a home enabled LHF to keep this project alive. There were also LWML districts providing help, including the Texas District LWML and the Central Illinois District LWML, as well as Brookfield Lutheran Church, Brookfield, Wisconsin.

It took almost ten years for this project to move from an idea to reality. Rev. Dan McMiller was especially appreciative when the project was at the printer. He was the individual who first recommended this as a fitting project for the mission field. He actively uses it for work in the South Wisconsin District. Dr. Alberto Garcia was involved in the distribution of the *Bible with Small Catechism* in Cuba, along with a group of students from Concordia, Mequon, Wisconsin, who were in Cuba on a mission trip with Rev. Garcia, who serves on the faculty of Concordia, Mequon.

This was one of those projects in which many hands joined together to bring a project to completion. We are especially grateful for the hand of the Lord always directing, always guiding, until this work reached the stage of reality.

One of the future goals is to perhaps use a more modern Spanish translation and utilize it as a Youth Edition. We are grateful to the ABS for providing the Spanish Bible text and supervising the printing and shipping.

May 1 – Brenda Pedersen joined the LHF staff as receptionist and executive secretary.

May 1 – Suzanne Zobel, Rev. Tom Petersen and I attended a meeting of the Executive Committee of the ELCS in Khartoum. Each member gave a report. The thank you's to the LHF became a little overwhelming and almost embarrassing. I spoke to them on the theme: THE WORD WORKS, LET IT WORK IN YOUR WORK, the same theme that was used when I spoke to the Fort Wayne graduates one year earlier. I told them all the accolades belong to the Lord and not to us. Their reports only indicated that the Word works and it would be our prayer that the people who support LHF would believe this and continue to support the LHF, so we in turn could continue our active involvement in their mission. Suzanne spoke to the women, and it was noted she was the first woman to officially visit the ELCS. Her reception was a little overwhelming, with remarks from Rev. Andrew and the Women's Program chairman.

We were given a tour of the complex and found many changes from our last visit. A kitchen upstairs had become an office. A small room downstairs had a cooler with Pepsi. The cooler is provided free by Pepsi if their products are sold. They expanded the clinic and are hoping the government will provide funds for a six-bed hospital, where patients can be held for 12 hours to see if their health requires transfer to the main hospital. The worship area was also altered with the bamboo roof raised about three feet and ceiling fans installed. They also have their own sound system and have bought their own large video camera. They previously had to pay \$60 for two-hour sessions and now they hire out at the same rate. They sold the motorized rickshaws and now have a 20-passenger bus that "runs the streets" and provides fares of some \$25 per day. There has been a proliferation of new city buses and they are afraid it will affect their income. An annex building that was nothing more than a junk room had been turned into the Youth Department. They have purchased a welder, and instead of paying \$10 per six foot bench, they make them themselves and provide them for new congregations.

May 2 – A Letter to Mackenzie (age 1½), from Grandpa in Sudan

Dear Grandma & Mackenzie,

This is Thursday and you'll be checking the clocks, feeding the birds, looking at the cross, and finding Jesus (cuckoo, bird feeders on deck, wall cross, picture Last Supper). The only thing different is that Grandpa won't be coming home at lunch to pull you in your wagon. I'll miss doing that, because Grandpa loves you and Grandma very much.

I'm far away. Someday you'll find the place on the globe you like to play with in my office. I'm in a country far away that has some of those animals you like to take from my office bookcase, the Maasai beads you like to take down and play with, the Sudan water pots, and the little tea cups from China you and I pretend to drink from.

I'll probably never be able to bring you here. Maybe your Dad can do it. Maybe someday you can go to school to be a teacher/missionary and come to places like Sudan to help people. The people here are anxious to learn about Jesus and to take the message to their families. There is much suffering as a result of war. People are hungry because their homes have been destroyed, and many are living in camps with no fancy dresses and hats that we love to see you wear. We pray that you will never have to live in a country where you have to fear every day for your life and every day wonder what you will eat.

Someday you'll be able to read this message yourself and know how much you are loved and how much we want to protect you from any harm. We also know how important the love of God is in granting you the protection for which we pray. We love to see your folded hands as you begin to honor God. It is our prayer that you will always remember what a great God we have and how we can honor Him.

By this time next week I'll be back home with you and I'll be able to hold you and tell you all about the animals and birds we saw here. Now I have to visit some important people in the government that will help us continue our work here of telling people about Jesus. On Sunday I will baptize Andrew's son, Elisa, and give him what Jesus offers, the forgiveness of sins.

I know your Dad, Mom, and Grandma will take good care of you and I'll be able to see you soon.

I love you,
Grandpa

May 2 – We just had dinner with Dr. Costa Jarvas and Mr. Joseph Ukel. The doctor was with us when we visited the government Office of Peace earlier today. Dr. Jarvas wanted us to have direct access to the other side's report. Mr. Ukel has been with the Sudan People's Liberation Army as a leader and has spent 11 months in jail, has had his passport removed and travel restricted. He is being watched by government people, as he is an outspoken supporter of the SPLA and does not support a cease-fire in the south until their demands have been addressed. He calls the Muslim-based government a minority and leaders not true Sudanese. Until the majority accepts Danforth's suggestion for sharing the wealth of the oil and the south having true input in the government, there will be no full cease-fire. The Muslims will only use it to build up their power and force. They have had this happen before and been shafted by the government. The government has offered minor posts to southerners in the government, but they are marginalized and forbidden to speak openly.

He feels that Danforth has made the right step and is looking for the monitors to keep the initiative, but talks have to address their main issues, recognizing their natural right as true Sudanese and the country's majority population of 69 percent, and that there be assurance of sharing the power and sharing the wealth. The SPLA seems to have most of the south covered, even though the government forces control over the towns, the largest of which has a population of 5,000. Danforth met with this man and his leaders when he was here.

Both of the above-mentioned men are Christians and more "transparent" than the government operatives. Mr. Ukel warned us as Americans that our great minority rights and freedom of religion have helped us in the Cold War, but the growing Muslim population is going to heat things up if their usual pattern of operation holds. He listed all the places where they lay low until they have the power (an interesting synopsis prior to the recent division of the country).

May 7, 8 – Dr. Simojoki holds translation meetings in Lilongwe, Malawi, with Rev. Dr. J.P. Bvumbwe, bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malawi. This church was founded in 1982 and has a membership of 25,000 in the country. Their history includes a vote against German missionaries who were promoting women's ordination. It was agreed that translation work would begin in the Chewa language, spoken by 17 million people in Malawi, Zambia, and Mozambique and also in the Tumbuka language spoken by 2 million people in Malawi. The catechism was completed in each language on February 1, 2004.

May 15 – The LHF board votes to grant permission to Dr. Anssi Simojoki

to investigate the possibility of forming a Lutheran Academy in Africa for the purpose of promoting confessional Lutheranism. Several attempts were later made to purchase a building for this purpose, but the plan never came to fruition (although seminars and conferences were held in our Nairobi complex).

May 15 – Report to LHF Board on Trip to Sudan April 29-May 8:

“I am the Vine, you are the branches. He who remains in Me and I in Him is the one who bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.”

ON THE OTHER HAND...WITH ME YOU CAN DO SOMETHING!

I returned from the Sudan vineyard with awe and humility, for I saw the hand of God enabling fruit to be produced in some of the most barren places on the face of the earth. Only God could provide the increase, only God could do something here, and He has done it. With Him, it has been proven, we could do something. Had you been there, your conviction would have been to do more. This report can only convey a small tinge of the overwhelming, enthusiastic joy I felt being with these displaced people.

It is hard to put into words the tremendous and overwhelming feeling of awe that surrounded the many events in Sudan. I don't believe any synod president, district president or mission official has ever participated in events that filled our four consecutive days. To report that I participated in five services during those four days would not be that significant, as I recently had a Sunday in the United States with five services. The unique ingredient was that three of the services were church dedications, two involved the baptisms of some 60 people, and one also included the first anniversary observance for the CLIHM. No service was less than three hours, and Sunday's worship went for seven hours.

Abu Hajar

Abu Hajar is in the Sennar State of Sudan. We drove for five hours to get to this church site. The first 40 miles were smooth, and the next 80 were a real test even for a 4WD Toyota. We stopped along the way for our potluck breakfast using one of the bamboo shelters in a roadside market area. It was evident that even animals sought shelter here from the 100 plus degree heat.

When we arrived in Abu Hajar, our first stop was at the police station to report our presence. There was no marking on the hut to indicate it was a police station, and the officer had no uniform to indicate he was such.

We proceeded to an area where there were grass thatched huts. In the midst of these huts stood a straw thatched church with a congregation gathered, giving us a welcome in song. There were handshakes all around with many children and women making up the group. We were told the men had left to travel many miles, as they do twice a year, to help on Arabic-owned farms. They stay several months and then return. It is their only income for the year.

A tent was erected in front of the church to accommodate the congregation, since the church had already been outgrown before it was completed. The sermon, preached and translated into Arabic and Dinka, was on Matthew 7, the house built on the rock and the one built on the sand. The baptism of adults and children followed the sermon. There is no school of any kind in this village, so many are totally illiterate.

Singia

We were greeted again by a delegation literally running ahead of us, after obtaining permission to be there. This was scheduled as a dedication service. The structure was “knit straw” from top to bottom. Again a tent was erected to accommodate the crowd. Think about this in terms of a mid-week special service and yet some 150 people showed up. I cut the ribbon to enter and then moved to the altar and pulpit for a special blessing. I preached on Solomon’s temple dedication prayer in Chronicles. Here we had 11 baptisms. Andrew distributed little lapel pins with the fish inside the cross, and I was wearing a wood model and had extra with me. I hung one on the front side of the altar and explained the symbol the early Christians used and taught them the Greek word “ICHTHUS,” containing the first Greek letters of the words: JESUS CHRIST, SON OF GOD, SAVIOR.

In this place, as well in the previous, I’m sure many from the village came out of curiosity. Not too many white people had ever been in the village. The children were a little surprised to see me open a bottle of Pepsi on the rim of the tire when an opener wasn’t available. I pointed to the cross that was painted on the wall behind the altar. I alluded to the fact that the message of the cross was for all – those gathered in the church, those under the tent, those peering in the door and windows, and for the entire camp. Here Jesus will be preached, and this message is needed because of our sin and His victory over it, giving us hope in every situation.

After the service we made the usual greetings, and I mentioned to the group that I was going to pay Andrew a “left-handed compliment.” I told them Andrew was the most successful mistake maker when it came to

building churches. I alluded to the fact that we visited two churches and both of them are too small before they are opened. They understood and were amused.

Mandela

Mandela is located about one half hour from the ELCS/LHF Center in Khartoum. When we left the main road, we drove nearly 15 minutes to the church site. All this time we were driving through the middle of the camp of those displaced from the south. We saw huts made of mud and straw, some made with discarded grain sacks, and some out of simple cardboard. We saw only one other car, but hundreds of donkeys with carts, each carrying a large barrel. They were carrying water, buying it from a water station and then selling it to consumers, who pay approximately \$1.25 per day for water. When income is only \$70 per month, one has to reduce consumption. No electricity, no water. Such is “camp life.”

As we drove through the camp on a trail barely wide enough for the 4WD, people stood in amazement and then began to wave. Children in some cases were not clothed and they lived in an endless dirt environment. Whether playing soccer or sitting on the sidelines, it was always in the dirt. There were so many huts it was impossible even for Andrew to find the church until a man with a Bible came running to direct us.

The usual singing welcomed us. The choirs were already singing and marching around the church, and the leaders were waiting at the door of the church. We were ushered to the “sacristy,” an adjoining little hut where we could robe for the service. A tent was again set up next to the church to accommodate the crowd. We joined in the procession around the church and then cut the ribbon and performed the dedication rite. In six months this structure will also be too small. The structure is probably what we would term the \$3,500 model.

The service lasted for 3½ hours with lots of singing by both the youth and adult choirs. The longer the service lasted, the more children stood at the windows watching and adults stood at the perimeter studying the proceedings.

We were whisked away after the service because we had “overextended our stay.” As Andrew was leaving the Khartoum office, he received a phone call saying that we would need a permit to visit the camp. Andrew told the official it was too late as we were on the way. We were to be out of the camp by six, and Andrew was asked to meet with the official about our infraction.

Water is the great need. The digging of a well was the topic of discussion with the president of the Khartoum State, whom we met several times during

the trip. The president offered assistance if we could enter a joint venture. Perhaps LCMS World Relief would join such a venture.

Khartoum

Seven hours!! That was the length for the Sunday service, the first anniversary observance of CLIHM, that took place once again under a big tent outside the ELCS/LHF complex with over 400 in attendance. The service also included the confirmation of six adults and 36 baptisms, including Andrew's son, Elisa. I preached on the Epistle of the day, 1 Peter 3:20, on the theme "Brought Safely Through." There is obvious evidence that the Spirit of God captures you in these circumstances because it wasn't what I planned to preach, certainly not what I had on my notes. I started in the Old Testament to show how the children of Israel were brought safely through the Red Sea, and the Jordan, how Jonah was brought safely through, and how eight were brought safely through the flood. I then talked about the problems they faced and how we have all failed, and how God through Jesus was able to bring us safely through.

I then told them we were even going to see in the service how God brings us safely through by baptism. I ended on the note as to how God brought us safely through, when in the fullness of time He sent His one and only Son.

The length of the service, of course, was impacted by the fact that some of it was in three languages and the sermon in two. There was also the special music by choirs from three different congregations, the seminary choir and a Sunday school choir.

The LHF provided catechisms for a special English language school that was conducted in Khartoum on three different levels. The upper level required reading from the catechism, and as a result, a number of Muslims were converted. We brought 75 copies on one occasion, which resulted in a \$200 overweight charge in Nairobi. In Detroit, the agent at the ticket counter honored our humanitarian aid plea and waived any added charges.

Rimela

It was a Monday afternoon when we made another journey into a displacement camp. It was another one of those areas of basic huts. These were a little more pretentious than the ones of straw, canvas, and mud brick. These were also of mud brick but the construction was more advanced. We drove for a good half-hour after entering the area with these huts. One really can't describe the endless number of walled dwellings. There were buses available to assist in the transport of people.

The church we dedicated here was one of the more advanced models. It still needed the zinc roof to put it in that category. I spoke on three texts for this dedication service. Using 2 Chronicles 6:18, and adding John 1:14 and Galatians 4:4, the theme was “WILL GOD DWELL WITH US?” All those passages are “dwell” passages. Solomon said, “The heavens of heaven cannot contain God, much less this building I have built.” If Solomon said that about his glitzy, gold temple, it is surely true of this building. We, however, can have the assurance of Him dwelling with us. They happened to have a picture in front of the church showing all the items we usually connect with Lent and the crucifixion. Under the cross was a snake and a human skull and I told them: “He has put everything under His feet.” That’s why we know he dwells with us through His suffering, death, and resurrection.

I told them the story of the adopted boy, who only had torn and tattered clothes, shoes that were only remnants of leather. The father gave him all new clothes and new shoes, but he took the old shoes and placed them on the mantle. Whenever the boy did something wrong, he was ushered to the mantle and reminded, “This is who you were, and this is who you are now.” I told them this is not a picture of our heavenly Father and how He deals with us. Sins are removed as far as the east is from the west – red like crimson, white as wool. He truly dwells with us.

After the service there were the usual speeches. I began to disrobe in the chancel as I explained to them that I was wearing vestments of a former St. John, Fraser, Michigan, pastor, and I had been given the vestments to distribute. As I removed my vestments one by one, I mentioned how the late Rev. Walter Rutkowsky had finished his work and was now in heaven, and that his daughter (Lois Brenner) wanted his vestments to have continued use. I placed them on the altar and told Andrew they were for the first men to enter the ministry of the ELCS.

I called this the “deluxe model church.” There are three styles of construction. One is just a straw roof set on posts, another is a straw roof with sides enclosed with straw, and the one here in Rimela. The roof is bamboo, then a layer of grain sacks, then the mud and straw covering. The floor is dirt, but the raised chancel area has a soft red sand. The interior walls are finished with a “fine covering of mud mixed with fine cut grass and donkey dung mixed in.” We were told you could buy donkey dung for \$10-\$15 per large sack. Eventually this church became more deluxe with a zinc roof.

Several years later as the persecution of Christians continued in the north, this church was bulldozed “because a road was going to be built and the church was in the way.” There were no cars present and there didn’t seem to be any need for some kind of highway just for donkey carts. Nevertheless

it was demolished by the local Muslim government.

I wrote in my report that this represented worship on that side of the world. You'll soon be rising to make your way to worship, but there will be many others who won't find the way because they have lost appreciation for what it is all about, and have become comfortable in their own little huts and haunts that have no space for Jesus to crowd in. There they have nothing. Why can't we give them hope in Christ? We need help to give hope. Let it be our plea to the LHF board and to our family of donors.

ELCS Council Meeting

Members of the council reported on the state of the church. By the end of the year, the ELCS hopes to achieve their goal of opening ten new congregations. In the first quarter alone 258 people were baptized and 400 received into membership. Andrew said, "The seed has been planted, and we look to LHF to provide the water. We can plant the seed, but we can't do it ourselves. If we can do the work, we will be able to add 5,000 to the church, but we may not be able to get to them because of the great time demand. I should be in the field. I should be in the office. I'm trying to balance it. Training manpower is the key and our hope is in the seminary."

At the end of the visit, Rev. Tom Petersen was conscripted to teach 22 evangelists that had arrived for a week's training. Their work is having a great impact and has resulted in two new congregations opening.

Yes, we are still in the translation, publishing, distribution mode. In the middle of May a binding machine is being delivered so that LHF will have a complete publishing center to go with the Rizzograph that was provided earlier. The problem encountered is that printers fear doing any print job for Christians. With our own press, the following four books will be printed: Zande hymnals (3,000), Arabic *Prayerbooks* (3,000), Arabic *Good News About Jesus* (5,000) and Zande catechisms (3,000).

WITH ME YOU CAN DO SOMETHING!!

June 15 – *Luther's Small Catechism* in the Sukuma language is released in Mwanza, Tanzania. Rev. Samuel Atunga, LHF Nairobi staff member, reported on his distribution efforts across 21 dioceses of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania. Atunga stated the philosophy of LHF in its distribution and introductory purpose, "*The Small Catechism* of Luther enables Christians to know the truth, and this is to be an on-going application of the Word of God in the lives of over 5 million Lutheran Christians in East Africa, so that

there is a renewing of their minds and hearts in conforming to the Scriptures and to the Lutheran Confessions, which are a correct exposition of the pure Word and will of Jesus Christ. Through the distribution of the LHF books and materials, the Lord's work is growing very much within the ELCT. These books are not just helping to strengthen Lutheranism, but are being used as tools to carry out extensive mission work throughout the country.

“Wherever we distribute LHF books, pastors and Christians are asking why many Lutheran Christians are moving to other denominations. The answer has always been the same – the lack of sound teaching. Some of the pastors in the Lutheran churches worldwide and especially in the ELCT, have not taken their commission seriously to teach the Word. Even though the disciples were repeatedly ordered to stop teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ, they did not cease to proclaim Christ. We can do no less and these books will be the key.”

June 19 – President Paul Kofi Fynn of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ghana thanked LHF for sponsoring Ebenezer Boafo at the Fort Wayne seminary. He agrees to publish *Luther's Small Catechism* in the Twi language and also work on translating liturgy and hymns into Twi. In 2008 contact was made with Rev. Nicholas Salifu at the St. Louis seminary. He agreed to translate the catechism into Kusaal. It was completed and delivered to northern Ghana in December 2010, when Salifu returned to his country after graduating from the St. Louis seminary.

August 8-10 – *Klaipeda, Lithuania International Translator's Conference*

LHF and *Good News Journal* sponsored the translators' conference with around 50 participants from various parts of the world. The keynote presentations were made by Ms. Laila Cakare, author and translator from Riga, Latvia, and Dr. Anssi Simojoki, LHF vice president for Africa, Nairobi, Kenya. Rev. Kurt Marquart, CTSFW, also gave a major presentation at this conference.

October 12, 13 – On this weekend, festivities took place for the tenth anniversary of LHF. The events included a mission rally on Saturday night and dedication of the LHF World Mission Center on Sunday afternoon. The world mission rally featured work going on around the world and the introduction of representatives from those regions, including Andris Smilgdrivs, vice president for Latvia; Konstantin Komarov, vice president for Russia; Marina Solodova, Moscow branch director; Rev. Slavik Horpynchuk, vice president for Ukraine; and Dr. Anssi Simojoki, vice president for Africa.

In the dedication booklet, we stated, “We are pleased to introduce a few members of our international staff. These staff members exemplify the high quality of people with which the LHF works around the world. We should

point out that LHF does not have any United States staff deployed overseas on a full-time basis. Instead, we have developed a system of national co-workers in the countries where LHF works. These co-workers are expert translators, but more importantly, they are committed to upholding a Lutheranism that is firmly grounded in the Bible and the Lutheran confessions. May the Lord continue to bless the LHF with dedicated people who love the Lord and His Word.”

The service participants included Rev. Larry Burgdorf, trustee of the Marvin M. Schwan Foundation, preacher; Rev. John Fehrmann and Rev. Scott Benjamin, LHF staff, readers; Mr. Mel Machemer, director of the Lutheran High School East Honors Chorale; Mr. Kurt Schmidt, director of the brass ensemble; Ms. Karla Altevogt, soloist; Ms. Gail Weburg and Ms. Linda Weburg, banner construction, Saginaw Zone, Michigan District LWML; Central Michigan ROTC, presentation of colors; Lutheran High School East Honors Choir, National Anthem; Rev. Dean Bell, board member, cornerstone unveiling; Rev. Richard Bolling, board member, artwork unveiling. Greetings were given by Dr. Timothy Quill, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana; Dr. Ron Feuerhahn, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri; Rev. Ken Greinke, LCMS world mission department, St. Louis, Missouri; Rev. John Merrill, pastor, St. John Lutheran Church, Fraser, Michigan; Rev. Michael Lutz, pastor, Immanuel Lutheran Church, Macomb, Michigan; Dr. Anssi Simojoki, LHF vice president Africa; Rev. Slavik Horpynchuk, LHF vice president Ukraine; and Dr. Wallace Schulz, second vice president, LCMS, St. Louis, Missouri.

A key ceremony took place prior to entering the building:

1. Key is passed by the architect, Mr. Mike Christofferson, president of Architectural Designs,
2. To the builder, Mr. Paul Weisenbach, Frank Rewold & Son Construction,
3. To the on-site supervisor, Mr. Richard Hallgren,
4. To the chairman of the board, Rev. Kurt Marquart,
5. To a church and community representative, Mr. Joa Penzien,
6. To the LHF director of operations, Mr. Jeff Rahn.

A prayer of dedication by Rev. Walter Otten, LHF board chairman, followed. As we entered the building we paused to dedicate the board room as the REV. ROBERT D. PREUS BOARD ROOM. This was dedicated by Mrs. Donna Preus and Rev. Daniel Preus. Valet parking was provided by the elders of St. John Lutheran Church, Fraser, Michigan.

Following the dedication service, guided tours were given by the staff and a light lunch was served.



Rev. Andrew Mbugo Elisa, an invited guest unable to be present because of visa difficulties, sent the following, “May I take this opportunity on behalf of the executive council, the staff, the entire membership of the ELCS and my own family to extend heartfelt words of congratulations to the LHF on these two important and historical occasions taking place these days in the United States. Even though I have failed to be present, I am with you in spirit and prayer.

“The celebration of the tenth anniversary of LHF comes at a time when all those who have benefited from the work done are happy and thankful to God. The LHF came into being not just as an institution, but as a real effective helper and active promoter of God’s Word all over the world. Because of LHF, people have received God’s Word in Sudan and are being trained in confessional Lutheran theology. They have seen Christ in their lives, have received Holy Sacraments, have places to worship God, and they have confessional Lutheran books translated into their mother tongue. The tenth anniversary coincides with the dedication of the World Mission Center, a compound and premises where God’s Word will be reaching millions of people bringing the word of hope to them in a language they can understand.

“The ELCS will never forget to remember in our prayers the services and support given to a young church like ours by LHF. It has resulted in a rapid growth of our church. Finally, we accord a special word of thanks to Rev. Dr. Robert Rahn, who has been a true Christian brother, father, pastor and believer to the Sudanese people. May God grant him wisdom and good health.”

November 13 – Pakistan

The connection with Pakistan came through Rev. James Knill, Concordia Lutheran Church, Triangle, Virginia. He called to relate the story of a member he instructed who came from Pakistan. In Pakistan, Indad S.J. Shahbaz

served as the bishop of some 25-30 Methodist churches and had to escape under the threat of death. He ended up in Triangle, Virginia. On a Sunday he walked to the nearest church, and it happened to be Concordia. He became involved in the church and Pastor Knill instructed him. He not only studied *Luther's Small Catechism* but also read the entire *Book of Concord* and agreed with the Lutheran confessions. He communicated with his churches back in Pakistan, informing them they should be Lutheran.

At this time Pastor Knill contacted President Barry and also the Mission Department, but no action was taken. On the above date I spoke to Shahbaz and discussed translation possibilities in the Urdu language. He provided me with the names of 33 pastors he claimed would follow his path to Lutheranism. As a first translation project we published 2,500 copies of *The Good News About Jesus* in Urdu. The booklet was printed and distributed by Rev. Shahbaz during his trip back to Pakistan in February 2003.

The vision we had for Pakistan was that we might travel with Rev. Shahbaz and explore the possibilities for publishing the *Small Catechism* and using it to catechize the 33 pastors in his diocese. As we never made that trip, I feel this is one opportunity that was possibly lost.

In the meantime, we have had several meetings with the POBLO group relative to publishing an Urdu catechism. We have hopes that this will soon materialize. POBLO now has mission work in Pakistan and has established a basic seminary.

November 17 – I visited with Bishop Slavik Horpynchuk, Kiev, Ukraine. He reported on the seminary in Ternopil and gave evidence of how the Word works. There was a student at the seminary by the name of Deacon Oleksiy Onufriychuk (try pronouncing) who came from a very reknown monastery in Western Ukraine. A fellow student picked up some our books (they came regularly to get them), and Onufriychuk started reading them and began to defend Lutheranism in classes. He was removed from the monastery and enrolled in the Lutheran seminary. The goal was for him to be ordained in one year. These kinds of reports are heard in various regions on a regular basis. How will they read if we do not print?

November 24 – Dr. Anssi Simojoki and I participated in the consecration of Bishop Walter Obare. I responded to the appeal from the church body to help with expenses. I responded, “Perhaps some gifts are still being received in honor of your consecration. We will be adding to the gifts a sum of \$1,000 as a special gift to the ELCK in your honor. Of course, the greater gift will be the books and materials that we continue to translate, publish, and distribute free of charge.”

December 1 – Dr. Wallace Schulz accepts the Call to LHF to serve as

evangelist. “I look forward to working with an organization that has the zeal of the Reformation, the compassion of the early Christian church, and the vision of worldwide missions,” Dr. Schulz said as he responded to the Call.

December 11 – Rev. John Duitsman commended my message wherein I stated that “it is time to throw down the gauntlet before the enemies of Christ” as a reaction to the growing persecution from Islam. The concept of a Luther Academy established in Nairobi was in the discussion stage.

2003

January 1 – *Romania*

On this date an exchange of messages began with Rev. Michael L. McCoy, Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Emmett, Idaho in regard to a lady in his congregation who was an experienced translator from Romania. Rev. McCoy did not know what a responsive chord this would produce. I would have to admit that some of my early interest in providing Lutheran books and literature developed when I served as the vacancy campus pastor of Concordia, River Forest. During that time I brought Rev. Richard Wurmbrand on campus as a speaker for a religious forum. Wurmbrand was a political prisoner for 14 years under a Romanian Communist dictatorship. His story is told in a book that has been in circulation since 1967 under the banner of THE VOICE OF THE MARTYRS organization with the title *Tortured for Christ*.

Charles Colson of Prison Fellowship said, “This book was singularly instrumental in awakening the conscience of the free world to the horrors experienced by our brothers and sisters behind the Iron Curtain.” And the late Dr. D. James Kennedy of Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church stated, “The trial and persecution and cruelty that the Wurmbrands endured is as timely as the day this compelling work was written.”

It has been a personal deep disappointment that we Lutherans did not embrace these Romanian Lutherans. I had hoped that his exposure at River Forest might have led to their return to their early Lutheran roots. It was not meant to be, and I grieve over that even today. I am grateful to The Voice of the Martyrs for keeping the great Biblical truths learned from the Wurmbrands alive. I wish now that I had taken a more proactive role in an effort to befriend and provide a more accepting welcome to this man of God.

This background helps you to understand that there was within me a great desire to reach out to people in Romania. The question was whether this would be the avenue. We learned from the lady in Idaho that there was a Romanian catechism, but according to her, it was not well done and

portions of it were missing. This began a quest to try and engage her in our translation efforts by requesting that she first translate the Galster booklet, *The Good News About Jesus*. Other players entered the picture as we learned that sermons translated into Romanian were sent to a Mrs. Carlene Gaiser in the Macomb area. Through her expertise we learned that the translation was generally very thorough and accurate. It was then that we attempted to get work done on a new edition of the catechism. Meanwhile, another Romanian appeared on the scene through Rev. Robert Smith, CTSFW librarian. Mr. Ionel Rad had written to him, indicating he was a Romanian and interested in translating the 95 Theses of Luther.

In the midst of all this, we received a request from the Dansk Balkan Mission of Redding, Denmark, who asked us to support their very ambitious project of translating *Selected Writings of Luther* in Romanian. The goal was to publish a compilation of writings into four volumes with a total of over 800 pages at a cost of \$50,000.

We were not able to participate in the Luther project. At this writing we are attempting to resurrect other Romanian projects, so that Lutheran books and materials can be distributed in a country where Lutheranism once prevailed. We continue to pray for a breakthrough and have Rev. Slavik Horpynchuk of the Ukrainian Lutheran Church working with us. It appears that our entrance into Romania will come as a result of our work in Moldova with Rev. Horpynchuk, as much of the language of Moldova is Romanian, and the catechism is being translated for the Moldovans in Romanian.

March 12 – Dr. Janis Vanags, archbishop of Riga and Latvia, expressed his thanks to LHF and to me personally “for the immense help for everything you have served with for the cause of the Gospel in Latvia and particularly for the sponsoring translation works of the Confessional Lutheran literature in Latvian. In the time span of several years we started to experience the good fruits of this branch of our cooperation, e.g., the students in Luther Academy in several subjects can read their confessional-based textbooks in Latvian. Members of the congregations are particularly joyful of the Kittlesen’s biography of Luther in Latvian and of the two volumes of Luther’s Postils. Thus, Luther is speaking for himself in Latvia and in Latvian.”

March 29 – On this visit to Nairobi our purpose was to give serious consideration to the purchase of a building or property to establish a Luther Academy. It was unfortunate that we visited Barclay’s Bank Training Center before we visited Gitengela. Rev. John Fehrmann, board members Hank Hajdas and Rev. Bill Brege, joined Dr. Simojoki and me in surveying the properties. Gitengela was summarily dismissed as being inadequate, although it was a nice location on a hill some 15 miles out of Nairobi. One could see the

city from this location approximately five miles from the airport. Barclay's Training Center was solidly constructed and exquisitely maintained. There were dormitories for housing, offices for officials, classrooms, dining hall, and all facilities that would fit well for an educational institution. The only problem was the price at \$2.5 million. Various options were discussed, such as a lease with option to buy or financing provided by Barclay's. It had been on the market for three years and worth triple that amount.

Education was obviously in high demand, according to a professor from the University of Nairobi. He said there were 300,000 wanting education and 8,000 receiving it, and any school starting up would immediately meet with success. The accreditation requirement of 25 acres of property might be lenient, and therefore the 12-acre campus of Barclay's might enable a school to be accredited.

Unfortunately, the enthusiasm for the project waned and faded. It was a great disappointment not to be able to negotiate a property purchase. We discovered later in a meeting with the Lutheran owner of the Gitengela property, Adna Ouma, that negotiations with her were not done in good faith and she was critical of one member of the delegation for acting too hastily in stating that there was no interest in the property and not permitting the entire group to visit all portions of the property.

This trip served as the occasion for an official installation for Rev. Fehrman, with a record attendance at the chapel on the Nariobi compound of 60 people participating, some even from outside the windows. Bishop Walter Obare, for whom we had provided funding earlier for his own installation, participated in this event.

April 3 – Visited Malawi with Dr. Anssi Simojoki, taking books with us to help the translation groups. We also swam on the sandy beach of Lake Malawi at a place where we were told the hippos and the most dangerous wild animals in Africa come to swim at night. In the evening we looked out from our tent to watch an intense electric storm on the vast lake and to ponder on the memory of David Livingstone (1813-73), which lives on powerfully in Malawi. It was across this lake that the Arabs annually transported thousands of slaves to the Eastern shore to be driven on towards Zanzibar, whose markets alone sold around 40,000 Africans annually to Muslim countries. Livingstone's cries of help drew the attention of the Western world to these open wounds of Africa.

We met with 20 excited translators. They were proud to show us two special rooms on the church compound that had signs over them with the words CHEWA and TUMBUKA. These are the two dialects in which we will be working to produce the catechism. The Evangelical Lutheran Church

of Malawi Bishop, Rev. J.P. Bvumbwe, stated that he heard about LHF in Germany and decided to invite us to assist in providing materials in these languages. “We are very grateful for your kind of ministry. I am disappointed at how our people have become challenged by outside forces. Our faith is at stake. Islam claims we don’t know who or what we are following. They insist that Christianity is a Western religion. When we get back to our heritage, there we find our strength. How can we confess if we do not have books and materials in our languages?”

As we drove down the main street of Lilongwe, the capital city, we noted the Muslims were building a mosque on each side of the street, as if to indicate you are entering the Muslim world or center. The bishop commented, “While money can build big buildings, it does not answer questions and the searchings of people. How is it that our people are willing to worship under a tree in a pouring rain, and around the corner is a mosque that stands empty?”

The Muslims work their bribes very well, taking young poor women in marriage and making them Muslim, or giving them money to attend their schools. The bishop says that many in the mosque, deep down still hold the Christian faith, and maybe our books will bring them back. The Muslims use the poverty of people to their advantage. Many such stories could be told over and over again.

During this trip I also visited Mwanza, Tanzania, on the southern shore of Lake Victoria. Here we visited with Bishop Nehemiah Bomani and shared with him copies of the catechism published in the Sukuma dialect, spoken by some 8 million people, the majority of them pagans.

May 12 – Dr. E.A.W. Weber wrote to thank sponsors of the *Book of Concord* in Setswana. “Can words express clearly and appropriately enough how sincerely we thank God the Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ that He makes Lutheran Christians willing to support and sponsor a project which serves Christians in a faraway country, even in a faraway continent to give them the opportunity to be able to read the confessions of their beloved church in their own language?

“For me as a retired missionary, it is a great joy and reason to be thankful to experience that sisters and brothers in Christ in a faraway country do prove with their gifts and prayers that they obey the Great Commission to make disciples of all nations, not only by baptizing them, but also teaching them to obey and keep everything He has commanded. That they not only give proof of their obedience, but also of their hope and conviction that our Lord keeps and fulfills his promise, that those who are not yet of His sheep pen, and whom He must bring into his church, will listen to His voice. I

add the other promise which Jesus keeps that the Holy Spirit is still at work, still teaches and reminds people of all nations of everything He has said to His disciples (John 14:26) by winning souls for Christ, not forgetting what Christ Himself has told us. The work of the Lord is never done in vain, not in America, and not in Africa.”

ELCS 10th Anniversary Activity Report

“This is the Lord’s doing and it is marvelous in our eyes”

After visiting Yambio, Sudan from November 20 to December 6, 2003, the following report was filed in connection with the 10th anniversary activities. Those activities began with the dedication of the Guest House in Yambio. Funds for its construction were provided by Rev. Arthur & Olga Senn, Port Washington, Wisconsin. It was to serve as a residence for visiting instructors, special guests, and evangelists, accommodating 20 people, and a dining and conference room.

On November 23, the Tenth Anniversary Thanksgiving Service was conducted. The Yambio church was not large enough to accommodate the expected attendance, so the site for the service location was moved to a large mango tree, and forms were built on which palm branches were placed for protection from the hot sun. Over 500 people gathered for the 5½ hour service. The service included 19 baptisms and 21 confirmations. It was announced that the church had grown in these ten years from eight congregations to 50, from 1,000 members to 10,000.

On a trip to Mendebah, some 60 miles from Yambio, we stopped to visit Andrew’s birthplace and farm. We observed new plantings of peanuts, pineapple, mango, and banana trees. The Mendebah congregation welcomed us with children of the congregation singing.

On November 30, a service of ordination took place for two men who graduated from the CLIHM. Rev. Daniel Preus was the speaker under the mango tree auditorium, and the service was 5½ hours in length. Community leaders spoke after the service and praised the arrival of Lutherans in the community.

The 10th anniversary activity also included the dedication of a new church in Saura. It was quite a challenge to get to the church “on the main road.” The truck carrying benches got stuck in one of the typical pot holes (more like a mini lake) in the road that had not received any attention since the war began 20 years ago. The church in Saura was sponsored by Royal Redeemer, North Royalton, Ohio. The cost for the deluxe model was \$9,000. The brick structure, with glass windows and zinc roof, put it in the deluxe category.

Another highlight of the 10th anniversary activities took place in Baguga, approximately six miles from Yambio. Here, Rev. Preus and I had the privilege to dedicate cornerstones that had been placed for the new Lutheran Mission Center and the eventual Lutheran cathedral to be built in this location. The 100 acres of land given to the ELCS lies in the midst of two communities that are six miles away in each direction. These communities are projected to merge in Baguga. A Lutheran school, which met in straw-thatched shelters, was already in session with an enrollment as high as 500.

When this site was given to the Lutherans, the site was literally cleared out of the jungle, and regular plants and trees were planted to provide food. It is anticipated that many Christians will be coming back to the south out of the camps where they have been living for the past ten years.

The dedication of a Sudanese Arabic catechism and an expanded hymnal was part of the two-week program.

It was now time to leave the jungle and head to the desert and capital city of Khartoum. Even though we missed flights that caused the cancelation of the graduation service, we were surprised to have 300 people gathering a day later. During the graduation ceremony, 11 were commissioned as deacons and deaconesses and 21 commissioned as evangelists. All of this also set the stage for the plans to move the ELCS headquarters from the north to the south.

The final piece of news we received before leaving was that the deluxe church we built in Rimela (a camp near Khartoum) is scheduled to be bulldozed by the Arab Muslim government, under the guise that a road is being built and it happens to run right through the church. This was somewhat ironic in that we wonder what kind of roads are necessary when all the traffic is donkey carts? Why now, when the camps will start to empty? Why not a water supply as a far better construction alternative? Probably because we are Christian!

August 25 – Gerry Mattijetz of Zion Lutheran Church, Glendale, California, wrote to inform us that the Armenian translation of *The Good News About Jesus* was completed and dedicated to God in their worship services. He also reported showing the LHF video, “Upon This Rock,” to the adult Bible class on two consecutive Sundays and taking a thank offering for our work.

The Good News About Jesus, authored by Rev. Lenard Galster, is a short booklet that focuses on the plan of salvation and is in a question and answer format. A question is asked about Jesus, and the answer comes directly from the Bible. This booklet has been translated and published into some 40 languages, a number of them by LHF translators. The booklet is often used as a test on the reliability and efficiency of a potential translation candidate. We

are grateful to Rev. Galster for not only allowing us the copyright permission, but for giving his personal support to publishing these booklets, including three editions in the Russian language.

Audio Visual Techniques Ancient and Modern

LHF's history includes various efforts at producing visual aids. The first two videos produced in our "homespun style" included "The Force of Faith," "The Harvest Is Now," "Hitherto the Lord Has Helped Us" (depicting ten years of history), "A Mission of Boldness," and "An Open Door." If you want to be entertained by home movies, these are available by request.

The production procedure was to go to a studio with 35 mm slides and some jittery video, show the slides on a screen and videotape them, then splice together the video from slides and the jittery video, and piece it all together with a narration made by "Cecil B Demille Rahn." I recall traveling back to Cleveland to use a radio studio there for at least two of the productions. Another one of the videos was made in the studios at Concordia University, River Forest, Illinois, with student help. Professor Rich Richter provided some counsel and aid. With the production of "Upon This Rock," we had Rev. Scott Benjamin on staff. He had some background in the arts, and we finally had a more professional-looking production.

Another effort revolved around the work started in Sudan and the help we provided in establishing of a Lutheran school. We put together a video called "Tools, Tuition and Uniforms" that featured not only rakes, shovels, machetes as tools, but the chief tool that we made available was *Luther's Small Catechism* in the Zande language. This became one of the first projects we promoted for Sunday schools, day schools and VBS, at a level of \$10 per student. It would give them the tools, help pay the \$1 tuition per year, and provide material that could be sewn by teachers and volunteers for school uniforms. We had the help and expertise of Mrs. Jen Bagnall, who serves as our very capable public relations director.

The grand finale for videos to this point is the professionally-produced video "How Can I Understand?" Vox Visuals served as the crew for this production that saw filming done in Thailand and Kenya. We tried to produce the video with the idea that it was somewhat timeless. To that end, it has been used effectively for at least five years. You can imagine the scrutiny the camera crew went through along with their equipment as we passed through customs in Kenya and Thailand. It also required additional baggage charges to bring all the needed equipment.

In the files we have something like 2500 slides, most of which are in carousels and each slide given a title in a master file. I can't tell you how

much extra video footage was left over after the 17-minute professional video was spliced together.

Perhaps in my retirement I can review all the homemade videos as a way to entertain myself. Remember again that we went from an 8 mm video camera to what we have today in those mini cameras that no longer even requires processing, just a hook-up to your computer. The LHF history does, indeed, span a “developing period” in communications. The equipment used was my own personal equipment, including what was not just an 8 mm but the “super 8” model. The LHF has advanced in this area so that we now have equipment that includes “non-jittery” video digital cameras!

By the way, if you are interested in pictures, each of those slides also has a hard copy photo correlating and corresponding to the master slide file. You can sum it all up and say “THOSE WERE THE DAYS!”

August 10-15 – A Jamaica book distribution as part of the Jamaica Book Project was carried out by Rev. R.W. Dunker, pastor, St. John Lutheran Church Youth Fellowship, Battle Creek, Iowa. This distribution took place in connection with conducting two Vacation Bible Schools on the topic of “The Apostle’s Creed.”

Rev. Dunker wrote in his report: “Through the Jamaica Book Project, we were able to distribute 112 catechisms to children in the third grade and above, 48 *My First Catechism* to second graders and below. We were able to carry 1,500 copies of the catechism (enchiridion) to be distributed in September 2004 to the Rolling Town Primary School in Kingston.”

November 19 – A report was picked up by Dr. Robert Kuhn, written by a Mr. Bogenkamp. The report seemingly made him an expert on translation questions, but turned out to be more of a feeble effort to discredit the work of LHF. His statement, “As to the quality of those translations, however, people with good credentials in the community of translators question an ideological bias and lack of skill they see in the work. It would seem important at all times, but especially when producing training texts for new pastors, that there should be no question about the accuracy and lack of bias in translations.” One wonders who the expert translators would be here in America who could make such a judgment. It was one of the few criticisms ever leveled against the ability of LHF translators. It mostly represented a cheap shot, when earlier we had just held an international translators’ conference meant to improve our translation techniques.

November 21 – While lying awake in our Nairobi compound at 4 a.m., I formulated an article for our newsletter in regard to estate planning that centered on a well-known slogan that says, “Where there is a will, there is a way.” Recently my wife and I incorporated our simple will into a living trust so that the method of distributing our assets could be done in the most effective way. We used the

knowledge of our lawyer to make sure we were using every legitimate avenue of preserving our assets for the purpose we determined.

A number of you have indicated similar action without any specific request or visit from us. You took action as a way to assure the continuation of the LHF mission, one that has its focus squarely on the Truth of God's living Word. We are of the conviction that if it is God's will, there will be a way for you to allow your God-given assets to be used to do His work.

Confirmation, Guns and Security

This is a report on a confirmation service here in the United States that I participated in as a guest preacher. I used the occasion to compare this confirmation service to one that took place in our Nairobi compound.

"I noticed that the preparations for your reception into membership in the church today included an announcement that coffee and cake would be served in the fellowship hall as a way to welcome you into membership. How many of you in this group made your confession of faith, and as a result are losing your job? How many of you who boldly declared your faith in the Triune God, would as a result have your children lose all opportunities for education and actually be removed from the school they were attending? How many of you would suffer physical harm because you confessed loyalty to Christ?

"Here is information surrounding the preparation for confirmations in Nairobi that were taking place on this very same Sunday. Dr. Simojoki described the situation, 'The security has been my concern for some time. On Sunday we were 105 people attending the service in which seven Somalis were baptized and three confirmed. That was a real celebration. The security guards had parked their vehicle at the main gate. We had two policemen with assault rifles and the Karen Security Unit inspecting the grounds in their formidable 4-wheel drive vehicle. We lacked only tanks and air force coverage. After two Somali delegates were recently murdered in conjunction with their peace conference in Kenya, I had to take the security concerns professionally. One of those murdered delegates was a Christian Somali who had demanded the clause for freedom of religion be in the constitution. He paid for this with his life. Yet we are not nervous, just alert. Threats have rained over our people and a sort of hit squad threatened our friends not far from our compound. I have alerted police and our security company. All is in God's hands.'

"So, when you prepare for your next confirmations and baptisms, remember those who must make more elaborate preparations in Kenya, Sudan, India, Sri Lanka, Somalia, and other places where we are working today."

November 23 – The schedule which had been prepared called for a two-hour tenth anniversary worship celebration of the ELCS. I commented that I had never

been involved in that sort of a service in Sudan, and that it would probably be more like five hours. We gathered under a makeshift covering of a large mango tree and palm branches that had been placed over poles, mostly for protection from the sun. My sermon contributed to the five-hour service length. It was translated into Zande and came from Nehemiah's wall building episode. I made the points that Nehemiah's project was

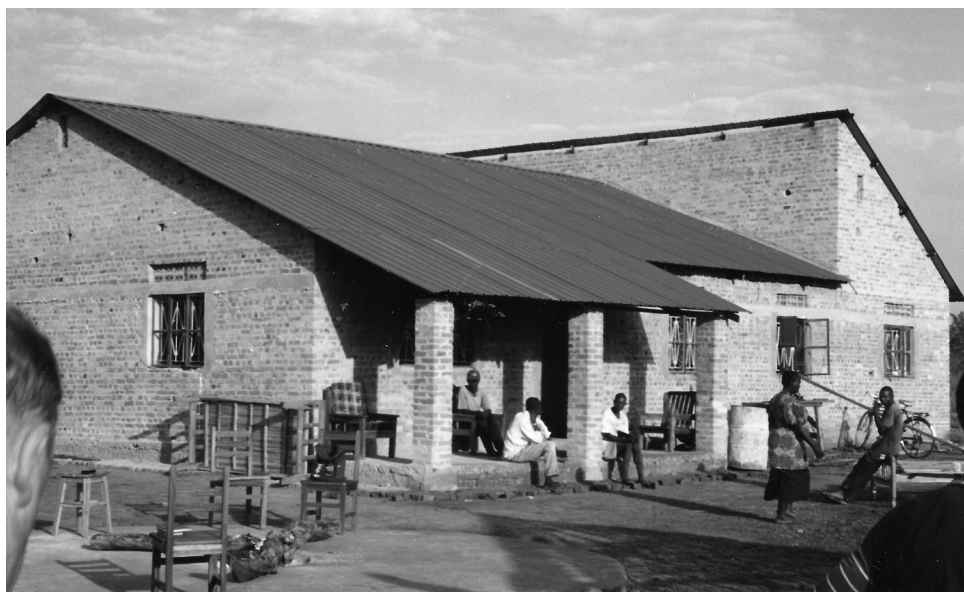
1. Begun in a posture of penitence and prayer
2. Continued with some practical preparations and
3. Completed through patient persistence.

I won't record the entire sermon, but I can tell you that there were 500 worshipping souls listening attentively. The service also included 18 baptisms and 20 confirmations, along with many choral numbers from four different choirs.

Bishop Andrew started to give his greetings at the end of the service. It began lightening and thundering, so we moved to the church that only held 200. A driving rain began and people were forced to crowd into one side of the church that had no windows and a short overhang. We waited for half an hour, and Andrew announced that festivities would be reserved until the next Sunday when an ordination of pastors was scheduled.

November 24 – This was the day of dedication for the newly-constructed guest house funded through a special gift from Rev. Arthur & Olga Senn, Port Washington, Wisconsin. They had sold their lake home and demonstrated their love for the work in Sudan by making the building possible.

The guest house has five dormitory rooms, a kitchen, dining room, living room, and 1½ non-operating baths. Four "booths" were built nearby, a



shower area and a toilet area for men and women. A shower meant dipping water heated in a barrel into a large pan, carrying it into the “booth” and using a cup for pouring. Surprising how good it felt after a day like Sunday when the clerical shirt has white rings of salt from sweat. But, “no sweat,” there is washing every day and an ironing table was always functioning. How to heat the iron where there is no electricity? Simply fill the box on the top of the iron with live coals to generate heat.

The ceremony of dedication involved a ribbon cutting by Rev. Andrew and the president of the local congregation and then the reading of Scriptures. A plaque had been prepared and the inscription was read. There was a brief ceremony for each room and I made the comment that there should be a cross over the kitchen serving window as a reminder of the fact that there are greater spiritual foods served for the soul. As soon as I made the statement, a lady came forward with a cross and the architect immediately put it in place, a rather dynamic, unplanned moment and testing of one’s composure.

November 25 – This was another day of endurance as we were special guests at a military ceremony marking the 13th anniversary of the freeing of Yambio from the North. It was also to commemorate the time many left the area and went North to escape fighting all around. The Sudanese People’s Liberation Army had their army, a rather scrawny, ill-clothed regiment of men and women parading the grounds. What was significantly strange was one of the soldiers leading the parade was carrying a cross. Quite a contrast! This “nothing to look at” army succeeded against all the forces unleashed by an army from the North in shiny uniforms with all their planes and bombs, but this SPLA volunteer army had the determination and will to win. The SPLA drove the leaders of the north to the peace table at a great price. This town showed why this army was sustained.

November 27 – America’s National Day of Thanksgiving was celebrated in Sudan with goat featured as the main dish. I found myself involved by appointment in a custom common to Sudan: a hunting expedition. A large net was set up and people began to drive a goat into the net. When it was entangled in the net, it was the duty of the “spearman” to spear the goat. That designation was given to me and there was “no right of refusal.” I’m sure many in America would see it as cruelty to animals, while Sudanese see it as giving the goat the right to escape.

November 28 – Functions and services can seemingly be held on any day of the week and on this Friday we were in the “village” of Saura, kind of in the middle of the jungle. We were here to dedicate the Lutheran church that had been built by members of Royal Redeemer Lutheran Church, North Royalton, Ohio. The biggest challenge of the day was to get to the location. We like to

complain about pot holes in our roads, but on this route we encountered mini lakes and steep banks that had to be traversed. At one point a truck got stuck, and it took many members pushing and shoving to release it so that its cargo of church benches could be delivered for the dedication.

November 29 – On this Saturday we all journeyed the six miles to the “village” of Baguga, which Andrew had designated as the headquarters for the ELCS. The ceremony was to dedicate the cornerstones of two major buildings planned for the site: a headquarters building and a cathedral. Rev. Dan Preus dedicated the church cornerstone that looked more like a podium on which an inscription was printed. A similar podium had been built for the headquarters building. Andrew’s vision had the area growing to such an extent that the two villages on either side of Baguga, some six miles away, would merge and Baguga become the main center. With his death in 2008, it now appears that the headquarters will possibly be in Yambio.

November 30 – The day of ordination for Rev. Nicholas, Rev. Wilson, and Rev. Elinama with participation by Revs. Simojoki, Elisa, Dachi, Arkkila, Asaph, Preus, Suzanne Zobel and me. Rev. Preus preached the sermon for the event. Mary Biba, a Roman Catholic lady, spoke for the community. She headed up a program of feeding the SPLA Army and spoke of physical and spiritual development. When I spoke, I utilized her “development” concept that in our country means fundraising to keep missions moving forward. “We have been here and have seen your needs, and I reflect on what we have been talking about before we came – development. We want to stand with you, but there are those who would prefer to decrease development. In a few weeks our board will make a decision about the work here. Rev. Preus is an executive member of the board. I will be here in June on a development project as we begin to build the headquarters for the ELCS, and I pledge to you that the LHF, as it did in 1999, will stand with you. In the Khartoum meeting on July 28 you heard a ‘no’ to your request for seminary development. On July 30 you asked for another meeting and you heard a ‘yes,’ although it wasn’t our main focus, to develop the Concordia Lutheran Institute for the Holy Ministry. We are committed to standing with you so that you can develop your country and the ELCS.” Suzanne was ecstatic about the speech and wished it could have been recorded. Simojoki labeled my speech as a war cry, a very bold message.

Rev. Preus mentioned that people were apprehensive and reluctant to come to Sudan, and he was also. But being here I can see the church in all its glory and joy. The joy on your faces will be remembered.

2004

January 10 – As a result of a trip to Kenya, Uganda, and Sudan during early December 2003, I encountered my only episode with serious illness. It was a blessing that the symptoms were discovered after I returned. When one considers the many miles traveled, the many countries visited, and the strange food eaten, it is a wonder that one didn't contract some stomach problems. We can only report a one-time serious incident as the —

MALARIA EPISODE

A preaching and circuit meeting speaking commitment took me to Wichita, Kansas, in early January. I was able to preach for the morning services and conduct the Bible class before going back to the motel to prepare my presentation for the circuit conference the next day. That afternoon I began to experience the typical flu-like symptoms, with extreme variations in being cold and then hot. I called the circuit counselor and reported my condition, doubtful of making the commitment. The pastor delivered some hot soup to the room for my evening meal.

The next morning I faced the drive from Wichita to Kansas City to catch my flight back to Detroit. From Kansas City I called my wife to have her make an appointment with the doctor, as I reported to her, "I think I have malaria." I checked in with my doctor. I reported my continued symptoms of severe chills that resulted in uncontrollable shaking, even though covers were piled on and hot water bottles utilized.

My first diagnosis from the doctor was that I was suffering from pneumonia, and antibiotics were ordered. After reporting the condition worsening after two days, the doctor suggested I better get to the emergency room. I checked in with great difficulty and waited for treatment and for a room assignment. Fortunately, the County Infectious Disease Physician was on duty. Upon putting the bloodwork under the microscope, he called the emergency room staff and my wife to view the evidence – malicious intruders that were suspected to be malaria bacteria. Blood samples were sent to the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta, and they made the verification that indeed, it was malaria.

It took five days before the treatments took effect. By that time I had been hooked up to what seemed like every machine in the hospital. I was in such a weakened condition that getting out of bed was out of the question. By the time I improved enough to leave the hospital in a wheelchair and walking with a cane, my medical history was already in the classroom, with Dr.

Ognjan showing the students in his class what blood infected with malaria looked like. Dr. Ognjan also informed my wife during the recuperation that the patient was within twelve hours of survival, as vital organs were beginning to shut down by the time treatment started.

It was later that we could joke with the doctor that there should be no bill for the hospitalization, and that he should be paying me for the education I provided. It was one of the first cases of malaria he had seen in the county. It would be three weeks before I would have the strength to return to my LHF obligations and duties.

On this particular trip I had obtained my malaria pills in Nairobi. It was determined that the pills received were more for someone who has previously had malaria and were not of sufficient strength. It was on this same trip that Dr. Anssi Simojoki had the disease come upon him almost immediately. Why mine occurred almost three weeks later is still a mystery. It was clear, however, that the disease was contracted while in Sudan.

I guess there does come a time when you become somewhat immune to the serious side effects. I remember the many times that Rev. Andrew Mbugo Elisa suffered from the disease, and how he worked while in bed getting rest and recuperating. People in Sudan are not strangers to this enemy.

January 30 – A new Lutheran church body was formed in Thailand. The government announced that a new law was being implemented that would allow Christian churches to register as a church body if it had a membership of 150. Since all Lutheran churches in Thailand were small, it was decided that an association of congregations would be formed and registered under the name of Concordia Lutheran Church in Thailand. Rev. Ted NaThalang was asked to give temporary leadership in adopting a constitution and organizing its government, with seven people making up a board.

February 19 – A number of professors from our seminaries have expressed their thanks for our books when conducting seminars in various parts of the globe. Dr. Robert Kolb, head of the Institute for Mission Studies, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri, stated, “This past summer I once again experienced how valuable your work is and how vital it is for the churches in central and Eastern Europe. I was able to use the Russian translation of my *Christian Faith* directly in seminars, and the two volumes of mine that you have published in Latvian were also put to use in my seminar there.”

February 27 – As the LHF becomes more intent on establishing its organization structure, a revised employee handbook is introduced, and discussion follows in regard to formulating a board of directors policy manual. This is the first board discussion on the future transition of the executive director position to another person, when that becomes a reality.

March 7 – A Sunday dedication of the Ukrainian *Hymnal* was conducted with representatives of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS) present: Rev. John Molstad, president; Rev. Adolph Harstad, professor at Bethany, Mankato; Mark Schwan and Dan Browning, Thoughts of Faith board members; Prof. John Lawrenz, Ternopil Seminary; and Mr. and Mrs. Tom Conzelmann, Frankenmuth, Michigan, ELS donors. After the service I spoke on Psalm 98:1 “O Sing unto the Lord a new song for He has done marvelous things.” I presented the hymnal as a special gift to Bishop Horpynchuk and the Ukrainian Lutheran Church. I told them that there were four places in the world where hymnals published by LHF were being used: Sudan, Lithuania, Bulgaria, and now Ukraine. One more would be added later in Swahili for Kenya and Tanzania. After the presentations were made, a table was set up and over 100 hymnals received autographs of people involved in the project.

March 12 – In our visit to Ekaterinburg I raised the question on the whereabouts of our friend, Rev. Pavel Bock, whom we had met many times on earlier trips. The answer was most interesting. Pavel was the pastor of the “methobapticostical” church, and he was sent to Moscow to be assistant to the superintendent of the Russia Pentecostal Church. I was told his brother became pastor of the Ekaterinburg church. The flow of LHF books is still the same, now even into the Moscow office of the Pentecostal Superintendent. This interesting phenomenon tells us that we are still the key producers of books apart from the Orthodox.

May 12 – Rev. Andrew Mbugo Elisa estimated the cost of four-story mission center to be built on a Baguga site. Andrew was informed that the cost was excessive and needed to be reduced.

July 27 – Notice was received that the voters of St. John Lutheran Church Rich Valley, Rosemount, Minnesota, approved a grant to build the Rich Valley Lutheran Mission Center for the ELCS.

August 2-14 – A Meru “Bible Storybook/Catechism Seminar” was conducted by Ms. Suzanne Zobel for 34 church leaders.

August 17 – Rev. Elisa wrote, “Your message indicating that LHF would make available a grant for the construction of the ELCS Mission Center has been accepted and acknowledged with great thanks and appreciation. Upon receiving your message, I immediately notified the engineer with the figure, as he is arranging to produce the bill of quantity for the whole work.”

August 16-20 – A Maasai Sunday School Seminar was conducted by Ms. Suzanne Zobel. Sunday school teachers are generally very young (12-15 years old), as they are the only ones who can read. They require much teaching themselves to gain Bible and catechism knowledge. These seminars

are a key to correct Biblical teaching.

October 1 – Rev. Elisa traveled to South Africa and arranged the purchase of a brick-making machine with help from LHF and LCMS World Relief and Human Care. He was also able to purchase sawmill equipment, tools to set up a workshop building that would feature brick making, sawmill, welder, and mechanical operations. The foundation for the building was laid, but because of his sudden death it remains unfinished.

October 2 – *Rwanda*

On this date Dr. Simojoki gave a background on the Lutheran Church of Rwanda after his visit. “I visited Rwanda by invitation of the bishop, Rev. George Wilson Kalisa. German missionaries from Bukoba, Tanganyika, worked in Rwanda until World War I. After the war, Lutherans were forced to join the Presbyterian Church, and this was the end of the first Lutheran mission effort in Rwanda. After the first major massacres of Tutsis in Rwanda in 1959 (around 10,000 people were killed), tens of thousands of Tutsis fled to Tanzania. Many of them came to join the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania. After the genocide of around 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus in April to August 1994, the Tutsis began to return to Rwanda. There were 6,000 Lutherans and six Lutheran pastors returning from Tanzania who formed the Rwanda Lutheran Church. The membership now numbers up to 16,000 Christians in 57 parishes, and the church is active in five of the 12 provinces. Their main problem is theological training. In this respect they are looking at us very much. They would like to align themselves with us theologically. They have already translated *The Freedom of a Christian* and have completed *Luther’s Small Catechism* in Kinyarwanda and Kirundi. They invited me back to teach the clergy the catechism and also arrange a seminar for translators.”

Some connections with Rwanda were already made back in 2000. In June 2001, Rev. Fehrmann and Rev. Bill Brege made a visit to Rwanda to meet with Rev. Jean Bosco, who was positioning himself as a key player for Lutherans. It was fortunate that he was exposed as your typical con artist just before plans were made to build a major complex in that region.

Suzanne Zobel conducted several workshops on teaching the catechism with Sunday school teachers and women of the church. Work came under the direction of Rev. Dean Sarambuye Celestin, whose desire was to build a Bible School and Vocational Training Center. The LHF provided funds to build a fence around the property purchased by the church. The fence would demonstrate the active intent in using the land as prescribed.

Today Rev. James May, Lutherans in Africa, Nairobi, Kenya, is consulting with the church and its needs.

November 18 – Kampala, Uganda

A meeting is held in Kampala, Uganda, to discuss forming an African Council. Those in attendance were Dr. Anssi Simojoki, Dr. Nelson Unwene, Suzanne Zobel, Joana Martin (representing Rev. Andrew Mbugo Elisa, Sudan), and I. There was a desire to find someone to represent South Africa and for Bishop Kofi Fynn, Ghana, to represent that part of Africa. The cabinet was to have a total of five members. This action, encouraged by LHF-Africa in Nairobi and Dr. Nelson Unwene of Nigeria. The discussion eventually focused on the authority of LHF-Africa, and the concept was finally put on a back burner due to economic conditions and was never implemented.

This was the time we also withdrew from further Uganda involvement because of a controversy going on between two Lutheran groups who each were trying to draw us into the skirmish. We told the leadership that when they had settled their dispute, we would again consider involvement.

November 20 – On this date the name of Rev. Samwel Atunga became a name that is associated with the growing disintegration of the ELCK. Whether Bishop Walter Obare would agree with the assessment is rather doubtful. Rev. Atunga was a very successful pastor/evangelist serving a growing church in the Nairobi Diocese. Problems developed for Atunga when he disciplined an evangelist for immoral activity, breaking up marriages, and a whole barrage of behavior unbecoming a church member/evangelist. For taking this action, the bishop disciplined Atunga and assigned him to the “isle of Patmos,” and the offender even today serves as head of an orphanage. Because this is an ongoing battle within the church and the courts, I will only say that the words of Scripture are pertinent: “Your sin will find you out.” From this event we have seen the gradual eroding in the rank and file of the ELCK membership. I’m sure there will be those who will want to vigorously disagree with my analysis. The record eventually will speak for itself.

It was on this visit that we also learned that the Barclay’s Bank had been sold and our interest nullified.

November 21 – This was how I began a message I was sending from the LHF compound in Nairobi. It took 50 minutes to get hooked up to the Internet. An hour of writing had passed and we discovered that the message “disappeared,” because I was typing while the Internet connection was on. When it goes off automatically after a half-hour, your message is lost. I even hit the “save” button, but what was saved was only the first couple of paragraphs. I suppose you can call it the Nairobi nemesis because this has been a rather regular problem from here. It meant starting over.

“This day was a little bit like a day we generally have in Sudan. The church service began at 10:30 a.m. and all festivities ended at 6 p.m. There was a

special dinner hosted by Phillip Dahoud in thanksgiving for all the help from the congregation in the time his children were kidnapped. He introduced his seven children and spoke of how his commitment and love for Jesus sustained him, and how he felt the Lord might be using this kidnapping episode to help the Somali people to 'come out.' For years they have been hiding their Christian faith for fear of persecution. It came to the point that only old men were attending services. Women and children stayed home in fear. Anssi talked about the miracle of a heavy rain that thwarted the abductors from crossing the border and being rescued by the police. The dinner menu included a Somali delicacy – camel meat. After the dinner Suzanne Zobel showed the movie *The Passion of the Christ*, followed by a long discussion.”

November 22 – I discussed with Simojoki our pioneering work in Meru, a rural Kenya area. We decided that we will withdraw from Meru except for translation activity, and have Suzanne maintain a contact and some work with Jane Nkonge, the former Anglican pastor who defrocked herself when the eight pastors left the Anglican church for Lutheranism. We were providing a modest stipend for each worker. Since Bishop Obare had not signed the document verifying his desire to have us work there, we withdrew but still maintain a connection without providing expenses. The funds used in Meru would be switched to work in Somalia.

November 23 – On this date we visited Gnong, about one hour's drive from Karen, to meet with the Maasai for whom we are translating the catechism and hymnal. We had a brief service led by Evangelist Daniel Mosiro. I preached on Psalm 23 leading to the questions, “Where are we going and whom are we following?” In the afternoon, Rev. Simojoki and I met with Mr. Isaac Ogai and Mr. Douglas Ochong of the Adventis firm who would build our Rich Valley Mission Center in Baguga, Sudan. They were very thorough in their presentation, but thoroughness would not be their hallmark in actual construction that was a complete failure.

November 29 – On this date we were out in the rural areas of Kenya to visit several preaching locations. The first one was Marimanti, where a service was held for 60 waiting people. We informed the congregation that we were on a tight schedule, hoping to conduct three services during the day, so it was a mini service. Also a Jeep delivered the sacks of beans and corn we provided for this famine-stricken area. Suzanne and I did some of the dispensing. Some of the elderly, we were told, could not make it because of their weakened condition and the challenge of crossing a river now running full because of a recent rain. Several people had drowned. We suggested a bridge or raft, but there is some strange belief in connection with the need

of crossing the river that would be too difficult to explain.

Mitunguu was our next stop for worship with 40 people. Then we quickly made our way to Nkubu as it was getting dark. There was enough light coming through an open door allowing me to read some Scriptures, speak a few words, and offer prayers. At each destination there was a prepared meal in which we simply had to indulge before moving on.

November 30 – On this Sunday we were in Meru for the service held at leased quarters the congregation would like help to buy. It was about two acres and there was a school on the site with a cafeteria (serves as the worship area), dorms, teacher residences, offices, and outdoor toilets. The \$56,000 price tag would be a steal, but no promises for help were given since there are about 15 other places that would like for us to help buy land. The message was from Romans on the theme “GOING ON A JOURNEY.”

1. What time does God declare?
2. What should we wear?
3. How should we prepare?

After the service there were presentations, and I was given the name “M’Marete,” meaning “one who has been through initiation as an elder and one who brings,” implying good things like translations. Along with that I received a fold-up chair, a staff, a cow’s tail, and a plaque, reminders of my visit to Meru.

2005

January 2 - February 7 – Andrew arrived in Detroit and began a month-long tour of presentations and visits, including stops in Elgin, Chicago, Cleveland, Westlake, Pittsburgh, Fort Wayne, Dearborn, Fraser, Frankenmuth, Oviedo, St. Louis, Springfield, Chesterfield, and Macomb. The trip to Pittsburgh was for the purpose of meeting with Rev. Jamison Hardy and the Concordia Lutheran Ministries Board, where we were able to share the history of the ELCS and present some of the church needs. An end result of this meeting was the willingness of the Concordia Lutheran Ministries to provide a grant to ELCS for the purchase of medical vans. In discussing this with Rev. Jamison Hardy, we indicated that this would not be regarded in the general mission scope of the LHF, with the conclusion that we should direct the funds to be sent to the LCMS World Relief/Human Care designated for that purpose.

This activity established a relationship between Concordia Lutheran Ministries and LCMS World Relief and Human Care by which the ELCS benefited, and also the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Kenya and its work

with orphanages. Because LHF had the special permit to send funds into Sudan from the U.S. Treasury Department, we became the conduit for the disbursement of funds without charge to other entities.

Two medical vans found their way to Sudan and were highly utilized for several years, but medical supplies became scarce. One of the vans became a bus for transporting goods and people, with some benefit to the church treasury.

January 9 – A contract was signed for the construction of the Rich Valley Lutheran Mission Center with Adventis Limited Architects and Interior Designers, Nairobi, Kenya.

February 18 – After visiting with Rev. Matthew Harrison (at that time heading up the LCMS World Relief and Human Care), Rev. Elisa wrote, “Allow me to repeat once again my words of thanks for the nice visit and meeting that took place in your office a week ago. It gave me great encouragement as I discovered your eagerness to assist ELCS in her struggle to serve God’s people in the Sudan, while concentrating on preaching the precious Word that announces the grace of God to all the people and the forgiveness of their sins. I remain praying and waiting to release what God has planned to be accomplished for ELCS through the Human Care Department and your good self.”

February 25 – A historic event took place with the movement of a shipping container from Nairobi to Baguga, Sudan, after six months of bureaucratic buffoonery. Had all the charges been applied as were requested for custom clearing and dock storage, the cost would have been \$50,000. At one point, in frustration, the suggestion was made that the container be taken into the ocean and dropped. We were told there would still be tariff charges. The lessons learned made it clear that we were definitely out of the container shipping business. Our next shipment was made through Orphan Grain Train, and they, too, encountered untold problems dealing with graft, greed, and corruption. Perhaps with the new country of South Sudan there will be some improvement in this shipping saga.

March 10 – The ordination of Alison Zebedayo Zebe was announced by Rev. Elisa, bringing the total to five pastors who are ordained and serving the ELCS. He graduated from Matongo Lutheran College in Kenya and was ordained in Juba, Sudan.

March 14 – Rev. Elisa expressed appreciation to LHF for sending Ms. Suzanne Zobel to teach the catechism during several sessions over a two-week period.

April 21 – First request sent to President Gerald Kieschnick to initiate talks for ELCS church fellowship.

April 24 – Dr. Wilhelm Weber visited LHF headquarters and pleaded for help to expand the seminary for the Lutheran Church in Southern Africa. LHF provided funds to purchase a house adjacent to the seminary in Pretoria, which now serves as seminary offices and is designated as LHF Hall.

May 1 – An arrangement was made to have Dr. Kieschnick meet with the ELCS church leaders. General Secretary Rev. Japhet Dachi wrote, “We have no words to express ourselves to you and also to your office about such a wonderful happening.” Unfortunately the event never happened, and the ELCS continued its efforts to convince the LCMS that there is a desire for fellowship and partnership.

May 5 – Whenever I am traveling overseas and the King’s Royal Order of Stuffers are working on a mailing, I take the opportunity to send a message if possible. On this Ascension Day, I wrote to them the following:

“Once again I will miss the special fellowship in your gathering today. I’m out here in the field. Between the Ascension and Pentecost events, the disciples saw the promises of God fulfilled and were eventually commissioned to ‘go and tell.’

“Pentecost is still happening! I no sooner walked into the LHF compound in Karen than I was introduced to two people who demonstrate this continuing power of Pentecost and the confirmation of the work we do together. I met Olben Ohide from South Sudan, from a region near Juba where 25,000 people speak the Otuho language. He is a former Roman Catholic and studying to become Lutheran by going through the special catechism course that is taught here at the Center. This week it’s a group of evangelists and church officers from the Uta Wala region of Kenya. It is a region quite familiar to me, as it was the first place I had the privilege of preaching under a tree and where we helped build a church. He had been in touch with Andrew, and he would become an evangelist in this new area for Lutheranism in Sudan. It is Pentecost 2005.

“The other person is from Tanzania. Mordecai converted from Roman Catholicism to Pentecostalism and found that religion to be lots of emotionalism with little theology. He found his way to some Lutheran in the Mwanza region and was given copies of the *Good News* magazine, which he devoured. This led him to the conviction he would become Lutheran. He reads everything in Swahili he can get his hands on.

Phillip Dahoud, the Somali Muslim convert and LHF translator, continues his productive work. He is now finishing the final review of a children’s Bible that will have a Somali artist provide the pictures. His was the family that had their children kidnapped. As Dr. Naaman Laiser observed today at lunch, “We will never know what impact the LHF has on the church through these

seminars that are regularly conducted here.”

Later I learned additional information from Mordecai, the Lutheran convert. He actually was a high ranking Muslim who was sent to Zansibar to become more trained for propagating the Muslim faith. He never had a good feeling about that, because even Muhammad did not know or have certainty as to what happens at life’s end. He was sent to Arusha and there he was given a book that had some information on Luther. He wanted to know more about that after he was connected with the Roman Catholics and Pentecostals. He ran into a Lutheran tailor who shared his faith. When the Lutheran Bishop Amayo in Kisumu met him, he personally asked Dr. Simojoki if he would receive Mordecai in Karen for further training. So, here he was taking the catechism class.”

May 5 – Support for Unwene allowed for his translation work and also his continued service on the faculty of the Lutheran Seminary in Obot Idim, a position for which the seminary was unable to provide compensation. In discussing this with Rev. Walter Otten, Brookfield, Illinois, it was concluded that the Lutheran Church of Nigeria would benefit greatly by having a conservative voice continuing to serve on the seminary faculty. It would become a byproduct of the translation work for which Unwene was paid. He would be able to continue to serve on the faculty without pay. This was an example how the LHF through its translation work would impact the church as a whole, which would happen many times during the course of LHF history. It was also an example as to how congregations partner with LHF to serve the Lutheran Church of Nigeria. St. Paul Lutheran Church, Brookfield, Illinois, and Trinity Lutheran Church, New Haven, Missouri, were well acquainted with Dr. Nelson Unwene and stepped forward with support to help LHF and the work in Nigeria.

May 8 – Once again I had the privilege to preach for yet another service in Yambio, Sudan. This time the day’s Epistle Lesson was 1 Peter 4:12-19. I began with a long introduction on what is the universal question asked in every culture and time, by Christians and non-Christians alike, during time of tragedy and uncertainty, during time of joy and happiness, at the death of a child or family member, when the roof blows off a church, when the roads are rough and the way is difficult? Do you know the question?

Before I ask the all-pervasive question, let me tell you there is an answer to the question in the 1 Peter text. Are you ready for the question and the theme? The theme, the question – WHY?

Why is there suffering? It is no surprise that Christians suffer. There are some things from which you can expect suffering – v.15 murder, theft, evil doers, meddlers. Suffering as a Christian happens all over the world, perhaps

here in your life as well. Cast your care upon Him for He cares for you. Why? He loved you enough to send His very best – John 3:16. No painted picture of privilege, a phrase my translator had a tough time translating.

At a gathering around the fire pit in the evening I told the group the word I would use to describe roads is “unbelievable.” I would use the same word in discovering that a container from America had arrived with the most unbelievable route taken and the unbelievable price that was gouged from LHF. The lesson learned was never send a container.

May 10 – Andrew scheduled a ground breaking ceremony prior to leaving for our flight to Nairobi. The original church had become too small for the congregation and a new building was being built. Since this was another one of those surprises, and since I’m usually the “go to” man for all seasons, I was asked to do the ceremony. I had no *Agenda*, so it was done from what I could remember for such an event. I read an appropriate lesson and commented briefly on it before handing the shovel to each participant.

May 2-11 – Harvard Schulz, LHF board member, and owner of Welfl Construction Corporation, Yankton, South Dakota and I visited Baguga and participated in the first site meeting with the officials of Adventis Construction. Harvard reported that the foundation which had been laid was more than adequate for the building project. It meant that we were on solid footing as the project began. It was unfortunate that the construction firm was not on the same kind of footing. After numerous delays and court battles, the firm was dismissed from the project on March 17, 2009. On July 26, 2008, Nilo Engineering & Consultancy Services, Juba, Sudan, provided a Technical Site Investigation indicating that a portion of the building with the second floor cement poured showed significant signs of structural failure. It was suggested that the eastern first floor slab and beams should be demolished before any work commenced, and that the structural design of the building should be reviewed. The granting congregation was kept informed of all activities and on November 1, 2009 the congregation suggested that the construction at the Baguga site be discontinued and that LHF would have permission to sell any materials or salvaging portions of the building and consider a one story structure.

May 18 – Rev. Fehrmann’s service to LHF ends.

June 1 – Rev. Scott Benjamin announces he would be leaving the LHF staff to pursue a doctorate degree in missions and to get back to a Word and Sacrament ministry. He eventually received a call to serve Resurrection Lutheran Church, Detroit, Michigan. He also mentioned the possibility of another stint on some mission field or maybe even eventually teaching missions.

June 4 – Arrived in Chennai, India. After being found at the airport by my

hosts (somewhat harrowing being in a sea of people and not connecting), I was whisked off to Ambur in an (thankfully) air conditioned car. It was a four-hour trip slowed by people, vehicles, goats, lots of cows, motorbikes, motorcycles, bicycles, and big trucks. In our country, windshield wipers have to be replaced periodically, and in India I'm sure horns need to be replaced even more frequently. All vehicles have big letters on the back – "PLEASE HONK YOUR HORN!" And do they ever oblige! Passing with oncoming traffic is done with the assumption that the approaching vehicle will move to the shoulder.

We arrived at the church where the event that had first been scheduled for 11 a.m. and then changed to 4 p.m. There was a large (typical in India) sign welcoming me and LHF. They even had the Ablaze logo included. After my "arrival speech," I was honored with the traditional India gifts that make you look like the Pharaoh of Egypt.

We were there to release copies of *One Hundred Bible Stories*. I first distributed ten copies to each pastor, about 30 of them in attendance. Five copies were then given to Sunday school teachers and finally a copy to each child. There was much enthusiastic singing. After the event I went to the Ambur Hospital. I asked about Rev. Henry Schulz. Rev. John Sundaram, LHF director for India, knew him well, as he had him for a teacher. There is even a residence on the grounds called the Schulz apartment. When I was in Missoula, Montana, we called Rev. Henry Schulz from retirement to serve a mission congregation. Rev. Al Pullmann and I had started on our days off in Lincoln, Montana. Rev. Schulz later served as my assistant in St. Ignatius, Montana. This was part of a three-point parish which I was trying to serve as a vacancy in addition to my own congregation, Messiah.

Later I was asked if I would meet with the Women's Society headed up by deaconesses. The topic they wanted to discuss was women as pastors. I sent them some literature to back up what information I shared with them from the Scriptures and confessions. I don't think I totally convinced them, but Rev. Sundaram thought it was helpful.

June 5 – I again was called upon to be the preacher of the day for the Sunday service. I took my shoes off as is custom here. I used the call of Matthew and tied it in with the Great Commission and used the theme "GO." Go with His power, plan and presence. Sundaram commented, "You could tell by your preaching that you love the Word." I suppose that is too generous a comment to accept when the Spirit works through the Word and you are a mere instrument.

We then proceeded to the afternoon activity, the laying of a cornerstone for a new church building. This was an event that was almost overwhelming

when I saw the cornerstone style similar to the one in Sudan, a kind of podium. It boldly showed: “Messiah Lutheran Church Cornerstone Placed on June 6, 2005, by Dr. Robert Rahn, Lutheran Heritage Foundation.” I shared with them my emotions over the name Messiah. I told them that the significant part is that the Lord said, “I HAVE CALLED YOU BY NAME, YOU ARE MINE.” Here in this place let it be known that the NAME OF THE MESSIAH stands forever etched in the stone and let it be etched in the hearts of people through the preaching of the Gospel that will take place here.

I spoke to a man who had been crippled by polio and had been a Buddhist. He gave his story, and his commitment was that he would rather die than to give up the name of this Messiah. I was asked to pray over him, and then several other people came for prayer. I think this might have some charismatic influence, but out there under that tree wasn't the place to ask any questions, but to put a hand on them and honor their request.

June 16 – The LHF was contacted by Rev. John Vogt of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS), asking if we might be interested in someone who could translate Polish books and materials. He introduced me to a seminarian who took seminary training at the Lutheran Seminary in Warsaw, but also took courses at the seminary of the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church of Germany, a sister church of the WELS.

This contact with Rev. Matthew Oseka began our work in Poland. Rev. Oseka worked with LHF while he was completing work for a doctor's degree in theology. The first works published in Polish were two short works of Luther on the topic of “Writings Against the Enthusiasts.” Rev. Oseka translated this from the German. These were selected because modern enthusiasts (Pentecostals) were unfortunately in bloom. It was felt that Luther's anti-enthusiasts works could be useful, because they teach eternal truth, that salvatory cognition of God is possible ONLY by the means of grace.

July 20 – A revised LHF constitution was adopted that, among other things, reduced the size of the board of directors from 25 to 15 members.

July 23 – Visited South Sudan with Rev. Tom Hoyt, Tomball, Texas; Mark Loessel, Macomb, Michigan; and Phil Porter, Shelby Township, Michigan. We made our visit to the Baguga site and ran into a problem with the road being blocked by a disabled truck. Water on each side of the road did not allow a vehicle to pass, so we were faced with walking a mile to our destination. At Baguga a project was underway, building a shed to protect a sawmill operation and brick-making machine. We hauled fourteen 2x4s in a 16' length to the site, which were nailed together to form a 40' roof stringer.

It was difficult driving nails, as the wood was mahogany or teak. Mark and Phil assisted in the building project. Our next trip to the site had us riding bicycles from the blocked road.

We returned for the wedding ceremony of Rev. Nicholas and his bride, Flora, a very somber couple who never smiled during the ceremony. She indicated nervousness as the reason. I spoke on Eccl. 4:9-12, "A CORD OF THREE STRANDS IS NOT EASILY BROKEN." The church was full with many peering in the windows and doors. A dinner followed for about 150 people.

July 24 – I made the trip to Baguga on a motorcycle driven by Andrew and was dropped off for the service led by Evangelist Cephas. I preached on Ephesians 2:11-23, on barriers and gates and Christ enabling us to cross over. I used the illustration of broad jumpers trying to jump a 30 foot canyon, and each one jumping farther than the next, but all ending up falling short of the mark. So it is if we assume we can get to heaven by our own efforts. Perfection is demanded and the mark achieved by the cross of Christ. Only 30 attended the service and I told Andrew this was of great concern to me. A pastor needs to be stationed here where there is so much activity going on with the construction of a building and a school of some 500 students.

In the afternoon discussions were going on when someone mentioned termites. The kitchen crew was summoned, the termite hill attacked, and soon before us was a tray of roasted termites that we all helped to consume.

July 26 – Andrew announced that today was "farm day." It meant traveling out to the place where Andrew was born and now had the farm. We endured two hours of some unbelievable roads. A truck met us at the farm with 1,000 pineapple plants that I helped to plant. There were 15-20 of his relatives there to also help. Sad to say that with Andrew's death, the pineapple, banana, peanut, mango plot is overgrown with weeds. Each pineapple could have been sold for \$1.

July 31 – We are in Khartoum, Sudan, thanking God that visa problems were solved and we were able to fly here from Nairobi. The purpose of our trip was the ordination of six men for the ministry. The text I used was 2 Cor. 4:1-15 using the theme "THE POSTURE OF A PASTOR." The three concepts centered on PREPARATION, PERSEVERANCE AND PROMINANCE and RELEVANCE OF CHRIST. The ordination followed our *Agenda* until completed, and then there was bedlam as everyone tried to rush up, bestow garlands, throw candy, and give flowers. The service was again held under a tent, and some 350 people were in attendance. Following the ordination we also had a dedication of the Zande *Small Catechism*.

Andrew came to the guest house in the evening with Allyson Magaya, the

Minister of Labor and another cabinet member. Magaya was on the phone most of the time, because the big event was that John Garang was missing on a helicopter trip. He had just been installed as Vice President of Sudan, second in command in the new administration. The initial reports said the helicopter had been forced to land because of bad weather.

Rev. Hoyt and I headed to the airport, with him departing for Texas and me to Riga, Latvia.

August 1 – Rev. Andrew sent the following message to LHF Mission headquarters: “The news from Khartoum is that the Vice President of the Republic of Sudan, Dr. John Garang, died on Saturday in a helicopter crash. This happened when he was returning from Uganda, using the helicopter of the Ugandan president. Soon I am going to release a statement giving details about the whole tragedy. The death of Dr. Garang has not interrupted the peace process in any way. His deputy has been named to replace him as all will continue as planned. May God rest his soul in eternal peace.

“As regarding the condition of our guests, Dr. Rahn left earlier this morning on Lufthansa on his way to Latvia. Suzanne, Anna and Dr. Simojoki are safe in the guest house. Only tonight they will go without electricity because of riots that closed most businesses in town. Our office, my house, and all the staff so far are safe. But as we receive the general information, there have been more damages and clashes between southerners and Arabs. We are staying inside to weather the storm and waiting for the problems to die down before resuming any activities or travel plans. The news which first came yesterday that his whereabouts is not known, was simply a security cover-up to make more preparations before announcing his death. The entire town of Khartoum was closed today, due to riots which have resulted in the deaths of many people.

“Since the news was announced yesterday, I have been in contact with most of the southern leaders, including the man who is expected to succeed Dr. Garang, and all have assured us that the death of Dr. Garang does not mean the end of the peace accord.

“The death of Dr. Garang is more than a tragedy to the southern Sudanese people. We have lost a man who gave his talents, time, and energy to struggle on behalf of the people. This has created a gap that will be very difficult to fill and forget. The very good Lord, our Savior, Jesus Christ, will not forget us in this critical situation, and we strongly believe that peace will continue to flourish in the Sudan.”

August 2 – Today we received an official tour of the Latvian Parliament Building from Rev. Janis Smits. The Parliament was not in session today. I took a picture of Rev. Smits “in his official place” up in front on a high platform

where he sits next to the head of the Parliament in his elected position as secretary. He is also head of one of the parties. He made the point that most Lutherans who are in the Parliament make it known they are Lutheran, but when it comes to a vote they forget. He expects some problems coming up on the question of homosexuality. A copy of each of our publications is in the Parliament Library. While there, he presented the completed manuscript of the history of Lutheranism in Latvia. He spent hours and hours as our paid scribe, sitting with the author, Rev. Roberts Feldmanis, and taking recordings of conversations about Latvian Lutheranism as he remembered it. He had served as head of the Mission Committee for years, had made a trip to India at one time, and was vitally interested in our work there. Feldmanis had passed away and a commemoration of his death would be celebrated every year.

We then proceeded to the print shop and picked up a new LHF publication, the Latvian *Prayer Book*.

November 11 – Congo

Dr. Simojoki travels to Bukavu and distributed Swahili books and the *Good News* magazine.

December 5-8, 2005 – First Joint Sudan Consultation

It was realized that after more people and groups began to be involved in Sudan, some kind of consultation needed to take place to assimilate and organize efforts. The first joint consultation was called and sponsored by the ELCS, LHF, and LCMS World Missions. Thirty-one individuals participated in the meeting, and all signed a Memorandum of Understanding, indicating that all activities in Sudan would be coordinated through the leadership of the ELCS. A description of needs was developed, and each member agreed to promote these needs in whatever way possible. It was determined that another similar meeting be held in two years to determine progress and assess needs.

October 5 – How A Project Is Born

This date can be used to demonstrate how a project is born. Dr. Simojoki filed this report: "I left Nairobi on Tuesday night. I spent one day in Dubai. The following night I flew to Islamabad. There, I obtained my visa to Afghanistan. We then ventured forward to Peshawar. Here we obtained the license to travel with an armed body guard. The journey through Khyber Pass would last eight hours or so. On Monday I flew to Herat in western Afghanistan, an area bordering Iran. I have delivered four lectures on the Bible and the mission. Four missionaries over here are Finnish and Lutheran. The executive director of the International Assistance Mission, a Christian charity organization, is a Finn and a devout Lutheran. He wanted

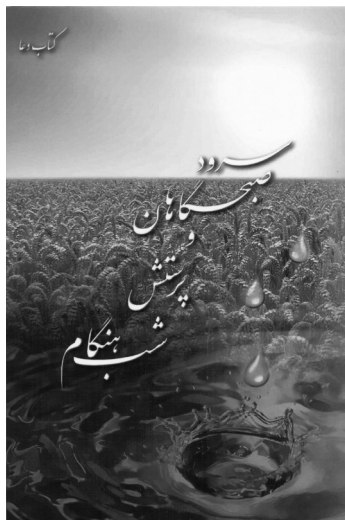
to strengthen the Lutheran confessional understanding of the Bible and invited me to their annual conference.”

On July 24, 2006, I received a message from a Harri Lammi in Kabul, the previously mentioned executive director of the International Assistance Mission, introducing himself and stating his reason for writing. “One of my dreams after working here for three years has been to write and translate a prayer book and catechism into one of the local languages (Dari, also known as Persian). Prayer is an essential part of Muslim daily practices, even if they do not know to whom they pray and do not have assurance that God hears their prayer. In sharing our faith with local people, I have at times been asked by them to write down the prayer.

“Dr. Simojoki said that LHF would be interested in supporting this kind of initiative. As the executive director of a fairly large organization, I have a reasonable amount of work just to do that, but I have thought that if there is anything in terms of a ‘heritage’, I would like to leave this for the Afghan people. We have to be quite careful what we write in emails so you can see I am being quite cautious about the words that I am not using.”

On February 16, 2007, business brought Harri Lammi to Detroit. We arrange a motel meeting to discuss the project further and give our encouragement to proceed. On January 8, 2008, we received the first draft of the Dari catechism/prayer book with the official title: *Morning Song and Evening Worship – A Book of Prayer*.

In November 2009, copies came off the press in Holland, and Lammi described how the decision was made regarding the cover and this gives us another dimension of translation and publishing. As important as accuracy is in translating a text, it is also important that the cover of a book is such that it attracts readers rather than distracting them.



Lammi said, “Initially I suggested the cover should have Arabic decorative sides on it resembling oriental design. It should also have a layout and design which is very Afghan. The Afghan design gives also more ownership to the Afghans. The cover was done with much prayer and thought. For me the drops of water describe the work of the Holy Spirit coming down as the dew from heaven, causing the wheat fields to have water, to grow and to bear fruit. The cover design also points to the dawn light of the Afghan Church. The title *Morning*

Song and Evening Worship brings these themes together. Pray for God's blessing, provision, and power of God's Word to grow spiritual fruit, the Spirit working through the Word, which is richly pointed to in the book (over 650 Scripture references), and the Word of God causing new life in us and lasting fruit."

The book was then and is now being distributed by personal couriers going into Afghanistan. So, like the long trip it took to get through the Khyber Pass, the long journey of a book comes to fruition, written first in English, reviewed, translated into Dari, reviewed, published and distributed.

2006

January 4 – Andrew Elisa arrived in Detroit on his way for studies at Fort Wayne. Rev. Rick and Pat Nuffer met Andrew and provided a vehicle for his use. I could not begin to report all the necessary red tape and arranging that had to be done to make this possible. Andrew had to take some preliminary courses to obtain a recognized Bachelor of Arts degree, so Concordia, Mequon had to be involved because they had an extension in Fort Wayne.

January 9 – First discussions took place on the need to elect a bishop for the ELCS. The reasoning was that the office of the bishop would better demonstrate that there is one Lutheran church in Sudan around which all Lutherans should gather. Discussion took place as to the need for a constitution.

January 15 – The Ukrainian *Book of Concord* released following the church service at Resurrection Lutheran Church, Kiev, Ukraine, in ceremonies conducted by Bishop Slavik Horpynchuk. Slavik gave a complete report on the significance of the occasion. He made the following comments: "Recently, my computer was attacked by a virus in an attached file. Someone sent it to me, most likely unknowingly. Norton AntiVirus caught the virus and removed it. I praised the Lord for the men who have created and update this software from time to time to keep my computer system intact. Otherwise all my work could be partially or even completely destroyed."

He then made a spiritual application to all of this by stating, "The Bride of Christ, his church, has been attacked by viruses of false doctrines many times. False teachers often tried to diminish the Gospel of salvation, the precious Good News that we are saved through faith in Christ alone. But our gracious Lord was raising church doctors who were fighting those deadly viruses with our confessions. The confessions were formed on the Scriptures, the inerrant Word of God. The Church was healed, protected, and strengthened. The greatest Confessions of the Church were assembled

and written at the time of the Reformation, led by the ‘Doctor of the Church,’ Martin Luther. How thankful we are to our Lord for Dr. Luther and all the Reformation Fathers whose writings are recorded in the *Book of Concord*, our precious Lutheran Confessions.

“After seven years of work, supported fully by the LHF, on this date, a week after the January 7th Eastern Orthodox Christmas, the ULC celebrated the release of the *Book of Concord*. It is difficult to imagine a more important Christmas gift for Christ and his church in Ukraine than the one we have received in the *Book of Concord*. We welcome to our festivities the executive director of the LHF, Rev. Rahn, and church representatives from Thoughts of Faith, the ELS and WELS. Mr. Mark Schwan, Thoughts of Faith Board Member was a special guest.” Hundreds of people, who that day were in attendance for the service, joyfully received a copy of the volume, and most requested autographs from translators, reviewers, editors, and others involved in helping to make sure our Church is more established in the Lutheran Confessions.

Bishop Horpynchuk pointed out that the ULC was brought back to life through the preaching of the Gospel. “Almost 40 congregations and mission stations all over Ukraine are led by more than 20 pastors. These men need to be well equipped, and the *Book of Concord* is one piece of that vital equipment. It is vital for the Confessional Church, the Church that recognizes Lutheran Confessions, because they are the true exposition of the Word of God. The Church can now defend her faith in the Lord Jesus more effectively. Our Confessions are more vital for the Church than the Norton AntiVirus is for a computer. They have been available in German, Latin, English, Russian, Tamil, and in other languages. Now the LHF has helped to make it available in Ukrainian, the language native to about 48 million people.

“We live in the end times. We need to check what we believe, teach, and confess with the Bible every day. There is no better tool to help keep the viruses of false doctrines out of the Lutheran Confessionals than the *Book of Concord*. Praise be to God it is available now to Ukrainians.”

The congregation had learned on this occasion that my birthday would be celebrated the next Sunday, and they immediately broke into a birthday greeting in full harmony led by the choir.

Several days after the *Book of Concord* presentation I received the following message from Rev. Yuriy Fizer, “Thank you for the blessed day in my life! Yes, thank you and the LHF for that day. It means very much for me. It is the translation of the confession of my faith. It is the translation of the true exposition of the Word of Salvation into my native language. I have read the *Book of Concord* many times in Russian and in English and I have edited

it in Ukrainian, and I saw it published two weeks before the presentation. And still yesterday I was very happy to have it in my hands and share the same faith and happiness with the people present.

“And even in the morning of that day I had a sign (so to say). On one of the national TV channels which I do not usually watch, there was a mention that on this day many years ago a man that translated the Bible into Ukrainian was born. That was a kind of symbolism for me that on this day there also was a presentation of the Ukrainian *Book of Concord*.”

February 17 – Plea was made to President Russ Sommerfeld, Nebraska District, to assist and support Andrew and the ELCS. Andrew would be invited to the District convention.

March 8 – Afrikaans project initiated to publish *Luther’s Small Catechism*.

March 12-16 – Seminar conducted on the Lutheran Confessions in the East of Lake Victoria Diocese of the ELCT in Mwanza, Tanzania. Dr. Simojoki traveled with the Land Rover loaded with boxes of LHF books and *Good News* magazines. The vehicle was stopped several times at police checkpoints. The driver had to tell what he was transporting in those many brown boxes. At one checkpoint the police released the vehicle after the officer had received his bright blue copy of *The Freedom of a Christian* in the Swahili language. On the way back to Kenya, a police checkpoint was erected in Serengeti, where there is an entrance to the world famous wildlife park. To the astonishment of the driver, a police officer waived his arm from far to stop the vehicle. There was no inspection. Instead the police officer had a broad smile as he walked towards the car with both his hands extended, “Thank you so much for Luther’s book! I read it at once. It is an excellent writing! Next time you come, please stop again and give us a good Lutheran book.”

The late Bishop Nehemiah Bomani, who died when a wall fell on him during a construction project, said he observed a profound change for the better in his diocese since the commencement of confessional seminars some years back, along with the regular flow of books and materials.

March 17 - President Kieschnick sent regrets at not being able to attend Andrew’s consecration as bishop, but indicated a meeting with Andrew could take place when the president is in Nairobi August 3-4. “It is my hope that we will be able to discuss together at that time how we can proceed to put in place a plan for formal doctrinal discussions, with a view toward establishing altar and pulpit fellowship,” said Dr. Kieschnick.

May 24 – An exchange took place between Jeff Rahn and Rev. James May regarding to getting some French materials for use in Togo. May indicated a desire to receive the French catechism so he could memorize it.

April 8 – Rev. Ted NaThalang accepted the position with LHF as coordinator for Southeast Asia. Prior to this solemn appointment, Rev. NaThalang had already been serving as a part-time independent regional promotion representative. Ted’s Call out of the seminary was to the mission field in Thailand. It came after some intervention by President Ralph Bohlmann. The mission board had ruled that Ted could not serve in the country of his birth, but the Minnesota South District saw no problem with this and were prepared to issue the Call. This is one time Pres. Bohlmann stepped in and urged the Call to be issued.

Rev. NaThalang served for several years under the mission board but there was a sentiment expressed that it was not the purpose of missionaries to start churches. This became a frustration to NaThalang. It also seemed at the time that a heavy emphasis was on having non-ordained staff serving on the mission field, including the supervision of the field. Rather than continue in an adversarial situation with regard to mission philosophies, Ted resigned his position as a missionary and worked independently for several years.

Ted became an important resource for LHF because he was a native Thai. There was a general suspicion of westerners. Because Ted was a native, he was better able to gain the confidence of the people and introduce the Christian faith through the books and materials published by LHF. When the Khmer catechism was introduced in Cambodia, the people to whom the



book was introduced approached him with the request to help them start a church. Today there is an official, government-recognized church body known as the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Cambodia. Further evidence that THE WORD WORKS.

April 23 – The presiding bishop of the ELCK, Rev. Walter Obare, wrote to Dr. Simojoki regarding activity in the Central Diocese. Dr. Simojoki responded to the letter in which he stated, “It would appear that you seem bent on de-linking LHF-Africa from ELCK. If you consider such a move to be in the best interest of the church, we would not object. That would really relieve us of the current financial burdens in the form of allowances and construction grants to the ELCK pioneering congregations. Besides, being an independent and legally registered organization, we can only work with partners who welcome us, and there are many such partners across Africa.”

May 10 – Dr. Simojoki made the trip to Burkina Faso where a clear call for French materials was given. More catechisms in French were needed immediately. Discussions are held as to how we might utilize all the French materials that were developed by Dr. Wilbert Kreiss.

July 12 – Trinidad

Dr. Wallace Schulz continued his connection with mission work in Trinidad. On this occasion he responded to a lay person in Trinidad who was interested in starting a training center to educate Christ-centered, Bible-based and Reformation-qualified spiritual leaders for Trinidad. He mentioned that the people in the Synod have a long tradition of missions and assisting in educational institutions wherever it is possible.

Rev. Schulz stated, “As you know, Rev. Rahn and I have taken significant risks in recent decades to establish teaching institutions in various countries of the world. In some situations we failed. In some situations we paid a significant price. This has not deterred me, nor do I have shellshock. Nor,



in my opinion, has Rev. Rahn been affected. In some ways, he has taken greater risks than I have. The entire Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sudan now exists, in a human sense, because he took a risk for the Lord. I also have to say that you will get support, not only from Rev. Rahn and myself, but from many others in our synod if you can, in some way, clearly identify this teaching institution as one that is Lutheran and committed to the Lutheran Confessions. If it is titled 'Baptist' or some similar name, I will still try to help you, but it makes the 'pull' a thousand tons heavier!

"So, what I'm saying is this: Since the LCMS does not now do work in Trinidad and since the ELCA pulled out some years ago, the 'field is ripe.' You have endless contacts there and we will help as we are able."

July 16 – Several major celebrations took place in Yambio. Banners were strung over the entrance of the Yambio Lutheran Church that said COMMISSIONING OF THE FIRST BISHOP OF THE ELCS. Up to this time Andrew's title had been president, but the church requested his title be more in keeping with the African culture. The commissioning took place in the early part of the service, and there was a large delegation participating in addition to myself: Rev. Jamison Hardy, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Rev. and Mrs. Rick Nuffer, Fort Wayne, Indiana; Marcelina Nuffer, Ellsworth, Michigan; Mr. Ron Ziegler, Rev. Don Pohlers, and Rev. Randy Bell, Pacific, Missouri; Pres. Russ Sommerfeld, Lincoln, Nebraska; Rev. Ken Greinke, St. Louis, Missouri; Rev. Claude Houge, Nairobi, Kenya; Dr. Anssi Simojoki, Nairobi, Kenya; Bishop David Tswaedi, South Africa; Bishop Asiago, Kenya; Bishop Onderi, Kenya; Bishop Janis Vanags, Latvia; Rev. Asaph Kazahgunzi, Uganda; Matti Reinikka and guests, Mr. and Mrs. Milton Scott and Glen Ziegler.

Bishop Tswaedi gave a short address prior to the commissioning with Vanags, Onderi, and Asiago assisting me in the rite. Russ Sommerfeld presented a pectoral cross. Nuffer presented the bishop's ring. Anssi and I placed the chasuble, and the president of the congregation presented the shepherd's staff. As Andrew was presented to the congregation, there was much celebrating, flower petals thrown, and the usual leis bestowed.

This was then followed by the sermon. I preached on 1 Cor. 2:2-5 with the theme, "The Prevailing Proper Posture of a Pastor." After the message, Andrew conducted the ordination rite for Moriano Joseph Bamuka and Joesph Otto Ottoniano, with assistance from Vanags and Tswaedi. Other pastors joined in for the laying on of hands and prayer. Summerfeld and I presented the pectoral crosses, and Andrew placed the stole, and finally other gifts were given.

This was then followed by the commissioning of the five deaconesses and

two deacons. The special deaconess patch was introduced and consecrated along with the patch for youth that Pat Nuffer provided. Pat was included with the group commissioned, having just graduated from the deaconess program at Fort Wayne.

July 17 – Because of a heavy rainfall during the night and roads being impassable for a bus, individuals who had not been to Baguga were taken by four-wheel drive over the hazardous roads. We visited the construction site for the Rich Valley Lutheran Mission Center and then the Baguga Lutheran Primary School. We brought with us 50 Zande catechisms that were distributed in the upper grades. Rev. Hardy distributed T-shirts for all the children, while Matti was doing some filming for the documentary being made on the ELCS church body.

July 20 – From Nairobi I flew to Antananarivo, Madagascar, but when I arrived Rev. David Rakotonirina was not there to meet me as planned. After waiting for an hour, I began to make plans for a hotel, when he suddenly appeared apologizing as he was delayed by traffic. After having been in Sudan and participating in an historic day, a church dedication took place, a bishop consecrated, two ordinations, five deaconesses and two deacons consecrated, and a catechism distribution at a Lutheran school, I was looking at Madagascar as a coming down from a mountain peak.

But there was another mountain peak to come. About five miles from that peak we pulled to the side of the road in front of five or six big black Land Rovers. These were the transport for the president of the district, mayor of the area, chief of district politicians, and assembly president, all political officers. They were waiting for us to “join the parade” of vehicles as they turned off the road and began to navigate a hill with all the ruts, dust, and dirt. We finally crested the hill. Before us was a sight that was almost unexplainable.

I was only beginning to learn the details of this gathering, a kind of Christian growth revival for families. We were ushered to the front row for special seating, as a service was taking place. After the sermon, all the dignitaries spoke. It wasn't until the offering was taken that I realized that this was a gathering of over 2,000 people, a three-day event at which people literally camped out under the stars.

Not only was it a rally service, but it included the Lord's Supper and the line-up was again forming. The altar stage area was like an amphitheater shell made of canvas and fine linen wrapped around. In front of this stage was a rail in a semicircle covered with more beautiful white linen. It was at this rail that around 50 people would gather. As they came forward they were handed a tin individual cup. The pastor would come by with a pitcher

of wine and fill the cup.

During the service I was sent a message that I was to address the pastors during their lunch hour. There were about 100 pastors present when I spoke about the LHF mission and what we were doing in Madagascar.

July 21 – Met with the president of the General Synod, Dr. Rakato Endor Modeste. He gave us a brief history of the Madagascar Lutheran Church, mentioning that that the revival we went to is a movement inside of the church. The Madagascar Lutheran Church has 6,000 congregations with around 3 million members. One congregation was added every week. Served by 1,200 pastors, the church is made up of 20 regions, each one having its own president. The General Synod is made up of regional representation. When they meet there are a total of 120 people. They have their own publishing house where linotype was still in use. We met with Dr. Joeseeph Randriansolo and Dr. Luigi Andrianarijona, who are LHF translators working on the catechism and *Augsburg Confession*.

July 22 – This was another day for a mountain top meeting. We were given a seat in the front row and then asked to come on stage to give greetings. I used 2 Peter 3:17, 18. “Guard against distorting the Truth.” The gathering was smaller. About 500 were in attendance gathering at a school site that has an elaborate campus. It is vocational in emphasis and has a big shed-like building that was used as a dormitory for women to camp in. Bicycles were piled on top of one another about 20 feet high. Some had ridden for an entire day to get there.

I told the guests of our early start in the basement of my home and urged the use of confessional writings in order to grow in faith. It was interesting to learn that the president of the region is somewhat liberal. In some of his remarks later he indicated they didn’t need a catechism as they already have it. Dave Rakotonorina said it was an old translation from the Latin and needed updating, in addition to sections on confession and absolution that hadn’t been included. Dave admitted that it was important to emphasize the distorting of Truth.

Dave then shared his story about being “moved” from his parish to president of a small seminary out in the country. It was not according to his desire, but felt he had to “go along to get along.” It meant leaving his parish of 6,000 members and his church seating 2,000 and be banished to the bush. The seminary was located six miles from any town, thereby taking his family to an area where there was only poor education. In his congregation he received \$200 per month, and at the seminary the pay would be \$60 per month. Dave was committed to making the confessional voice be heard in spite of his banishment. He thinks if he can continue to have exposure,

he might eventually become president of the region. He had been elected president of the pastoral conference. The introduction of LHF books will keep him active in all regions. We purchased a car for him to help with the distribution and introduction of books.

July 26-September 2 – Suzanne Zobel takes a major trip to conduct catechism seminars in Nairobi and Rwanda. The final review of the Kinyarwanda translation of *Luther's Small Catechism* was made during the women's catechetical seminars in Nyagatare, Kayonza, and Kigali, Rwanda. Reviews of the Meru and Tharaka translations of the catechism were conducted during two week-long seminars on "Mission and the *Small Catechism*" for Meru District congregations.

Three one-week seminars were held (one in Nyagatare, two in Kayonza) for the women who received catechetical training earlier. The seminars were intended to receive reports of their activities and to complete their training in the catechism. Of the original 60 women who were trained, two were not permitted to attend due to inactivity in their congregations. And 13 women who had not been part of the earlier training showed up and received training.

The women reported on their various opportunities to share what they had learned in the first seminar. All began with their own families. Other opportunities came in their congregations, neighborhoods, and through community groups. The biggest challenge to their efforts was the lack of catechism copies. Resources were shared and discussions held about training issues in Meru District, as mentoring of Jane Nkonge continued in women's and children education.

Suzanne proved to be an excellent teacher. She demonstrated great proficiency in teaching the faith in many seminars on the catechism whenever a trip to Africa could be scheduled. She has made trips to Sudan and helped develop the women's work and deaconess work in the ELCS. She also proved to be a very capable communicator with local and district LWML groups.

August 3 – From Burkina Faso in East Africa, Rev. James May wrote, "I agree it was good seeing you at the convention. I am so thankful for LHF and *Good News* magazine. God has done amazing things with these two instruments. I have two men who have already memorized the catechism and two other men who have already translated the catechism from French into the largest tribal language of Burkina Faso. The language is called Moore (pronounced Moray). It will take some time to type this into my computer, but I pray that LHF can help us with this project because the people of Burkina Faso are EXTREMELY excited about the catechism.

Our biggest obstacle is that there is no place of worship, and Ouagadougou is a capital city and that means it is more expensive to build. We will live here for another year. With the university located here, most of the people we work with are connected with the university. They are the cream of the crop from most of the villages. I had one university student travel back to his village three hours west of us, and I received a five-page letter from him listing all the teachings he brought (everything I taught him on justification and on Law and Gospel), and also listing the names of 30 people who want to start a Lutheran church in Kyo.”

September 13 – Simojoki reviewed work in Africa and talked about passing the torch. He said, “In a decade, LHF Africa has extended its area of work over East Africa (Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi) up to Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan, and Congo and south to Zambia, Malawi, and South Africa. We have also extended our effective area to the west up to Cameroon, Nigeria, Benin, and Burkina Faso. Madagascar is a chapter of its own. Above Africa, LHF-Africa has also set its foot in Istanbul and even in Central Asia. India is also in the LHF portfolio. This constant expansion has been amazing, bearing in mind how few we are. By God’s guidance though, we have usually found the right contacts, although not in Sri Lanka. Our many activities in recent years have considerably slowed the translation work, but we now have reached a respectable domain over Africa. I see my role as that of a frontier man riding to the West in open ranges. The next phase is to send down roots in the new conquered territories. It would be excellent if we would have Harri Lammi with us for Central Asia. He is quite a harvester. Then the Islamic belt from Istanbul up to China would be an area all of its own.”

This summary certainly tells the extent of LHF work throughout Africa and beyond. It took much effort to effectively open these areas, to find translators, to train translators in special seminars, and finally get to the publishing in the many languages represented. It was at this time that Rev. James May entered the picture as a possible candidate to replace Dr. Simojoki.

You could say that this was also the time when questions would start to be raised relative to what the main mission of the LHF was to be. While fewer works were being translated, much groundwork was being laid for future translation work. Concerns were raised in the LHF board that we not stray too far from our main mission. The tension between translation work and general mission work would continue to be a discussion point. We discussed this within the framework of my contention that LHF should always be mission-driven and not money-driven. There is a fine line here and one dare

not overshadow the other. If we were to err, I would prefer it would be on the side of mission expansion. Dr. Simojoki's summary certainly emphasizes the challenges and opportunities that were rapidly coming to the forefront of the LHF mission. Dr. Simojoki expressed his willingness to work even after retirement with part-time salary.

September 19 – Rev. Kurt Marquart, chairman of the LHF board of directors, is called to his eternal home. Rev. Walter Otten, who would step into that office, gave the following tribute to Rev. Marquart:

Dr. Robert Preus was the first chairman of the Lutheran Heritage Foundation until his unexpected and sudden death. Executive Director Robert Rahn was faced with the question, "Who could or would replace the well-known and confessionally-bound Robert Preus?" There was one name that immediately came to mind who, while not known for his administrative or organizational skills, would sustain the "Lutheran Heritage." He was known because of both his writing and his skillful, challenging, confessional, and enlightening lectures and public presentations. His name was Kurt Erik Marquart, professor at the seminary that had lost its president, Robert Preus. Professor Marquart responded positively to the request of Director Rahn to serve as chairman of the Lutheran Heritage Foundation. Professor Marquart served as chairman of the Lutheran Heritage Foundation until his death on September 19, 2006, brought on by a prolonged bout with the disease known as Lou Gehrig's disease. The current chairman of the Lutheran Heritage Foundation, Pastor Walter Otten, had written of Chairman Marquart in *Mysteria Dei: Essays in Honor* of Kurt Marquart:

"If Luther could go to the extreme of calling Christians 'Little Christs,' then one who has known Professor Kurt Marquart for 47 of his 65 years is unafraid to speak of him as a 'priest after the order of Melchizedek,' not because, as Christ, he was 'without beginning or end,' as Luther said of Melchizedek, but as Melchizedek, Kurt Marquart appears 'abruptly' and 'without a genealogy.'"

"Without a genealogy" does not deny that he had a father or mother, but unlike many in Missouri he came without a genealogy in Missouri and its Lutheran heritage. He came not first to Missouri, but to New York. He came from Europe as a 15-year-old, fleeing Communism. He had not yet been confirmed; that would take place not after eighth grade when Missourians at that time were confirmed, for he was not yet in the States. Confirmation, when he would first learn of Luther's catechism, occurred when he was a senior in high school. He came to the United States bilingual, speaking both German and Russian. In a Tribute shortly after his death it would also be said, "He also served as an instructor in French, which later served him

well in his mission trips to Haiti,” but he originally came to the U.S. without English. He did learn that language, and he learned it well. His writing and his speaking clearly reflected what he learned as the confessional Lutheran theology embraced by and taught by the fathers of the Missouri Synod, the very theology that is at the heart of the Lutheran Heritage Foundation. His language skills and his confessional theology enabled him to not only head the Lutheran Heritage Foundation, but to sustain the very essence of the Lutheran heritage.

September 22 – Rev. James Fandrey received a Call/Contract to Serve the LHF in the area of development/church relations. The document stated, “While this appointment pertains only to the specific position of development/church relations, we herewith confirm that the discussions also involved the potential of assuming the role of executive director around January 1, 2008, at which time a new Call/Contract would be issued.” It is interesting to note that this discussion started already back in November 2003, but at that time there wasn’t unanimity on the board and discussion continued.

October 4 – *Dar Es Salaam (Tanzania)*

The diocese comprised Dar Es Salaam and Zanzibar, about 1,000 members. Bishop Alex Malasusa arranged for Dr. Simojoki to conduct a seminar on the catechism. An unusual question was asked, “How shall we share in the expenses?” This was the first time in 18 years in Tanzania and Kenya that Simojoki was asked such a question. The bishop explained, “Since you come to us and bring us such precious books and true Lutheran doctrine, there would be no blessing if we only received these treasures without our commitment.”

October 22 – Rev. Fandrey notified Calvary Lutheran Church, Elgin, Illinois, that he is accepting a position with LHF. “My service, pastoral and administrative, at various levels of the LCMS has provided opportunities, experience, and broad knowledge of almost every level of church structure and governance. Through the process of ongoing service, I believe that I have been equipped for this significant and unique role within the church, and I therefore have accepted the Call to the Lutheran Heritage Foundation.”

November 16 – On this date we entered and later aborted a project to provide a volume of history on the work of Matthias Flacius, under the general direction of Rev. Dr. Oliver Olson.

The Flacius Record

I first met Rev. Olson when a group of pastors met in the St. Louis seminary library to discuss a possible major undertaking of completing a

second volume on the work of Flacius, to be authored by Rev. Olson. The plan was to have two editions of the Flacius book, Croatian and English. It was learned from Dr. Olson that Flacius is a national hero in Croatia and that there is even a Flacius museum in Flacius' native city of Labin. It was the city council of Labin that bestowed special honors on Olson for his continued work in honoring their patron scholar, Flacius.

Every five years in Labin, there is a Flacius symposium that honors his memory. Croatian writers are more inclined to view Flacius either as a historian or philosopher. They pay almost no attention to him as a theologian. Olson set out to correct this errant view and he needed major assistance to carry it out.

I became interested in this project because I viewed Olson as a man of faith and conviction, desiring to bring to American Lutheranism a more accurate view of the man Flacius, rather than the view held in many circles. One of those views, promoted by Melancthon, was that he stole books. This was embellished as time went on accusing him of not returning books or cutting out pages with a knife to be kept in his possession. For centuries, whenever the theme was a manuscript theft or damage in libraries, the Flacius knife was remembered. Olson showed in a convincing way that this was not tenable.

I may also have been drawn to Olson because of the disservice he received from his church peers. Terminally ill, Dr. Theodore Tappert arranged that Olson be called to Mount Airy Seminary in Philadelphia as his successor. Olson taught there for three years. He was not a welcomed faculty as he argued against Romanizing the liturgy (having learned the arguments from Flacius). He wrote a booklet called "Reclaiming the Lutheran Liturgical Heritage." Among other things, it describes and upholds Flacius' defense of Luther against the claim of a bishop in Mainz about continuity. He insisted that the Roman Catholic canon of the mass had been written by the apostles themselves.

Olson found out later that a meeting of pastors at Columbia University was held, devoted to discussing ways to have him dismissed. The faculty was divided, 6 to 6. But during the interviews that involved the new president, he was accused of needing psychiatric help. So, in keeping with the great wisdom of men, Olson was dismissed – one can say for defending Flacius' view.

Olson received a visiting professorship for one semester a year, and for a number of years he commuted across the Atlantic and engaged in activities to defend Reformation theology. He was able during this time to resuscitate the *Lutheran Quarterly*.

Exhausting more of his personal resources during an economic downturn, Olson came to the LHF for a grant to complete the work, in order to give Flacius his due in the annals of Lutheran history. Nathan Baruch Rein of Ursinus College wrote, “Though Flacius was a major figure during the period of Lutheran confessionalism, scholars have tended not to know what to do with him. This was not so for Olson. For him, Flacius is confessional history writing in grand style, focusing, unabashedly, on the influence of a single great man. In Olson’s view, Flacius’ importance to the German Reformation cannot be overstated. He was responsible for the survival of Luther’s reform.” Olson wanted to show that Flacius’ stubborn and tireless refusal to compromise on doctrine or practice saved the Reformation, virtually single-handedly. He was a true Reformation hero, second only to Luther. Little has been written in English on Flacius, and Olson’s work is the first book-length treatment. He has done a great service in writing *Matthias Flacius and the Survival of Luther’s Reform*.

It should also be pointed out that Olson has to his credit being fired from the St. Olaf faculty in 1973, although his popularity among students was apparent. It all sounds so familiar. Tenure was refused because the president didn’t like his interest in Flacius, and he wanted no conservative theologian in the religion faculty. Sure makes sense for an institution “of higher learning!”

The church could use the history connected with Flacius because he is not held in high regard, and according to Olson has not received his due. Walther did say that Flacius was a theologian second only to Luther but he also added, “Pity that Flacius fell into error at a later time and would not accept correction.” Olson’s second volume would challenge that and also give attention to the general view in the *Formula of Concord* relative to original sin, which became known as the “Flacian controversy.”

It was with regret that the LHF had to forego involvement in the project in 2009 when the proposed budget for completion stood at \$58,000, and a declining economy made it impossible. It is our prayer that Dr. Olson’s work will find another avenue on the road to completion.

2007

January 13 – A trip was made to India to release the Golden Edition of *Luther’s Small Catechism* in the Tamil language. Rev. John Sundaram gave us a preliminary tour to a religious location in the Chennai area. We went to the tourist area called Cape Comarin where three seas converge – Bay of Bengal, Arabian Sea, and Indian Ocean. The Bay of Bengal is on the west of India, the Arabian Sea on the east and the Indian Ocean is to the south. This is the place

where there is a large statue of the “spinster goddess” and where people take a plunge, believing that by doing so their sins are washed away. The spot is considered holy for them. It would be our purpose to bring them the Word of Truth in which they find the true way to have their sins washed away through the waters of Holy Baptism.

In the afternoon, we drove to Nagercoil to the Lutheran seminary where we had the distribution of the Golden Edition of the catechism. Around 100 pastors were in attendance, including Dr. Herb Hoefer, Concordia, Portland, Oregon, and Rev. Joshua Sironomy, president of the IELC. A large sign had been placed in the seminary auditorium announcing the event. After an initial program, Dr. Hoefer presented the first copy to me wrapped in gold paper. I presented the second copy to President Sironomy and the third copy to Rev. John Sundaram, citing his work on the edition. We then gave ten copies to each pastor in attendance.

I tried to get the seminary students to pose for a picture as they reached out their hands for a copy. I was unable to communicate the message, and when I started handing them out it’s exactly what happened. They all crowded around and were reaching out for their personal copy. It was recorded as another significant chapter in LHF history. During the tea and cookie time there was much positive response from people who had wanted this work for a long time.

January 14 – The Sunday service was held in a congregation served by Rev. Michael Sundaram. There was a guest organist, and during the early part of the service there was some gesturing between Michael and his father. Rev. John Sundaram ended up going to the organ and playing for the service. It was obvious that there was musical ability in the family, including a beautifully chanted service by Michael.

After the service, catechisms were presented to ten officers of the congregation. Mexican crosses were handed out to the children and some JESUS NEVER FAILS bookmarks to members. I received the usual India gifts of friendship.

January 15 – We traveled to Guntur by a crowded train because of a Hindu holiday. Leaving suitcases behind in order to travel light, we enjoyed the freedom from traffic. This was the annual January Guntur Conference sponsored by St. James Lutheran Church, West St. Paul, Minnesota; Bible Faith Lutheran Church and LHF. Speaking this year was Rev. John Pless of Fort Wayne; Rev. John Klinger, St. Louis; and Rev. Michael Albrecht, St. James, West St. Paul, Minnesota. Arrangements were made by Karuna, David and Paul Dasari, who are carrying on the work in Guntur after the death of Rev. Rao Dasari. (As I write this on September 12, 2011, we received word

that Karuna had been killed in a car crash in India, and preparations were being made for her funeral in Plymouth, Minnesota). For each conference, LHF releases several books that are used as part of the program. During the conference we held a meeting of the Telegu Translation Committee to decide on the next works to be completed.

January 16 – Mr. John Trier, Columbia City, Indiana, invited LHF to partner with groups who were establishing a radio ministry and well drilling projects that would benefit Sudan in the Republic of Central Africa. It was determined that the activity, while noble and worthy, was outside the mission goals of LHF and we declined involvement.

January 19 – We jumped from Chennai to Bangkok to meet up with Rev. Ted NaThalang and our video team that is going to produce our first professional LHF video. Our first stop was in Cambodia at the Angkor Wat temple ruins, where we spent most of the afternoon shooting various scenes, including two monks kneeling at a Buddha altar after ascending a long flight of stairs.

January 20 – Flight to Phnom Penh and a visit to the “killing fields” of Pol Pot. There was a memorial there, a structure made of glass, around 50 feet tall and 10 feet in diameter. It has row upon row of shelves on which there are skulls. The grassy field has many depressions, which are graves where the remains of people were thrown. When it appeared that people were going to soon die in a prison, they were brought to this place and killed or buried alive – men, women, and children. One of our translators was interviewed and remembered his ordeal as one who was imprisoned during the Communist regime. On the return we stopped to film three boys harvesting morning glories either for salads or food for animals. Many people live in homes built on stilts, and they grow plants or fish for their livelihood. These scenes can be seen in our video titled “How Can I Understand?”

This was a Sunday when we did not get to church for lack of a Lutheran church, to say nothing of even Christian churches in this part of the world. We took time at noon in the Killing Fields museum to meditate on man’s inhumanity to man, and why it was necessary for Jesus to suffer similar indignity in order to redeem and restore us from our prison house of sin. Perhaps all of this had more of an impact on us than sitting in a stained-glass church would.

From that genocide site, we proceeded back into town to visit the genocide memorial. This is a place that once was a large high school. In the 1970s, it was taken over by Pol Pot and turned into a prison and torture chamber. The idea was to kill anyone with education and stature. There were as many as 2,700 prisoners a year in this place, and we saw the cells and read about the conditions and treatment.

January 22 – Today we had 35 people lined up to serve as a congregation as we posed various settings of a church service. The scenes covered would be Pastor Phom Prun baptizing a child, preaching, speaking words of institution, serving Holy Communion, and giving the blessing. People wondered what it was all about. I explained to them that we were demonstrating in the video how the Word works.

Having completed the shooting of the video, it was time to depart. Negotiations took place at the airports in Bangkok and Dubai over the charges for being overweight with the camera equipment. One place wanted \$500 and ended up at \$270, and the other wanted \$1,000 and ended up at \$700. Emirates was the more extreme airline in their gouging methods.

January 25 – We arrived in Nairobi and shooting began with Dr. Simojoki that included shots at the chapel with all worship portions. We also traveled to the Maasai area to shoot scenes of the people. It included a depiction of Muslim ladies in their traditional garb. We also did some filming at a mosque that elicited some comments from a guard about permission. We also took a trip out to a rural area where we were able to film some of the wild animals – giraffes, lions, wildebeest, and zebra.

January 28 – Since Bishop Robert Kaumba was in the compound at the time, some discussion was held with Simojoki concerning the history of Lutheranism in Zambia. In 1989 Simojoki visited Zambia. There were two Lutheran church bodies that worked side by side, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Zambia and the Kenya Evangelical Lutheran Church in Africa. Kaumba studied in Kenya at a united theological college. While he was studying and away from his parish, the LWF ordained two women pastors in his congregation, with help from Germany. When Kaumba tried to find out from someone about the authorization of such, he was told he was a student and had no authority. He asked advice from Rev. Arkkila and was told to connect to LEAF. They also had some contact with an ELCA type person who informed them that women's ordination and homosexuality was in harmony with the Bible. Kaumba objected and was excommunicated and evicted from his home that had been funded by LWF, and his LWF scholarship was cancelled. He contacted Simojoki and we helped with the scholarship. He was ordained in 1992 but with no formal degree. He will receive that from St. Paul United Theological College. In December 2006, he was invited to visit the congregations in his former diocese. All indicated a desire to leave and connect with LEAF. About 15 congregations were involved with a membership of 3,000.

There had been no pastors, so no baptisms or Lord's Supper for three years for this diaspora group. He wanted someone to come to give further

training to 11 lay pastors. He would like a crash course for them within six months. The church previously was given \$4,000 per year from LWF, but when women's ordination was denied, the funds were withdrawn. Anssi Simojoki is going there to teach in May.

Where else in the world could you be sitting in a grass thatched hut and have someone come up behind you and surprise you? It was Bishop Andrew from Sudan. At that moment there were three bishops from Africa gathered, from Sudan, Congo and Zambia. A little earlier Rev. Carlos Winterle, a bishop of the Brazil Lutheran Church, also had been there.

February 11 – Letter from Islamic Union Courts relative to ordering the killing of Omar Aziz and Phillip Dahoud. Under the letterhead, "In the name of Allah the merciful."

To: All the Islamic Union Courts

To: All the Islamic Union Courts Forces

To: All the Somali Muslims

Re: Announcement of religious death sentence

As from today, November 2, 2006, we are informing all the above mentioned groups that the IUC has sentenced to death the following persons after they converted to Christianity and abused our prophet Mohamed while they were on exile from the country. These two KAFIRS (NON MOSLEMS) are named respectively.

1. Mr. Phillip Dahoud
2. Abdi Aziz Omar Dad

Therefore we are requesting from all the Somali community to abduct these two KAFIRS or to kill these two men. Anyone who kills or abducts these men will enter the heaven of Allah and will be rewarded with a good amount of money.

Peace be with you,
Sharief Ahmed Sharief
Chairman of the Islamic Union Courts

April 15-28 – A Trail of New Books

Rev. Fandrey and I made this trip to Eastern Europe together in order to introduce him to our field offices and workers. Every stop we made included meetings with translators and the release of a new book or two. In Kiev, Ukraine, under the leadership of Bishop Slavik Horpynchuk, we celebrated the release of the first in a series of 38 commentaries on the Bible. Romans was the first selection released in the *People's Bible Commentary* series. Also released was Luther's Small Catechism for the Russian speaking people in the Crimea. We also released a volume for children with the title *David and Eileen*.

The trail of books continued in Riga, Latvia. On the day of our arrival, the book *A Place to Stand* by Edward Veith was released. Discussions were held with Bishop Janis Vanags and Dr. William Weinrich, provost of the Luther Academy faculty, to produce an anthology of noted writings by the ancient church fathers for use in the classroom.

In Taurage, Lithuania, we met with Bishop Mindaugas Sabutis and heard that the *Apology of the Augsburg Confession* and the *Smalcald Articles* are ready for the press. Only the *Formula of Concord* remained to be translated and the entire *Book of Concord* would be complete.

The trail continued to Novosibirsk and Ekaterinburg, Siberia. Bishop Vsevolod Lytkin, Rev. Sergey Glushkov, and Rev. Alexander Trapeznikov met with us. Konstantin Komarov, LHF vice president for Russia, introduced the latest book printed, *Ministry, Word, and Sacraments: An Enchiridion* by Martin Chemnitz.

While in Moscow, we reviewed the final draft of a project that was ten years in the making and to be released in several months. It is destined to be a great help to Bible-reading lay people and pastors. The 830-page volume contains all the helps, notes, maps, book introductions, and commentary that have been part of the *Concordia Self Study Bible*. In the absence of any full set of Lutheran commentaries, this volume will work to bridge the gap until more editions of the new commentary are completed.

We were constantly dealing with increased costs, and this trip included discussions about moving our office in Riga to less expensive quarters. In Moscow we were anticipating a change in our warehouse location because of increasing rent. Rev. Fandrey commented, "I had no idea that the educational level of LHF translators was at such a high level. The team is truly leaving a very positive trail of books."

June 14-30 – An Indonesia trip included seminars on *Luther's Small Catechism* presented by Dr. Jack Preus and Prof. Mike Middendorf of Concordia University, Irvine, California. Also accompanying Ted

NaThalang and me on the trip were Rev. Tom Petersen and Rev. Jeff Ehlers. The Lutherans in Indonesia are an interesting group with over six million members and representing 15 different synods. The following report gives you a glimpse into the history of Lutheranism here in Indonesia.

“So will My Word be which goes forth from My mouth; it will not return to Me empty without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.” Isaiah 55:11

In 1920, the practice of cannibalism ceased among the Batak people of Indonesia. That was a mere 91 years ago. Two American missionaries, Henry Lyman and Samuel Munson of the American Mission Society in Boston were among those who were eaten by the Batak people.

Rev. Dr. I. L. Nommensen, a German Lutheran missionary, came to the Batak people in 1850. There were several efforts to kill him. One on occasion he was tied to a stake, and as the spears were lifted there was a huge clap of thunder and a big storm. It led his captors to conclude that his God was greater than theirs, and he was released. On another occasion, poisoned food was brought to him, but his suspicious nature led him to feed it to his dog, who died as a sacrifice for his master. This dog was buried next to Nommensen’s grave and is part of the Nommensen Memorial display in the village of Sigumparing.

Today the Gospel has taken a firm hold among the Batak people, as was promised through Isaiah. The four major Lutheran bodies are enumerated here. It is interesting that none include the name Lutheran.

1. GKPS – The Simalungun Protestant Christian Church
2. HKBP – The Christian Batak Protestant Church
3. GKPI – The Christian Protestant Indonesia Church
4. HKI – The Indonesian Christian Church

In the HKBP synod alone there are four million Lutherans. It is a strange experience to enter a store, hotel, or shop and find that the person serving you, more often than not, is a Lutheran. It is also strange to see Lutheran churches dotting the landscape throughout the countryside and in the villages. The average membership for a congregation is 1,000 and some churches have a membership of 5,000 and even 10,000. There are over 3,000 churches but only 1,200 pastors, many of them serving four or five congregations.

The 8,000 catechisms and catechism workbooks distributed among the Batak may seem like a drop in Lake Toba, Indonesia’s largest lake in the Batakland. We are counting on the 200 leaders in the church to use them in teaching other pastors and leaders while they wait patiently for the many thousands that are needed.

We hope that the Batak Lutheran influence will penetrate the south

part of Indonesia where Muslims have been prominent, and so has their persecution of Christians. It is said that the Muslim influence has not moved to the north because the Batak people are a feared people, perhaps because of their past history of cannibalism.

Among the 1,200 pastors are 200 women pastors. The challenge for the church with a shortage of workers is to define the role of women in the church, which will be more difficult to be done objectively after a practice has been established.

Missionary Nommensen is viewed as a king in the Batak land. His picture is seen not only in churches but in public buildings. His contributions include a Bible and the catechism's enchiridion, which has become a rare find. For this reason, the LHF Bahasa translation of the catechism has been very well received. When an official of the church was asked about the section on the Office of the Keys and Confession, he indicated that it was not taught at the seminary he attended.

In teaching the catechism during the Batak seminars, Dr. Preus taught the providence of God under the First Article and in the Lord's Prayer Seventh Petition (Thy will be done). The providence and will of God was experienced on the curvy, narrow, mountain road when the bus we were riding in was involved in an accident.

It was also providential that at the time we were not traveling next to one of the many deep ravines encountered on the narrow mountain roads. A large truck, traveling too fast for road conditions, forced our bus to leave the pavement, and in doing so encountered a very soft shoulder that pulled us into the ditch. The bus plunged into the mud and came to rest leaning up against the bank of a cliff preventing it from rolling over. It was providential that none of the ten passengers were hurt. By the next day another bus was put into service.

It's a simple lifestyle in the villages, and rice is the chief food for these people whose average annual income is from \$500 to \$1,000. We stopped at the roadside and entered a rice field that was being harvested so we could personally take the curved knife and do some of the harvesting. Naturally we discovered that the farmers were Lutheran. We also stopped along the way to visit a Batak home. Again it was a Lutheran home that was randomly chosen. Batak houses are unique and carry the style used for hundreds of years. The home was built on stilts, and the bottom portion was fenced to contain their animals. Earlier in history, it was the place where slaves were kept. The roof was unique to the Batak in that it was in a concave shape, with a peak at each end. The roof is now made up of tiles or tin, whereas in the past it was straw.

Children are a treasure of the Lord. Where else in the world do the children need to have their own worship service because of a lack of space? We visited such a church on a Sunday where we learned about this. When we arrived for the 8 a.m. service, there were 300 children singing with their whole heart and soul, and the decibel level was high. The little church was strained to accommodate the young worshippers. Their parents arrived for their two-hour service at 10 a.m. In this service, four adult choirs provided special music sung without any choral scores.

There was much excitement over visitors from America, even invitations to preach that were declined. Dr. Preus and I did bring greetings after the service and gave a brief message. We were asked to form a line so that all worshippers could come by to greet us with their personal “horas,” the traditional Batak greeting. It was the American delegation that was encouraged by their gracious hospitality.

The message of the day was given by a deacon, as the pastor had to be serving one of his other six congregations. The Lord’s Supper was not celebrated, and we learned that it is only celebrated twice a year, at Christmas and Easter. This led to some discussion about the frequency of the Lord’s Supper. Their concern was that they did not want to lose respect for the sacrament.

THIS IS THE LORD’S DOING AND IT IS MARVELOUS IN OUR SIGHT!

I have to confess further that the providence of the Lord was seen in permitting us to have this “Batak experience” just at this time. It came during a time when, just before leaving, word was received that several of our major funding requests had been declined. During this trip in a faraway land, a message was received of another request that was declined.

The visit with the Batak brought things into perspective. It became my resolve to consider the Batak plight, and to take the Lord’s Word to heart that it is His will, the matter will succeed in the manner in which He sends it. It is His promise on which we rely. I believe God will use His people to help bring in the harvest that waits in many lands and in many languages.

Our program and plans alone will not bring success. The Lord will provide the increase. Attached to His Word and planted in His soil, it will produce a rich harvest. The Batak road is hard and the toil lasts into the night and then the harvest. Pray ye, the Lord of the harvest, to bless the LHF field work, and pray He richly provides so that our work can go forward in Indonesia and around the world.

(This report was written from the back of a large 5,000-seat auditorium at the seminary of the HKBP church in Tarutung, Indonesia, in the heart

of Batak land, while listening to an impromptu quartet (common) singing the Batak hymns of the church. A special added blessing in the “Batak experience.”)

August 10 – Visiting on this date in Finland. Rev. Juhana Pohjola picked me up at the Helsinki airport and put me on a train to Turku, where I was to get off and be met by Anssi Simojoki. We drove in the country where Anssi once served a parish, and went to a farm where a group of about 20 people were waiting for us. Eight of them were members of the LSRY (Finnish mission society) board. A few could speak English, and I gave greetings and some history of LHF. I appealed to them for greater support for our Nairobi office and work. Our question to them was whether they would continue supporting after Anssi retired. We talked about fundraising. That was a little foreign to them. They are not used to asking people for money. Perhaps a throwback to the whole concept of a state-supported church body. Those funds, they agreed, are beginning to dry up. One wonders what will happen to the churches that are well kept by the state, but not well attended by parishioners.

August 11 – Drove to the site of a family retreat where I discovered Rev. Scott Murray was here serving as retreat speaker, and I roomed with him. Around 50 were in attendance, and I served as their speaker for the evening Vespers. While here I had a very good conversation with Rev. Huhtinen, who is chairman of the LEAF mission board. Five years ago it was a very liberal board, but it is now very conservative. We discussed help for the seminary in Sudan, and Huhtinen and Arkkila will teach on behalf of LEAF. This means we have two Finnish groups supporting the LHF program: LEAF and LSRY.

August 12 – On this date Rev. Juhana Pohjola took me to the Lutheran Church he serves in Helsinki. It meets in the Seventh Day Adventist Church. Unlike most large Lutheran cathedrals of Finland that are mostly empty on Sundays, here we had standing room only. I observed that it was, for the most part, a congregation of younger people. The preacher for the day was a young pastor who is on his way to Fort Wayne for graduate studies. He will come back to serve in the Luther Foundation church body. A Rev. Korpinen also serves here but was away at the family retreat.

When Juhana completed his graduate studies in Fort Wayne and returned to Finland, he was told by the bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland that unless he accepted the role of women as pastors, he would not receive an appointment to a parish in Finland. My advice to Juhana was to establish an organization like LHF and investigate starting a confessional church. The rest is now history in the making.

When the bishop came to visit one of the services, Juhana visited with

him prior to the service and told him they were celebrating the Sacrament, but he should not plan to attend as they were not in fellowship. The next day, the main paper in Helsinki reported on the “young, upstart Lutheran pastor who denied the Sacrament to the bishop of the church.” At that time, the church services were being held in a large Lutheran cathedral that was no longer used by the Lutherans. Shortly after this encounter, Juhana was told the church was no longer available. Lodges and secular groups could continue to use it, but not these Lutherans. Juhana was placed under church discipline because of his position, and for that reason he was not in the pulpit the Sunday I visited. I spoke at the reception that followed the service and gave the congregation encouragement to remain faithful in their struggles.

From this beginning, there is now an official confessional church of Finland. They have their own bishop with about 35 congregations and new ones opening on a regular basis. It seems the young people of Finland are looking for a church body that stands for Truth. The Sunday I was there, a 90-year-old pastor, a kind of spiritual father for the church, pronounced the benediction.

Juhana described most Lutheran cathedrals as being cultural centers with little activity. The only time the churches were full was at Christmas, a kind of cultural custom that has people come to church to sing carols and then go into the neighborhoods to sing door-to-door. I asked about Easter and was told there wasn't much interest in Easter. Amazing Lutherans! Will it be the same for us in the near future as “tolerance” is promoted and Truth not tolerated.

August 13 – Visited Slovakia in an effort to get some action from Dr. David Daniel in bringing to completion the book *Baptism* by Dr. Robert Kolb. Plans were made to publish a catechism and other works. At this point we would have to list everything here as “inactive.” It has been a great disappointment after much effort at getting things off of dead center.

August 14-16 – *Poland*

On August 14-16, 2007, I made my first visit to Warsaw, Poland, to meet with Rev. Oseka and to map out our future publishing strategy for Lutherans in that country, as well as become better acquainted with Lutheranism in general. Rev. Oseka indicated that the only Lutheran Church that existed in Poland was the Evangelical Lutheran (Augsburg) Church of Poland, but he believed they would not be interested in any translation of confessional material. Therefore, he thought the printing, distribution, and introduction of the books would have to be done without assistance from the church. On the other hand, Rev. Oseka was of the conviction that a lot of theological literature in Polish was necessary to preserve the pure Lutheran identity in a very unfriendly Catholic society.

It was under these conditions that LHF published Mueller's *Christian Dogmatics* and Walther's *Law and Gospel*. Copies of these did get distributed by mail to each Lutheran church in Poland. In ensuing years there was a change in church leadership in Poland, and LHF sought opportunity to work more closely with the leaders of the Lutheran church. To that end, Rev. Fandrey visited Warsaw on May 9, 2011. Together with David Fiala, LCMS missionary in Central Europe, a meeting was held with the bishop of the church, Rev. Jerzly Samiec, and the home mission director, Rev. Grzegorz Giemza. The discussion centered around the involvement of the church in the distribution of the newly-published *Luther's Small Catechism*.

The previous bishop had been removed from office because it had been revealed that when Poland was under Communist rule, he maintained extensive secret files on many people, information that was provided to the Communists. When this fact was exposed, the bishop was unrepentant; thus he was removed from his office. David Fiala stated that the current bishop has placed evangelism/missions as a high priority and would work with LHF to develop good materials to assist in these efforts of Lutheran Church of Poland (LCP). The LCP, even though a member of the LWF, does not ordain women.

Rev. Oseka accepted a position with the WELS, teaching at their seminary in Hong Kong. He continues to translate for LHF but has engaged Bogumil Jarmulak as his assistant branch manager.

September 7 – Dr. Bernie Lutz and Rev. Hicham Chehab collaborated and completed an Arabic/English tract titled “The One True God, Friend of Everyone.” This was designed to be used for outreach among Muslims. Dr. Lutz, by the power of the Holy Spirit, brought Hicham to know Jesus. Rev. Hicham currently serves as pastor to Muslims in the Chicago area, working out of Peace Lutheran Church, Lombard, Illinois. Lutz also authored a book that was used in the Sudan seminary program with the title “Guidelines for Sharing the Faith with Your Muslim Friend: The Do’s and Don’ts.”

October 15 – (Nigeria) Completion of the book *Biography of a Reformer* in the Efik language.

November 11 – The 15th anniversary of LHF was celebrated under the theme “A Time for Reflection, Recollection, and Rededication.” The guest speaker for the anniversary was Rev. Richard Resch, cantor, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana. His presentation was titled “Lutherans and Singing the Faith.” Mr. Eric Burgdorf brought greetings from the Schwan Foundation, and Rev. Erik Rottmann, Versailles, Missouri, presented a “Festschrift” to Dr. Wallace Schulz in honor of his 35th anniversary in the ministry.

2008

January 3 – Left on a trip to India that included a 7½ hour leg to Paris and then a 9½ hour segment to Chennai, arriving on January 5, and checking into a hotel at 3 a.m. Kind of takes the glamour out of flying and mission trips, but it was a good introduction into our mission efforts in India and Madagascar for Rev. Fandrey.

January 6 – Rev. Fandrey and I split up to preach Epiphany sermons at St. Thomas and Bethlehem. The custom is still prevalent here in India that men sit on the right and the women on the left. The customary India gifts were bestowed on us after the services.

January 9 – Trip to Bangalore where, at the United Theological Seminary, we had a distribution/introduction event for the Kannada and Tamil catechisms and CDs and DVDs of “Reformation Hymns.” The interesting thing was that we had to wait almost two hours for the delivery of the catechism before the event could begin. The other interesting aspect was the history behind the Reformation hymns. These were about a dozen hymns that congregations sang from memory. They had never before been published, and Rev. Sundaram was afraid they eventually would be lost unless put into print and put on CDs. It would require an elaborate effort to preserve hymns that had been written by the great-grandfather of John Sundaram. It would require recruiting musicians who would be taught the music, then recruiting and teaching a choir to sing the hymns, and finding a recording studio where they could be produced and printed. Rev. Sundaram, being a capable musician himself, was able to pull this off in what in our estimation was an amazing feat.

January 12 – We were back in Ambur, having arrived by train from Bangalore. I took advantage of the Ambur Hospital executive director by having a check-up for pneumonia-like symptoms, and had some medicine dispensed from the hospital pharmacy after being diagnosed with an upper respiratory infection. It gave us an opportunity to learn about the great history of the Ambur Hospital, which had strong early support from the LCMS and LWML.

January 14 – We went by train from Chennai to Guntur in order to attend the Annual Lutheran Conference hosted by LHF and others. A translation committee meeting was also part of the program, and in the meeting we discussed publishing the Kuske translation of the catechism. There was also a Stump edition of the catechism, and the discussion centered around finally coming up with an edition that was acceptable to all groups. Final

decision was that there would be a Dasari edition based mostly on Kuske, with portions of the Stump edition, which isn't totally reliable, as it doesn't have the section on the Office of the Keys. Presenters for the conference were Rev. Dan Preus, Rev. Steve Briel, and Rev. Sonntag on the topic of prayer.

January 17 – Back in Chennai where we visited three St. Thomas sites. Whether these are authentic or not, they nevertheless are big tourist attractions: the place of St. Thomas' supposed burial, place where he lived in a cave and escaped capture, a footprint of his in stone, and a crevice in a stone where he got water. You could drop down a vessel and dip water from the same source. There is a church on a hill overlooking the city where St. Thomas supposedly served. It has a cross supposedly carved by him that on several occasions dripped blood, also a picture of Jesus and Mary supposedly painted by Luke and sent to Thomas. On one side of the altar is an relic conjectured to be a bone from the body of Thomas. All of them are Roman Catholic sites. Tradition has it that Thomas did end up in this area. It is true that our bringing of Bible teachings to India in the form of various books coincides with a tradition that is nearly 2000 years old. It is believed that in 52A.D. the Apostle Thomas brought the teachings of Jesus to India, and that he was martyred here as a proclaimer of the Gospel.

January 19 – Arrived in Antananarivo, Madagascar, where we immediately went on a 150 km, tire-squealing trip to try and make it to a seminarian's wedding on time. We arrived for the reception around 1 p.m., and it lasted until 6 p.m. Since there were Lutherans present from various congregations, the procedure was that each congregation can form a singing group and present a song. It was amazing how well each group did. It was obvious that these people have a great talent for singing. Rev. Fandrey and I decided not to entertain with a duet, but we did bring greetings.

January 20 – We were up at 5 a.m. waiting for our ride to church. It was a late arrival and we arrived at the church at 6:30 a.m. We were not able to find room in the 1,500 seat church but finally got in for the Creed. The singing was phenomenal, choirs were great, and the organ outstanding. Church attendance is not a problem here. Rev. Rakotonirina told us that in the previous year, 200 students applied for the various seminaries in the Madagascar Lutheran Church, but only 10 were accepted. *God's No and God's Yes* was being readied for the press, and we met with the printer to finalize the cost for 10,000 copies.

At each distribution event Rev. Fandrey spoke on the question "Why do we do what we do?" He emphasized the cardinal doctrine of the church, justification by faith through grace apart from works. This is the bedrock of our teaching. If we lose our grip on this, we lose our grip on being Lutheran.

March 15 – Youth Corps Mission Movement program was introduced in an attempt to have younger people support the mission of the LHF. The program was built around the concept of direct giving through credit card or automatic withdrawal from a bank account. “Young Adults” were designated in an age bracket from 18-60. Age, it was determined, is pretty much relative, and anyone joining the program was considered an “anchor” or charter member. The membership is still open for young adults who want to be engaged in missions to preserve and perpetuate the truth as translated and published in native tongues of people around the world.

April 1 – Dr. Bernie Lutz launched “God’s Plan for Sudan,” a program to support the Concordia Lutheran Institute for the Holy Ministry (CLIHM). Lutz, a former missionary to Lebanon and New Guinea, did several long stints of teaching and helping formulate the curriculum.

April 18 – The board elected Rev. Walter Otten as chairman.

May 7 – On the way to Sudan with Dr. Bernie Lutz who will serve as a teacher for the CLIHM program. Securing a South Sudan visa in Kampala, Uganda was a challenging effort. With the help of our Kampala LHF representative, Mr. Pascal Kungbowia, we launched forth to the Sudanese People’s Liberation Army (SPLA) or South Sudan embassy. We have some documents we used for Khartoum, and we are told in no uncertain terms that there was no interest in seeing anything to do with Khartoum. Documents from there were a detriment. Our goal was to receive the visa by the next day and we were told it would be impossible. We were ushered to several offices with the same story heard, but Rev. Lutz used his best begging style. We at least got a “maybe,” but plan to be here by 4:30 p.m.

No money changed hands in the embassy. You had to go directly to a bank and deposit the cost of the visa into their account. We did so and took the receipt back to the embassy to prove we made payment. In the meantime, we were confirming our air ticket on the Mission Aviation Fellowship flight and arranging how all our luggage will get there because of weight restrictions. By the time we made those arrangements, it was a race (up to 120 kph) to get back for picking up the visas by 4:30 p.m. We weren’t making the needed progress in a car due to the traffic, so Pascal jumped out and hired a motorbike, and he was off. We returned to the hotel and wondered if the visas would be granted. We would not be able to leave on the plane early the next morning with no visas. Pascal returned several hours later with visas in hand. How do you spell RELIEF?

May 9 – Our flight lands ten miles from Yambio, and we were picked up. The day was spent meeting with seminary students and discussing curriculum with ELCS executive staff. A daily schedule for the seminary was adopted.

May 10 – We visited the construction site of the Rich Valley Lutheran Mission Center in Baguga where an engineering problem with two sagging beams was discussed. There was a problem with an inadequate number of workers and the engineer's absence from the job. Because of the problems, we scheduled a meeting the next week with the engineer and a law firm in Nairobi. The Baguga Lutheran Primary School had three of their classrooms burned, and the rebuilding would start in the next days.

May 13 – Flight from Baguga to Entebbe to Nairobi, where we talked about Dr. Simojoki's retirement and interviewed Rev. James May to assume the position of vice president for Africa. Dr. Simojoki was very confident May could do the job, as he is academically bright, learned French in six months, would learn Swahili in a short time, his theology and practice always combined properly, and that he would be able to bring with him a strong support base. Anssi pointed out that his French would be of great help for work started in Benin, Rwanda, Congo, and tied with Burkina Faso.

May 17 – Rev. Fandrey and I discussed the transition realities that are on the horizon. Jim is anxious to assume the leadership role, and I was considering my own future and what would be the requirement to explain my continuing role in the organization. I wrote about requirements for the future of the organization and I explained my thoughts. "I don't believe I at any time gave an indication that I would be leaving the scene here. It is a reality you have to face. Retirement would violate my personal view of stewardship of vocation. Neither do I believe it should be necessary to 'fold up my tent' and look to Walmart for necessary continued employment. Your decision to consider the position when offered will be based for the most part on that unknown quantity of trust. Do you have the confidence in making a decision with that as a large factor?"

May 30 – A letter was written to the LHF Board of Directors, indicating that I was prepared to make a transition and proposed how I might make a contribution to the LHF in another capacity as a full-time worker. I stated, "If the board is willing to offer a position of continued service, I can then offer my resignation from the position of executive director effective January 1, 2009, or later, in the event that the position is not filled by that date. I proposed that I continue my service in a position as 'Founder/Church Relations.' I look forward to our discussions on June 4 so that I can make a smooth transition from my position and allow the board to begin the process to fill the vacated position. My recommendation to the board is that strong consideration be given to selecting Rev. James Fandrey as my successor."

June 18 – Rev. Walter Otten, board chairman, wrote to Rev. Fandrey, "The Board of Directors has received from Dr. Robert Rahn, the founding

executive director of the Lutheran Heritage Foundation, notice that, while he wishes to continue to serve the LHF and will do so with a different job description, it is his desire to no longer serve as executive director. Thus, the Board of Directors of the Lutheran Heritage Foundation voted to extend a Call/Contract to you to serve as executive director as of January 1, 2009, and enter a training period with Rev. Rahn for the ensuing six months to become familiar with the responsibilities.”

Rev. Otten stated further, “For the past 15 years the LHF has seen as its primary responsibility the need to translate orthodox, Christ-exalting literature in many languages that did not possess such Gospel-oriented material. The LHF has therefore translated our historic Lutheran Confessions, dogmatic and exegetical works, devotional material, the writings of Martin Luther, and worship resources into many different languages that heretofore did not possess any of those works. God has richly blessed our efforts. At times the power of God’s Word that creates faith and brings Christ into the lives of mankind has also led us to assume other activities. As confessional Lutherans we do believe that God’s Word, both the proclaimed Word and THE Word, Christ, in the Sacraments, not only proclaims Christ, but also brings and offers Christ, in Whom alone there is life and salvation. We are assured that you share this unique Lutheran understanding of the Word and Sacraments with us and that you sincerely desire to continue this God-pleasing and richly blessed activity. We pray that God leads you to accept the position.” On July 14, Rev. Fandrey officially accepted the position of executive director.

July – *How the Righteous Suffer*

Do you remember the two questions Habakkuk asked at the beginning of his short oracle? These were the same questions asked by an unidentified pastor (security reasons) in Zimbabwe in the midst of a scarcity of food, skyrocketing prices, fear of a political dictator, and fear of the next beating, rape, pillaging and burning of their homes. In their situation we might ask the same question: “Lord, how long will I call and You will not hear? How long will I cry and You will not save?” These were the questions that were asked not only in Zimbabwe, but also in Sudan, Congo, Rwanda, Burundi, Egypt, Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan, and hundreds of other countries, towns, and villages where governments raise up dictators.

As we call upon you to remember the persecuted church, this unidentified pastor brought this agony and heartache closer to our doorstep. He asks, “Is carrying food a crime? No, but, churches have been stopped in fact from distributing food. Even an organization that feeds street children was told to stop operations. Our own food distribution is kept as low-key as possible.

How tragic, to live in an environment when doing good has to be done in secret, lest it be seen and stopped.

“We cancelled our youth meetings last night and encouraged people to be off the streets during the evening. Late last night, taking our assistant caretaker to catch a ride and having to drop him in town, I myself was feeling a bit nervous. Even writing these words, letting you know some of the things that are really happening, I have a concern about who might get hold of this and what might it be used for. Such fearfulness is wrong.

“Friends, we need you to pray please. God must hear, and God must do something. We as a church will continue to do what we can do. We will seek to ‘trust in the Lord and do good’ and we will hope to ‘dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture.’

“The wickedness is unbelievable, the lack of concern for struggling people is demonic, the deafness of those in power to the cries of the suffering and the commitment to self-advancement at the expense of others are hard to believe. How can any in power inflict such suffering upon their own people?

“As a church, in our fear and uncertainty and concern, we seek to remain faithful, we look to God, but we are honestly asking the Habakkuk questions. We feel that we pray and God does not listen. We feel that we cry and God does not act. But our faith is trying to reach beyond our feelings. Indeed, what is the alternative but despair?

“So please, this week especially, pray that we will understand God’s larger purpose and be willing to endure with an eye on that. Pray for many people struggling and wondering, in fear and uncertainty. Pray for young people caught up in the situation, for elderly who are beaten by youths contrary to the deepest mores of culture and African community and disgraced in public as evidence of society’s fabric being ripped apart, for grandmothers and widows, for school children with studies disrupted and classes cancelled, for people in prison for political views, for pastors to be wise and full of integrity, for police and army members, that they will be convicted and refuse to act out the part they are to play.

“And pray for God’s righteous judgment to come, for God to lift His powerful hand, for evil to be crushed, for those that dig a pit to fall into it, and those that spread a net to be caught up in it, that God will be seen to defend the defenseless and father the fatherless. Please pray that God will hear, and that God will act, and that suffering will cease.”

This truly gives a picture of the work the LHF is doing to bring hope in the midst of despair, to bring the Word that will bind up the brokenhearted, to declare the Good News of peace in the midst of suffering, pain and agony. To this we are called.

September 9 – Rev. James May is called to replace Dr. Anssi Simojoki as LHF vice president of Africa.

September 15-November 5 – LHF sponsored a speaking tour for Ms. Jane Nkonge of the Meru region of Kenya. Jane had an interesting past before becoming a Lutheran. In July 1977 she received a diploma in theology from St. Andrews College in Kenya and was ordained a priest in the Anglican Church in Kenya (ACK). She served as the Sunday school/youth director of her diocese.

Following difficulties in the Meru Diocese and the ACK, Jane and six other priests (all male) searched for a strong Bible church body and joined the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Kenya (ELCK) in April 2003. After intensive training by LHF (at the request of Bishop Obare) and understanding the correct Biblical position, Jane denounced her own ordination. She began to serve as the ELCK coordinator for women, youth, and children for the Meru District (through the support of LHF) and also led the translation committee work in her Meru language. Under her direction, the Meru catechism and the Lutheran liturgy were completed. LHF continued to support the translation efforts and also the mission efforts of the seven “defectors.”

Notes and Comments of Interest

Simojoki on Worship at the Nairobi Complex Chapel

“Our chapel has never before been this full. There are at least 65 people. The visitor from the United States LHF office is preaching. Some of the people have to sit outside. My task is to serve at the altar in the Divine Service. When our chapel services started, we had discussions about whether to take the high or low road, whether to condense the Lutheran liturgy to its childish minimum or to use the whole treasury of the worship life of the Reformation to the full. We chose the high road.

“Too often the missionaries from the West underestimated the African Christian to be a child, who must be spared the treasures of theology and worship life, so that they would not go over his head. You should hear how our mixed Kenyan-Sudanese-European-American-Ethiopian-Somali congregation recites Psalm tones in ancient modes, and fully takes part in the pious, meandering litany and the decorative communion liturgy. Africans are full, mature Christians, at least as much if not more so, than the Western ‘besserwissers’ withered horizonless by liberal theology.

“In recent months, the number of Somalis at the center and in the chapel has grown visibly. On Easter Sunday we will have the first baptisms and confirmations. After that, a new baptism class will begin. Several times, angry Islamic fanatics have been seen at our gates demanding the handing over of

Shukri and generally making threats. Henry's life, too, would not be safe in the hands of such a group. After all, the young man is the son of a mosque preacher from an old family of preachers. Security has been stepped up.

"In addition to our guards, the area is patrolled by armed policemen night and day. It is strange that God chooses as his weapons those who we would not want on our payroll over our dead bodies. Such a one is the nearly seven-foot scarbrowed Nuer man, Moses Chuol, the apostle of Hagadera Refugee Camp, who in the past used to exhaust me with his persistent assaults. This Moses really is not ashamed of the Gospel, but bears witness to salvation in Christ to the Somalis in the refugee camps of Eastern Kenya. Yesterday he headed back again with an impressive package of books and other materials in the Somali tongue on his back. Now it is the turn of the Islamic fanatics of the camp to be at their wit's end and complain about Moses, but what can you do to a refugee who is simply using the universal human freedom to speak?

"All our Somalis have experienced persecution and live under its threat. At the start of the year, the highest umbrella organization of the Sheiks of Somalia published a resolution, which was read on the radio all around the country. The Somalis are a Muslim nation. Christian Somalis are renegades and traitors who must be treated accordingly, that is, killed wherever they are encountered. Their wives and children must be separated from them. They are denied the right of inheritance. They must not live! When we read this text, we could feel how the blood was about to freeze in our veins for a while. So full of burning hatred and blood thirstiness is the opposition to Christian Somalis amongst their own people! So everyone must count the cost carefully before following Christ. Many, an increasing number, do so, conscious of the danger, out of love for Jesus.

"During communion I blessed a few children, including my son, Lassie, who is almost as tall as his father, and will go to confirmation next year. It created a hum amongst the Somali ladies. To my surprise, a large group of colorfully dressed, noble-looking ladies arrived at the next table, in order to receive at least a blessing, if not yet the Holy Sacrament. Eagerly they bowed their heads, and practicing the sign of the cross they departed from the Lord's Table with a smile. Here are students for our next baptism class. My thoughts drifted beyond the roamer, David Livingstone, to an even older roamer, the father of faith himself, Abraham. It is true, 'In your seed will all the nations on earth be blessed.' Now it is the Somalis' turn!"

September 23 – Nigeria

Release of *My First Catechism* in the Efik language of Nigeria.

November 7 – This was my last board meeting as LHF executive director. I expressed gratitude to the board for the opportunity to serve

and indicated that I looked forward to continuing to serve in my new role. The board acknowledged my years of service with resounding applause and thanksgiving for the vision, dedication, commitment, and direction provided from the beginning.

November 29 – A Somali ministry organization, designated as The Somali Mission (SM), was established by Phillip Dahoud (fictitious name to protect individual). Phillip immigrated to Europe with his four oldest children after threats on his life and twice having his children kidnapped. He has gathered together 14 Somalis to study the catechism; they meet once a month. “There are some ministries here who failed before to do what I am doing now, and they are not happy about it,” he said.

Phillip started building a website with the assistance of a web designer. The domain name is www.somalimission.org and it has been successful in reaching many Muslims in Somalia. He reported that he needed to return to Somalia to conduct baptisms for those who have requested it.

In the introduction to the Charter of The Somali Mission organization, it states that the Somali people embraced and practiced the Islamic faith brought by Arab and Persian traders for more than one thousand years. During the last three decades, Islam was growing stronger with an increasing emphasis on fundamentalism. There are about 16 million Somali ethnic people dispersed in Somalia, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Djibouti, among whom less than two thousand converted to Christianity during the last century.

The lack of mission effectiveness is intricately linked with the history of the people. Religious, political, and cultural factors have worked together to make this group of people not only resistant to the Gospel, but defensively hostile. For centuries they have blocked Christ’s saving message from gaining any meaningful foothold.

However, The Somali Mission, an indigenous Christian missionary organization, believes that it is our responsibility to carry on the Great Commission and reach our people with the Gospel.

In between His resurrection and His ascension, several times and in different ways Jesus made it clear that bringing His Gospel to all people must be of paramount importance to all followers until the task is accomplished. Wherever His followers live or whatever the cost, nothing else is to be of higher priority.

On one occasion, Phillip stated his goal in life in the following manner: “My goal is to become a Lutheran pastor and then go back to Somalia and start an official Lutheran church. And then they can kill me, because I know they will kill me.”

The SM charter further states that some people think the Somalis are

one of the closed communities in which the Gospel is unable to penetrate, and therefore cannot be saved. “We believe by our Lord’s leading and power it is not only possible but certain. For whatever fields might seem to us as resistant are in actuality white unto harvest. The love of our Savior Jesus Christ compels us to focus on obeying His great command. We can do very little by ourselves, but in everything by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, we present our requests to God. (Philippians 4:6)”

It had been the intention of the LHF and the Friends of Westfield House to send Phillip to Cambridge to study for the ministry at the Westfield House, but this has been delayed because of residency requirements for one who immigrated to Holland. At this writing, visa requirements for England have become more stringent, and it may require that he receive training at a seminary either in South Africa or Sudan.

The Homegoing

+Bishop Andrew Mbugo Elisa+

December 31, 2008

“Blessed are they who die in the Lord from now on! Yes, says the Spirit, let them rest from their hard work, for what they have done accompanies them.” Revelation 14:13 (GWN)

On November 17, 2008, Andrew was flown to Amman, Jordan, for hospitalization upon strong urging from doctors at St. Paul Hospital, Khartoum, and by the Minister of Transportation of the Government of Sudan, who was also a member of the Lutheran church in Khartoum. Andrew was well enough to report on an MRI that was taken, indicating an inflammation of the brain, and he was taken to another hospital that Andrew described as very expensive. He cited the Office of the Minister who admitted him and provided the care.

Initial cost for the care was provided by LHF, but it was more than we could fund. We are pleased to report that payment for treatment was not a voiced concern, although Andrew fretted about who could pay the amount. As it turned out, no charges were ever made for his treatment.

When no sign of improvement was seen, the debate ensued as to whether he should go to England for further treatment. It was our opinion that he should go to Nairobi, not only for good medical treatment but also for the family support from the LHF compound.

December 27, 2008, Dr. Anssi Simojoki and members of the compound congregation conducted a short service with corporate confession and Eucharist. On December 31, at 5:22 p.m., Dr. Simojoki sent a short message

that said, “Right now there is a serious turn in Andrew’s condition. We do not know whether it is a temporary one or the final.” Blood donors were drafted, but Andrew was unable to speak. Instead, he wrote his thoughts on paper. On this paper these words were written: “final forgiveness and final blessing.” Dr. Simojoki ministered these to him. After receiving blood, Andrew recovered for a while and could speak. Then a serious turn occurred. His lungs worked only on 22 percent capacity, and he was moved to the ICU. The message from his wife, Linda, and Japhet Dachi was that there was no hope.

A message came to LHF from Mrs. Marja Simojoki that was posted on Nairobi time at 12:02 a.m. stating that a call came from the hospital, “God has called Andrew to join all those Christians who are waiting for the heavenly joy with him.” Later his death was diagnosed to be from many bouts of malaria, tuberculosis, and cancer of the brain stem.

I wrote to the extended Elisa family stating, “Andrew’s death occurred ‘on the last day of my watch’ in the capacity as LHF executive director. Rev. James Fandrey, our new executive director, and I had planned a November visit to Khartoum and Yambio that had to be cancelled because of Andrew’s hospitalization. I hope to come to you possibly in March or April.

“As you today lay Andrew’s body to rest in the tomb of the earth awaiting the blessed reunion of body and soul at the time of the resurrection of all flesh, there are so many memories to be recalled. It is not the memories, however, that give us light in the darkness of this hour. What gives us reason for rejoicing are the faith and hope God instilled in His servant. This sustains us in the darkest of hours, this is our hope in the midst of our tears and sorrows, this is our joy in the face of sadness. I commend you to the great grace of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Yes, let Andrew, servant of God, rest from his many hard labors, for we know that what he has accomplished accompanies him. It is his faith that was granted by the power of the Spirit working in him. It is to this end that we say, “WELL DONE, THOU GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT. ENTER INTO THE JOY OF THE LORD.”

“God is with you to sustain, strengthen, and embolden you for the walk ahead. Our prayers are with you and our love for you continues.

Funeral & Burial on January 10, 2009
Funeral text for sermon preached by
Dr. Anssi Simojoki, LHF vice president for Africa

“By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because the day will bring it to light. It will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man’s work.” (1 Corinthians 3:10-13)

Dr. Anssi Simojoki, LHF vice president for Africa, preached the sermon at Andrew’s funeral on the text from 1 Cor. 3:10-13. He made the following comment about Andrew’s building program: “Andrew’s hallmark as a builder was his strict demand for the best theological and practical quality, in the words of St. Paul, ‘gold and silver and costly stones.’ He abhorred cheap theological compromise because he had seen in his life how useless is the non-biblical human straw, hay and wood in the church, how empty and useless are human ideas and words that are unknown to God and his Holy Word. Therefore, he preferred waiting for a number of years in order to receive well-trained Lutheran pastors to the church, rather than compromising the theology and the holy ministry of the church with hasty, superficial, and fashionable short-cuts, that in the long run will take the church nowhere.

“Andrew keenly followed this star in his building work. He could not be intimidated or brought to deviate from the Lutheran doctrine and its ecclesiology. These were to him the treasure in the field and the rare pearl that were finally found. This was for him more precious than any treasures of life. Before any kind of physical and psychological intimidation, Andrew was a fearless and proud African church father. As such he heeded the true needs of the ELCS rather than any kind of personal flattery and benefits. Still, his amazing talent was to create respect, trust, and friendship across various human boundaries.

“God had other plans for Bishop Andrew and for the ELCS; His plans are good. We should follow His plans and His will and continue the building work of the ELCS in humility, without personal gain or self-glorification, without slightest tribal prejudice, without compromising the truth of the Word of God. Bishop Andrew was prepared for his final departure by his final confession of sins, by the absolution he received, and by the final blessing of his body and soul in this world before entering a better world than

this. As everyone who believes, he is saved by grace and grace alone. With forgiveness of sins God grants through faith and life and eternal blessedness as Dr. Luther teaches in the *Small Catechism* according to the Word of God.

“Humanly speaking, much remained undone. It is always so! It is God who calls His builders, it is God who works through their efforts and toils, and it God who sends them to rest in His appointed time. Everything is from God, through God, and to God (Romans 11:36). Therefore we say with Apostle Paul gratefully and trusting in God’s good will, ‘To Him be glory forever and ever! Amen.’”

I was unable to attend due to the fact that my passport had been submitted to an embassy in New York and the embassy closed for the week of New Year’s. There was no way I could retrieve my passport for travel to Sudan. It was a great disappointment not to be with the Elisa and ELCS family.

2009

January 18 – On this date I was preaching for a service in Marathi, India. This is the Lutheran Center Congregation. There was standing room only for over 200 people, men on one side, women on the other. Here we gave out copies of the Marathi, Hindi, and Gujarati *Small Catechism*. Marathi and Gujarati are state languages; Hindi is a national language. There are 18 national languages and 24 state languages, so we have a ways to go.

January 19 – I was in Rajahmundry at the Epiphania Lutheran Church where I would speak at the Telugu Lutheran Pastors Symposium. This is a large church building built by the members themselves. The Bible Faith Lutheran Church is sponsoring the symposium and we are presenting the Telugu enchiridion, *Augsburg Confession*, *Large Catechism* section on baptism, and *A Letter from Luther on Baptism*.

January 22 – John Sundaram and I left the YWCA hotel in Chennai and headed for Bangalore. The car was small, but the air conditioning worked, so what more would you need? We stopped at a roadside hotel for breakfast. What was it? I didn’t have any idea! I ordered an omelet but was told it was a vegetarian-only restaurant. Non-vegetarian means they have some meat and other things. The traveling was really quite comfortable because between Chennai and Bangalore, they opened a new toll road that cuts through the middle of Ambur (they don’t like it). Not like our toll roads where you can’t get on for miles. On this one, there is an opening every mile or less where people can cross, and don’t forget about the oxen and carts, the bicycles,

motor bikes, motorcycles, huge trucks, and buses. I was told that accidents are now more lethal because there is always speed involved.

Outside of Ambur we stopped at a print shop where a program was prepared for the release of the *Book of Concord* in Tamil. I presented the ornately wrapped copies to the area president and to John Sundaram. I wondered where the rest were and I was told there were only two copies. John told the gathered group that the remaining copies would be available in several months. I wasn't pleased with the plan but did present special certificates of appreciation to four translators who were present. A large tub of rice was set out and a man stirred the rice with what looked like a shovel. It was mutton rice served on banana leaves. We did get plates and silverware while the rest ate "by hand."

I did mention to the group that this would be a day to be easily remembered as it fell on my birthday. The birthday present was the first edition of the Tamil *Book of Concord*, and that isn't too bad of a gift.

January 25 – From Chennai we skipped over to Kiev, Ukraine, where we surprised Bishop Slavik Horpynchuk. He thought we were releasing another edition of *The People's Bible Commentary (Romans)*. After we made that presentation I had Slavik's daughter, Katherina, come up to translate for me, and we switched gears. I brought up all the people that were involved in putting the book together. After my presentation I gave the first copy to Mrs. Horpynchuk, the instigator of the project. It was passed down the line back to me, and I presented it to the bishop. The title of the book was *We Preach Christ Crucified*. This was a compilation of sermons that Bishop Horpynchuk had preached over the years. It was my suggested title and I had the bishop read 2 Corinthians 4:5 and explained the choice of the title to the congregation. There were many flower bouquets presented, solos were sung, a violin solo played, a choir selection, greetings read, gifts presented (special icon and gold chained pectoral cross). Katherina also directed a skit or pageant depicting the parable of the sower of the seed. We were asked to join in an autograph party. Slavik was pretty much speechless. The celebration marked ten years of service to the congregation and for his years of service as the bishop of the Ukrainian Lutheran Church.

My special gift to him from LHF was the *Treasury of Daily Prayer* and a pocket edition of the *Book of Concord*. It was funny that he had asked about these things the day before. He had seen them advertised on the CPH web page.

January 28 – In Riga, Latvia, discussion centered on distribution of books and the *Good News* magazine. The gal in charge of distribution was out every week visiting congregations and making sure the tables in each congregation had books. The distribution covered almost all active congregations.

January 29 – Discussion in Moscow not only dealt with distribution issues but also with spiritual matters. I was concerned that Marina Solodova, LHF branch director, was becoming lax in her church attendance, and I addressed this concern. I am the godfather to her daughter, Katherina, and she is getting close to confirmation age. I wanted to know how this would be handled. I heard that they attend more regularly in the summer, but now in the winter it was about once a month. The pastor was trying to save money and there was no heat in the church. You couldn't even take off your coat. Attendance is diminishing. I suggested to Pastor Igor that he make some kind of special effort to accommodate Katherina in confirmation, since she lives many miles from the church and it would be unsafe for her to travel there on her own. The spiritual life of family and friends is not something you set aside. This was a special concern as I indicated that my visits would be less often and this may even be the last one made.

June 22 – Letter addressed to Michael T. Washtour from the Relief Association for Southern Sudan (RASS) stating, "The Sudan Lutheran Church is hereby recognized and recommended as one of the churches that will be operating and preaching the Word of God in both South Sudan and our refugee camps in the neighboring counties. It is our pleasure and the people of South Sudan to recognize your church and recommend your church to operate in areas as part of the spiritual campaign for peace and love among our people."

Mr. Washtour is one of the Sudanese of the Nuer tribe who immigrated to the U.S. as part of the group known as "The Lost Boys of Sudan." He became a member of Redeemer Lutheran Church, Marshalltown, Iowa. Redeemer and their pastor, Rev. Daniel Johnson, became very active in programs benefitting the refugees and also the ELCS. At one time there were three groups working on their own edition of the Nuer catechism. LHF was able to coordinate the cooperation of the three groups to complete the project and publish the Nuer edition.

July 2009 MISSION REPORT:

From time to time we issue mission reports to friends of LHF. One of those was filed on this date. It reported on the theme "Bread of Life" and covered activities in Sudan and Southeast Asia.

"Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. Do not work for food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you, because God the Father has placed His seal of approval on Him." John 6: 26, 27

I'll begin my report by citing some thoughts from the "bread chapter" of the Bible. It begins with the feeding of the 5,000 and contains another of the great "I am's" when Jesus said "I am the Bread of Life." A good number of themes could be built on this chapter, including:

- Bread King or King of Kings
- Food That Lasts
- Eating What's Good For You
- Giving The Bread of Life

It's a great chapter full of pertinent truths for our age, a contemporary message for our times. I'd like to suggest that Jesus wrote the first successful diet plan as outlined in this chapter. No other diet book on the bookstore shelves can make the claim that it is successful. Maybe for some but not for all. Do you know why we can say Jesus' diet plan is successful? Because it doesn't depend on us, but on Him. He gives us the diet that "endures to eternal life." "The person who comes to Me will never be hungry and the person who believes in Me will never be thirsty."

Even with those precious promises of God, there are those who would make him a mere Bread King...

- Available and good to have around
- Glorified aspirin tablet (take when all other cures fail)
- Glorified electric fan (turn on when things get hot)
- Cosmic bellboy (called at the snap of a finger when needed)

If you want to be reminded as to how important your contributions and service are, you might review the feeding of the 5,000. The clue to that is in the phrase: "There's a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish; but what's that among so many?"

Maybe we relate to the boy. He didn't seem to have too much to offer, but with what he had, Jesus made a miracle. Jesus can use what we bring Him. It may not be much, but He can multiply our offering.

In the diet plan of Jesus, He sends no one away empty except those who are full of themselves. When God wants to do something good, He starts with a difficulty. When He wants to do something great, He starts with an impossibility. Little is much when God is in it!

The following mission report tells us that He still provides today. "For God's Bread is the One Who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world" (verse 33). Our prayerful response is "always give us this bread" (verse 34).

Sudan - Bread of Life Program Moves Forward

All programs of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sudan that enable the Bread of Life to be fed to the people are moving forward. The Word of Life is being translated into the language of the people so that worship can take place with the use of a Zande liturgy and *Prayer Book* being revised for publishing. The catechism, which teaches about the One Who said, "I am the Bread of Life," is being used widely throughout the church and in the Baguga Lutheran School. Other language catechisms are in process.

Seminary

The Concordia Lutheran Institute for the Holy Ministry will soon complete another year of training. Dr. Phil Giessler (Cleveland, Ohio) spent three months teaching the 14 students "The Unity of the Scriptures" and "The Pastor as Bible and Catechism Teacher." Dr. Bernie Lutz (Crane Lake, Minnesota) followed with a three-week session on "Isaiah" and "The Principles of Bible Interpretation." Mr. Rob Lutz of Our Savior Lutheran School in Crookston, Minnesota, taught remedial English and some general principles of teaching in the Sunday school and home. Rev. Justin Kane (Immanuel Lutheran Church, Conover, North Carolina) taught a course on the Gospel of John. Rev. Roger Heintz of Brookfield Lutheran Church in Brookfield, Wisconsin, will complete the current school year the end of September.

As the students depart for their break, they will be working in their home congregations to put into practice what they have learned. The new school year begins on January 18, 2010, and this will mark their final year of formal training.

More than Just a Teacher or a Student

Dr. Bernie and Mr. Rob Lutz did more than teach in a classroom. They led the students and members of the ELCS in a work project to improve the water situation. Water drawn from a lake for bathing and washing was polluted and caused skin rashes, so a system was devised whereby gutters were installed on the guest house to capture the rain water coming off the zinc roof and to empty into two 1,000 gallon containers. Sinks for washing were also installed to improve sanitary conditions.

Termites for Bread

One of the delicacies of this area is the crop of termites that are collected and served after frying in cooking oil or in some cases eaten raw. Even mahogany boards are no match for these creatures with a voracious appetite to satisfy their large bodies.

Other Improvements Made

During weekends and free time, other projects were carried out to improve the overall conditions. Brick was laid around buildings to improve conditions during the rainy season. Library shelves were built to get books out of storage for better utilization, and carpeting was laid in the guest house dining and conference room.

The gravesite memorial was completed for the late bishop, Rev. Andrew Mbugo Elisa. It is located next to the Yambio Lutheran Church.

Southeast Asia

Rev. Ted NaThalang recently completed two trips that took him to Laos, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Hong Kong, and Japan. The Word as the Bread of Life continues to be a precious commodity in most of these areas. There is a hunger for the books and materials that are being published and prepared for publishing.

In Laos, LHF is working with the Lao Evangelical Church, the only recognized church in Laos, with 600 congregations and some 150,000 members. All other churches are underground. The leader of the church, Dr. Khamphone Kuountapanya, is waiting for the completion of *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* in the Lao language.

In Thailand, Rev. NaThalang checked on the progress of an intensive project to publish the *Thai Bible Stories in Pictures*, which has now been completed. While in Thailand, Rev. NaThalang conducted a seminar on the role of pastors and lay leaders and to help them understand the role of women in the church.

Vietnam

Luther's Small Catechism has been completed and there are only 100 copies remaining. Some problems were encountered in having translation work taking place both in the U.S. and Vietnam, because the language is slightly different. One other problem is with publishing in a Communist country and how many books can be brought in from the outside when published. A number of projects are underway.

Cambodia

Luther's Small Catechism is out of print for the second time and a third edition is being reviewed for publishing. Three other works are being prepared for publishing.

Hong Kong

A major project is underway to publish the Chinese *Book of Concord*. A team of Lutheran translators has been assembled. There is some discussion on what the title should be, as the English title may not convey well what the book is all about. A new edition of the English/Chinese *Small Catechism* is being completed. While in Hong Kong, Rev. NaThalang visited the Lutheran Theological Seminary, the largest Lutheran seminary where Dr. Peter Li, *Book of Concord* translation team member, is a professor.

Japan

In Japan, there is an old edition of *Luther's Small Catechism*, but there is a copyright issue that makes it simpler to put out our own edition to be included in the *Book of Concord*, and then work on the full catechism with questions and answers. The few remaining copies of the *Book of Concord* cost about \$260 per copy, and the projected cost on a new LHF edition will be less expensive and more accessible. This LCMS partner church is studying the issue of women's ordination and needs access to both the catechism and the *Book of Concord*.

Moving Ahead with YCMM

We are continuing to promote membership in the YCMM (Youth Corps Mission Movement) as a way to keep moving ahead with books and materials that help to establish and hold to the confessional basis we as a church have had for over 150 years.

Why eat the pabulum offered by the world when Christ offers us the Bread of Life? What's the difference? That is what many are asking these days. We can present the answers if we are in the confessional wing of the Lutheran Church. The majority of Lutheranism has drifted over into the humanitarian wing and are espousing many of the bread king precepts that dilute the Truth.

And we will say again with the early followers of Jesus...Lord, always give us the Bread that endures to eternal life.

Construction Frustration, Failure, Future?

November 5 - The president of St. John Lutheran Church, Rich Valley, Minnesota, wrote, "In a meeting of our Linkert Committee, on Sunday, November 1, we reviewed the present state of the construction site at Baguga, Sudan, the time interval since the funds were sent to LHF in 2004, the various happenings since then, all the correspondence with LHF during that period, and the fact that the funds have been spent. It is our suggestion

that the construction be discontinued. Funds supplied to this project by St. John are limited to those transmitted in 2004.”

Thus ended the initial effort to erect the Rich Valley Lutheran Mission Center in Baguga. The biggest contributing factor in this failed effort, in my estimation, was the untimely death of Bishop Elisa. During 2008 there were many meetings with the Adventis Construction Company of Nairobi who were contractors for the building. Rev. Elisa was saddled with the responsibility of dealing with all aspects from the time he recommended Adventis as the construction firm.

One of the challenges was the purchase and delivery of materials from Uganda and Kenya over roads that were nothing the likes of which we could even describe. One could say that we did successfully accomplish the delivery of all materials with the exception of roofing tiles. Even now all this material is stored in Yambio.

Labor problems were encountered during the construction, but they were handled by Rev. Elisa. The original contract was even revised when it was obvious that Adventis had miscalculated the cost. Meetings between our lawyer and Adventis took place regularly in Nairobi.

The foundation and first floor for the building were successfully laid. Work then began on supporting pillars for the second floor. Half of the second floor was poured when work was discontinued. In the months of trying to negotiate a way to continue, it became obvious with the sagging of the second story floor that the engineering was faulty; the cross beams were not sufficiently supported. The beams even began to separate from the support pillars. It was clear, even before an engineering firm from Juba made its report, that the second floor would have to be demolished. More supporting pillars were added as part of new plans.

Because we could not receive any satisfaction of a willingness to negotiate a continued contract, our lawyer submitted to Adventis our breach of contract document. Because this was Africa, we simply determined that the time and effort would be wasted in pursuing their ineptness, failure to fulfill obligation, and lack of response. Without Rev. Elisa's tenacity, business acumen, and on-site control, the effort came to a complete standstill.

The partially built facility, surrounded by growing jungle brush, stands as a monument to failure, a sad commentary on what might have been.

But it is not an abandoned project. I am not willing to walk away and pronounce a verdict of total failure. My commitment is that in some way and at some time the work will again commence. We have determined that we should be able to construct at least a one story structure. Originally Rev. Elisa had blue prints for a four story structure that we had already reduced

to two floors. We believe there are capable local contractors who will be able eventually to complete this structure. Even now studies are being made as to how we can use the available materials and bring this dream of a worship center, school classrooms, and office to completion.

It is estimated that this could be done at a cost of \$200,000, utilizing the materials at hand and also the brick-making machine and lumber mill that was earlier provided as fund raising tools for the ELCS. With the new construction activities in Yambio, six miles away, with improvement to the road, and with electricity soon to be brought to the area, there have to be capable contractors and volunteers to complete the project. The key now is to bring this to completion before prices escalate with the infrastructure that is being laid in the surrounding areas and villages.

No, we will not consider it a failure until we have exhausted every effort to finish what we started. Until that time I will continue efforts to find the funds and conscript the help needed. Rev. Elisa oftentimes said: "The Lord will provide." And so He will in this instance also.

December 14, 15 – A mission consultation was held at King of Kings Lutheran Church, Omaha, Nebraska, sponsored by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Sudan and the Mission Partners of the LCMS. The purpose of this third consultation was to again discuss mission activities carried out by respective groups in Sudan. After some 15 years of intense activity by the LHF, more groups were becoming involved and this third consultation was held to be sure all activities were being carried out through the ELCS. Rev. Fandrey and I pointed out that the investments by LHF at this point were in the neighborhood of \$2 million, and that contributions by other groups would be welcome to help alleviate the heavy financial responsibility assumed by LHF as the church was organized.

Dr. Mike Rodewald, LCMS regional director for Africa, pointed out that "Africans are asking, what does it mean to be Lutheran? That is why organizations like the LHF are so important, so that all people might have confessional Lutheran books and materials in their own language. Then they can understand what it means to be Lutheran."

This meeting pointed out the difficulties the Sudanese have in obtaining visas to the U.S. Rev. Edward Sunge Nzeme, Yambio, Sudan, had to email greetings to the gathering. "Al Salam Lekum (Peace to all of you). On behalf of the ELCS I greet all of you in the blessed Name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I am happy to address this consultation from Africa because the American government did not grant us the needed visas. But this is not the end. One day somebody from the ELCS will once again visit you in America. I know that you who have gathered will be able to come up with decisions

that will help the growth of the ELCS.”

When this meeting took place, Rev. Nzeme reported that the following were serving the ELCS: 10 pastors, 3 vicars, 15 seminarians, 4 deaconesses, 2 deacons and 60 evangelists.

Rev. Nzeme listed six specific challenges facing the church at this time:

1. Lack of trained manpower at all levels
2. Lack of proper infrastructure (offices, church buildings, classrooms, etc.)
3. Shortage of funds. People in Sudan have just come from war and most of them do not have enough income to support the church.
4. Lack of means of transportation (we have one vehicle and a few motorbikes).
5. Lack of proper communication facilities. Most pastors do not have access to the Internet.
6. A need for a unified Lutheran church in Sudan, as many Lutheran congregations are now being registered with the government of South Sudan.

Visas and Patience

Patience is a virtue that is tested when obtaining a visa to Sudan, especially if your visit is to include Khartoum. It made little difference how early your application was made. The process included clearance by officials in Sudan with a visa number sent to the Sudan Consulate in New York. The result always seemed the same – a last minute arrival of the document, sometimes a day after you were scheduled to leave. At times the speed depended on what conflicts were taking place between the governments of Sudan and the U.S.

You perhaps recall the bombing in Khartoum of what was thought to be an ammunitions plant, our effort to send a message to the Sudanese government that they should not provide hiding for Al Qaida.

Our visit to Khartoum on one occasion was the only time we were provided with a police escort to the bomb site, as we became instruments of propaganda for local TV. When we arrived at the site along with government dignitaries, police, and media personnel, speeches were being made in front of cameras while the Americans were being shown pieces of wreckage. This was meant to demonstrate the fact that we had bombed a pharmaceutical plant where they were making aspirin tablets. Their intention, they told us, was to leave the destruction until a UN team would come to inspect and make the declaration as to what kind of building it was. It clearly was their opportunity to point out the American error. That night we watched

ourselves on the Sudan networks.

This was a good lesson as to how American missionaries sometimes unknowingly become party to local politics. It was only in Sudan that we had entre into the highest offices of the land on a regular basis. Part of this could be contributed to the fact that Rev. Andrew Mbugo Elisa was actively involved in the peace process and also the fact that one of the cabinet ministers was a member of the Khartoum Lutheran congregation. He had come from the South and had talked about returning.

In January 2011, the vote was held to determine if there would be one or two Sudans. The South voted overwhelmingly in favor of separation. Even now the establishment of a new government in the South is taking place. As you might expect, this will not be done without one type of skirmish or another. Already the South has declared a moratorium on discussions with the North relating to oil and minerals, because they are accusing the North of sending rebels into the south to create upheaval. If this is the case, we are then resorting to how things were prior to the peace accord.

At this point we are not certain what the implications are for travel between the South and the North. How will our leaders reach the congregations located in the North? What treatment will the Lutherans in the North receive? Perhaps visas will be required. It may be even more difficult to obtain a visa to just cross one border.

Here we are reminded that the Great Commission still spurs us on. We still proclaim the three “P’s” of that commissioning, as recorded in Matthew 28:16-20 – “GO.”

Jesus had come to the end of His ministry and He gave His last command: “GO.” Note the context in which He gave His command. It was at the Ascension, and Jesus told the disciples to wait in Jerusalem. At the Ascension the power was promised, and at Pentecost the power was provided.

Those disciples who were sent to Jerusalem by Jesus to wait for “power from on high,” were not guilty of SITTING ON THE PREMISES, but they were STANDING ON THE PROMISES of God!!

The “go” is not given in isolation, and this is also a reminder to us, who have received the command to go.

Go with Power

This power was given to Jesus already at His incarnation, a power that transcends earth and heaven and is now issued to us to go in His power.

Go with a Plan

Jesus laid out a specific plan. There are any number of witnessing plans and programs that have been developed and promoted over the years,

but none of them has in any way improved on the Lord's plan. These are the ingredients that Jesus made part of a workable witnessing program:

Make disciples

Baptize

Teach

Preserve, keep

Disciples are made by two key concepts: baptizing and teaching. He even specifically stated that we are to limit our teaching to those things which He has commanded. When those disciples walked with Him on the Emmaus road, the Bible says: "Beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures." (Luke 24:27) Elsewhere He included the Psalms when He referred to the Scriptures. In other words, it was what was in the Bible of His time. Today we have a wholesale abandonment of His Word, or a misapplication, as you often see not only in Africa but here in America. The theology of glory includes the preaching of a Gospel of prosperity. This is common among Pentecostal churches in Africa. We even see it here in America, with modern-day evangelists demonstrating by their personal life styles; being a prophet of God makes for profit. Luxury cars, luxury homes here and abroad, but the priceless Gospel put at a price.

Go with a Presence

Jesus said: "I am with you always!" With you always, not just for a moment, not just on some mountaintop, not just when you have made all the financial adjustments necessary and have the investments producing properly. No, He is with us with His presence always, to the close of the age.

Plan of LHF

It is His Great Commission that also gives us our direction in terms of the LHF mission to deliver "weapons of mass instruction," a term first used by Miss Suzanne Zobel, mission educator of LHF.

To translate, publish, distribute, introduce books and materials such as:

Catechisms

A Child's Garden of Bible Stories

Book of Concord

One Hundred Bible Stories

Books for training pastors and lay leaders

Seminars and seminaries for teaching materials published

"How will they read if we do not print?"

Jesus Never Fails!

2010

August 17 – Gbaya catechism released for use in Cameroon.

October 7 – We were in Yambio, Sudan, with Dr. Bernie Lutz of Crane Lake, Minnesota, and Rev. Reijo Arkkila from Finland. We conducted an open forum with the seminary students who lauded the program we provided. We informed them that the general economy of our country would not allow us to support programs at the same level, and that they should be prepared for stipends to be decreased each year. They were encouraged to develop stewardship programs in their congregations and to be ready for no support after four years.

October 8 – The Yambio Police Band arrived at the Center at 10 a.m. to lead the processing graduates through the village. The line-up included the processional cross, flags, large Bible, pastors, graduates, choirs and congregation. We marched to the town square on what was a very hot and sunny day. The procession led to the church for the service, and Dr. Lutz served as the speaker. Diplomas and certificates were given to each student. Speeches were given by members of the faculty and staff, including Nicholas, Dachi, Edwards and Arkkila. The Minister of Education for Sudan also spoke, as well as the police chief, who was more like a preacher who talked about wisdom in the context of “the fear of the Lord.”

The parents, wives, and friends of the students displayed their great exuberance in an unusual way. When the diploma was granted, all would run forward and pick up the student and carry him around to the applause of the congregation.

October 9 – An Interim Committee Meeting was announced and all pastors were invited to participate. Around 15 men joined the discussions. The translation work was discussed and the ongoing difficulty with finances was another topic. It was reported that the Baguga Lutheran Primary School had declined to 110 students, and there were now more students in Yambio with 210 students. The St. Paul Hospital in Khartoum was in arrears financially and help was being sought from Lutheran Medical Missions and Lutheran World Relief. It was determined that a plan was needed to outline procedures for starting a school.

Rev. Jock Rianz from Malakal reported on a container that arrived in 2009, bringing a tractor, water purifier and other farming equipment. Two containers were joined with a roof, but the project was never completed. Other reports included information where churches were started and a place where people were arrested for starting a church and now moved from

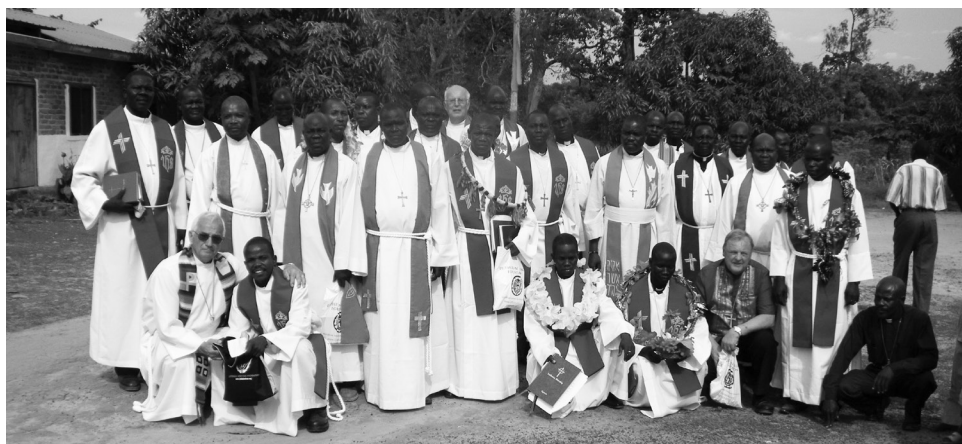
place to place to escape persecution. It was obvious that communication was a missing ingredient between the pastors. The flow of information is a problem, especially in northern Sudan. A plea was given that we continue the training of pastors.

I made a presentation calling for a plan and vision based on 2 Timothy 1:6, 7: "For this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline." We are not called to crawl, but to walk or even run. It calls for an entrepreneurial spirit. This is a time for us to think about a vision for the church in 2011 and 2012.

Dr. Lutz summarized the discussion and called it a great meeting. He quoted Revelation 12:12: "Woe to the earth and sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time."

The Baguga situation was addressed and the feeling was that the building project should be continued, perhaps on a smaller scale utilizing at least the first floor. The group will check for some possible large equipment in the area which could be used to knock down the north end with the poor construction.

October 10 – This was the designated day for the ordination of the 16 candidates. The festivities again began with a procession through the village of Yambio. Some 580 people attended the event. My sermon was based on 2 Timothy 1:13,14: "Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. Guard through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you. To be a fit minister, you are called upon to 'guard the treasure.' Of and by yourself this would be impossible, but it has been entrusted to you by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit dwells in you by the power of God's Word.



Be faithful in guarding this treasure that many are trying to take from you. Guard the treasure of His Word as you serve in every aspect of your ministry.”

The ordination rite was performed by Rev. Japhet Dachi and Rev. Edward Nzeme. Dr. Lutz presented each candidate with a stole, and I provided the pectoral cross. There were other gifts to be given but things became somewhat chaotic, and it was decided to give the rest of the gifts after the service ended. Those gifts included baptismal napkins, communion wafers, Mexican crosses, plastic crosses for children and wives received LHF tote bags. A dinner followed the service. The service and festivities lasted for seven hours.

At the end of the ordination service Rev. Japhet Dachi presented a resolution from the ELCS:

BE IT KNOWN EVERYWHERE:

WHEREAS God so loved the world that He gave His Only Begotten Son to redeem sinners, and

WHEREAS all who hear and believe this saving truth are forgiven and promised eternal life, and

WHEREAS God has commanded His children to bring the teaching of justification by faith to all nations, and

WHEREAS the Lutheran Heritage Foundation and the capable leadership of Rev. Dr. Robert Rahn has provided a means to share the Gospel with the lost, and

WHEREAS the Holy Spirit has richly blessed the hearing of God’s Word in East Africa, and

WHEREAS the ELCS has grown to be a large church body of believers with pastors, churches, and a seminary to train and equip leaders to spread the Good News, and

WHEREAS Rev. Dr. Robert Rahn has personally used time and money to fulfill the Great Commission in East Africa, and

WHEREAS Rev. Rahn has worked long and hard to find professors to teach the curriculum courses required for the reception of a Diploma of Excellence,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the ELCS together with clergy and laity stand and clap their hands giving thanks to God for His faithfulness and dedication in helping the ELCS.

October 11 – An all-day meeting was held to discuss a new structure that I proposed in anticipation of the election of a new bishop. Everyone

was given an opportunity to speak about the proposed structure that would have Dachi serve as interim president and that a lay treasurer be elected to assist Edward in dealing with the money matters. It was explained that Dachi would be a good choice, since he would have no ambitions for the office for which he was ineligible, coming to Sudan as a guest from Kenya. When the vote was taken, 38 voted in favor of the proposed structure and 17 voted against. Dachi encouraged participants to join hands and work in serving the Lord. "I thank you for the privilege to serve with you. If I have offended anyone I ask for forgiveness, and I offer forgiveness to those who have given any offense. The White and Blue Nile join and become one river, let us join hands and become a big ELCS. May the Lord strengthen us together as we help one another." This was followed with discussion on the idea of a Council of Advisers, and these were voted on from each deanery. An assistant treasurer was also elected to serve with Edward.

October 12 – At the 7 a.m. devotion, we held an installation for Dachi as interim president and left for the airport, while the delegates continued a program of working on the constitution. As it turned out, there was one delay after another with the plane arriving, and finally it was too late to reach Entebbe in day light so the plane had to be parked in Yambio overnight for a morning departure. All of the commotion had to do with bad weather in Entebbe, our destination.

October 13 – While we were having lunch in Entebbe, Dachi informed us of the first problem he had to deal with that took until 3 a.m. to resolve. It seems the Malakal Deanery demanded a new dean, and this became a point of contention. All parties met together and they finally agreed to have one of the new graduates serve as their dean. I congratulated him on successfully resolving his first problem as interim president of the ELCS.

October 14 – We arrived here in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to release the *Book of Concord* in the native language of Amharic. Dereje Tilahun and Daniel Turago were the leaders of the LHF translation team in Ethiopia. They had arranged for the release of the *Book of Concord* and for a meeting with leaders of this large church body, Mekene Jesus. We met the president, Rev. Dr. Wakseyoum Idosa, and the general secretary, Rev. Dr. Berhanu Ofzaa, and learned some of the church history of this body. It has 7,000 congregations and 5.5 million members with 2,250 pastors. There are 45 congregations in Addis Ababa, and is structured to have three executive committee meetings each year, and a council meeting once a year with some representation from congregations. There is a convention every four years with 600 in attendance. The church operates a number of regional seminaries and Bible schools and has 200 students at the main seminary that are the

cream of the crop coming from those regional schools.

Another Lutheran body in Ethiopia is the Lutheran Church in Ethiopia with 21,000 members in 150 congregations and 46 pastors. They celebrated their 50th anniversary in 2009. This group promoted the idea that “Lutheran” should be in the name of the church. When it was brought to a vote the idea was defeated, so they formed their own conservative church body.

October 10 – Thanks for Zulu Work/Tribute to Supporting Congregations

We can serve two purposes in connection with this date, on which we released *Dogmatics 2* in Zulu, which featured the topic “Teaching Lutheran doctrine together with Franz Pieper, a series of five volumes explained further later.” When this work was completed, Dr. Wilhelm Weber, Sr., LHF project director for Setswana and Zulu translation work, wrote a letter of thanks to St. Luke Lutheran Church, Clinton Township, Michigan, which had sponsored the publishing of the work.

As a quote at length from Dr. Weber’s letter, I wish to let this letter convey a special word of thanks to the many congregations who have joined us to sponsor numerous published titles. The list would be too long to record, and the danger would be to overlook key congregations that have stood with us. In reviewing a computerized listing of supporting congregations, we can verify that there are over 65 congregations that have supported the LHF mission anywhere from eight to 15 consecutive years (fifteen is the number of years that we have the computer capacity to generate such a report). Many of these congregations have chosen to sponsor one of our books in whole or in part. We deeply appreciate the increased activity we are seeing in the sponsorship of books. We thank all of you. Here, Dr. Weber speaks a word of thanks on his and our behalf:

“To all sponsors of the LHF, and especially today dear fellow Christians of the St. Luke Lutheran Church, Clinton Township, Michigan, whose contribution funded the publication of the volume of *Dogmatics 2* in Zulu,

“May I start this letter of appreciation and gratitude by praising our Lord and Savior for miracles He is still performing today. There is an old man living in Africa. He grew up as a missionary’s son and became himself a missionary, and the Lord cared for him and his large family of nine children, and their families according to the truth which we confess as pupils of *Luther’s Small Catechism*, that He ‘provides daily and abundantly with all the necessities of life’ by motivating Lutheran churches, congregations, and individual Christians in Germany and in America to support foreign missionary work that men whom they do not know personally can do their work for decades never to be forced to work for money, but to be free to learn foreign languages and then to serve as pastors in Lutheran congregations, or as teachers at

a Lutheran theological seminary, and even in retirement to publish the Lutheran confessions, Lutheran sermons, and their Lutheran theological lectures that their former students and even interested congregants can read genuine Lutheran doctrine in their mother tongue.

“If fellow Christians in Europe or America help to support and sponsor missionary work in Africa, it still happens today what St. Paul promised the Corinthians as a fruit of giving money for fellow Christians in need when he writes, ‘This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God’s people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you because of the surpassing grace God has given you. Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift.’ 2 Cor. 9:12-15

“Thank you very much that you helped so graciously to enable me to bring the indescribably gift of God in their language to Zulu, and certainly also to Tswana, who understand Zulu. The contents of *Dogmatics 2* in Zulu is focusing on the saving grace and saving faith, the Lutheran doctrine of conversion and justification through faith in Jesus Christ, with special emphasis on who Christ is and what he has done for us according to the Word of God, the Lutheran confessions, and what good Lutheran teachers have taught.”

I believe Dr. Weber, a fellow LHF global worker, stated our thanks very well in a great summary way. Thank you, Dr. Weber, for faithful service and for your words of commendation to all supporting congregations and individuals.

October 15-18 – Visited in Nairobi in a new era now that Dr. Anssi Simojoki had retired from the position as vice president for Africa, and Rev. James May had been called to assume that position. In view of the economic downturn taking place in America, we were finding it necessary to make some adjustments in commitments at home and abroad. This would include a suggestion that the center in Karen might no longer be able to be retained. It was a complex that served us so well and helped bolster Lutheranism throughout East Africa because of our books and the seminars held to introduce those books. In some minds this was interpreted as closing down our work in Africa, when in fact we were asking if another smaller location might reduce our expenses. Rev. May felt that if he resigned his position, funds saved could be made available for keeping our presence in Karen. A new organization called Lutherans In Africa was formed. It could serve as a fundraising arm to support May’s family and some of the program.

All of this was a cloud that surrounded my arrival on this occasion, and we gathered around a table and discussed our options and plans. It was not an easy meeting but one in which we tried to work out some kind of solution. We found an arrangement that worked out well, even though at the time we weren't sure about it. We asked Rev. May to serve as our representative in the area of translation, publishing, distribution, and introduction. He quickly and capably brought all of our projects under his leadership and brought several large projects to completion.

As it turned out there was another element that torpedoed May's efforts. I boil it down to the basic fact that our books and materials were highly desired by the majority of the ELCK, but somehow we made the wrong turn with the ELCK leadership and controversy ensued. I'll not try to analyze and evaluate the situation, but I believe it will be a higher court that does that. I'm sure Rev. May could also do the same, but he has already paid a price to which I will not contribute. It is another part of the history that will be sealed for the next 25 years, which by then may have eliminated any need for revelation.

October 19, 20 – These were two days spent in Tanzania conducting seminars on the Swahili catechism and the *Good News* magazine. I was accompanied on the trip by Rev. Samuel Atunga, LHF distribution director for Tanzania. It was also the occasion when I visited with Rev. Ambele Mwaipopo, secretary general for mission and evangelism, and an acting bishop of a diocese. My purpose in meeting with him was that he was part of the Swahili hymnal project that LHF was attempting to bring to a conclusion and have the hymnal in print. There had been delays that have lasted over a year, and we were doing everything we could to get it off dead center.

One of the Lutheran churches I visited was Bishop Laiser's in Arusha. The church has a membership of 10,000 and they have four services each Sunday with seating for 1,500. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania is similar in size to Ethiopia with over five million members.

Pastors told me that they regret that the hymnal isn't published to be distributed in 20 dioceses with 2,000 pastors. At confirmation, it is a tradition for the confirmand to receive three books: a Bible, catechism and hymnal. Now they are getting a praise hymnal that has Pentecostal roots, and this is a shame.

On our way to Kibaoni Lutheran Church, the site of one of our seminars, we stopped at a large Lutheran congregation in Akeri. On their grounds was the burial site of two early missionaries who brought Lutheranism to the area. We were surprised to see the date on the headstone as being the same as the month and day we were standing there.

It was reported to us that a month earlier the ELCT informed the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America that they would no longer partner with them because of their position on homosexuality and marriage. There were 2,500 people who attended the meeting in which this decision was made.

We got to Kilimanjaro Airport in plenty of time for our flight but we discovered we were at the wrong airport. Our flight was from Arusha. After some interesting back road travel that was to have been a shortcut, we got to the rather spartan airport. There was a report the plane was full. Rev. Atunga, no stranger to inconvenience, put up enough objections in order to get the seat. The plane was not full after all.

2011

January 14-March 6 – Rev. Ted NaThalang took an extended trip to review work LHF had going on in Thailand, Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam. He wrote about visiting the new capital city of Myanmar, “This is the first time for me to go out of Yangon. The new capital city is well planned and looks very modern. But it is sad that the government does not allow a new church to be built. The only thing I see is the big Buddhist pagoda. There are few Christians. They will have to worship in their homes quietly.”

Ted was invited to come to the Philippines and meet with President James. The Philippines is unique in that English is the main language. There are, however, five major local dialects: Tagalog, Hocano, Cebuano, Kankaey, and Kalanguya, President James asked if the LHF could help translate and publish *Luther's Small Catechism* into the five dialects. We suggested that the enchiridion be done first.

March 23 – On this date we received a progress report on the Swahili hymnal being prepared under the direction of Bishop Dr. O.M. Mdegella of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, Arusha, Tanzania. In this connection, here are specific challenges and opposition to translation work.

Challenges and Opposition in Translation Work

A new element was introduced when Bishop Mdegella was attempting to complete a new edition of the Swahili hymnal for a church body with over 5 million members. While we were exerting more and more pressure for this overdue book to be sent to the printer, it was discovered that in the final review that “some people invaded the book and put some theological terms into it that were very liberal. Our meeting was held to review it again and remove some things that had been inserted in a very clever manner and would not be detected except by careful reading.”

Bishop Mdegella said, “We had to make efforts to avoid theological secularization. All sections that would encourage homosexual inclinations had to be revised in order not to allow any loopholes that would condone that. We had to avoid anything that would encourage secularization. This also required the church to form a special theological committee to go through the whole liturgy once again.”

Copyrights

This is an appropriate place to make a few comments on the whole matter of copyright policy. The LHF, through Jeff Rahn’s close scrutiny of all copyright issues, has been free of any copyright infringements. Since many of the books published are under the domain of CPH, Jeff has worked closely with Mr. Jonathan Schulz, CPH vice president and corporate counsel. This close working relationship has meant regular meetings over the years with Rev. Dr. Paul McCain, CPH publisher, and Dr. Bruce Kintz, CPH president and CEO. Entering as we have into a new technological age with regard to publishing, with the advent of the Internet and other new diverse avenues of publishing, more discussion is taking place with regard to copyright issues as it relates to electronic publishing.

Shipping and Handling

In following the previously-stated line of challenges, one could also bring in the challenge of shipping and handling that one has to deal with. When the *Spanish Bible with Small Catechism* was printed, we used the savvy of the American Bible Society. We discovered that it was definitely needed as there are always “entrepreneurial souls” trying to bilk you out of money. In a shipment to Paraguay, there were efforts made by dock handlers or custom agents to hold the shipment until certain funds were provided. Having a contract that called for shipping from “door to door,” we knew there should be no “middle men,” so we contacted our shippers and they expedited the shipment after several months of delays.

Dr. Douglas Rutt, our Spanish catechism consultant, wrote, “The Bibles have arrived in Paraguay. Apologies are given for the shipping company in Paraguay that openly tried to squeeze more money out of the recipients. Due to our intervention, they did not have to pay anything. So the Bibles are safe and sound in Paraguay. LHF is complimented for the hardcover version, which we did not have last time. They thank everyone and will make good use of the Bible.”

Print on Demand

Close on the heels of copyright technicalities, we could discuss the new concept of “print-on-demand.” This is starting to come into play with regard to books published in foreign countries with a demand for copies in the U.S. Because of the cost of overseas shipping, we are finding it less expensive to use this new concept of print-on-demand. It means a more intent effort to make sure all translations are put in a proper format, so that the Internet can be used to send specific texts to print-on-demand companies for printing copies (large or small runs) for use among immigrant populations in the U.S. This is a technology that LHF is only beginning to utilize on a regular basis.

In a sense we have also moved away from the actual publishing of books. We started our work in Russia. It is in Russia where we have moved more into putting translated works out for Internet access. Under the capable direction of Mr. Konstantin Komarov, a number of new ideas are being tested with the use of the Internet. We have a backlog of translated materials in Russian, and instead of waiting for them to be published in book form, we can give out portions or all of a book prior to actual publishing.

This will be the process in all fields as we go along, and as the prognosticators predict the demise of actual books in favor of things like the Kindle, iPad, and whatever other inventions are used. We believe, however, there will always be those who want “the feel of an actual book and the physical evidence on their shelves.” We do, however, have to keep up with technology.

March 28 – A report was received from Rev. James May, LHF Africa, reporting on a seminar he taught in Rwanda and the usual urgent appeal for more pastoral training on the *Small Catechism*.

“I want to give an update on Rwanda. The conference was well received. At the main church in Kigali they do have the *Small Catechism* (enchiridion) and *Freedom of a Christian* in Kinyarwanda on display and available, but the pastors did admit no one has ever taught the *Small Catechism* in the congregations. I did an inventory encouragement quiz and, as in Luther’s time, found that some of the pastors did not even know the Ten Commandments. On the other hand, as the conference went on, they realized how teaching the catechism answered many questions that they and their members have. There were so many questions, in fact, that we were only able to get through the Ten Commandments.

“Like Western Kenya, the Seventh Day Adventists are a fast growing church. People in Africa have a greater respect for the Decalogue than Westerners do. Therefore we spent a lot of time on the true meaning of the

third commandment and the Sabbath Day, as well as many other laws. They also seem to have problems on the use of the law, as well as making the distinction between law and gospel. But with teaching, it started to sink in but will take time.

“I have been invited back for the installation of the new bishop, Rev. Evalister Mugabo. Both he and current Bishop Kalisa attended and took many notes. Bishop-elect Mugabo also asked that I continue training the pastors on how to teach the creed, the second part of the *Small Catechism*. He will also encourage Rev. Sarambuye and others to work on the translation of the complete catechism. I mentioned there is nothing in the budget for this year, but that if they could get it done and implemented that most likely a way would be made to publish it.”

March 31 – Rev. Nicholas Salifu, LHF translator, Bawku, Ghana, West Africa, wrote in his monthly newsletter, “The sermon preparations are also going on well. The greatest weakness is the leaders who cannot read English, cannot use commentaries or concordance. However, notes in class, personal experiences and the Kusaal *Luther’s Small Catechism* are strengths in the sermon preparation. It is heartwarming to see how people are patronizing the Kusaal *Small Catechisms*. Several distribution centers have been created and interested people have access to the books. It seems our shelves are two-thirds empty. We have encouraged people to form study groups to read the catechism. All our churches read portions of the catechism every Sunday.”

April 18 – Messages were received from Rev. Kelvin Li, Hong Kong, and Phillip Dahoud, our Somali translator, indicating they have been hospitalized and recovering from various ailments.

Life is Fragile

The reports of sickness and hospitalization remind us as to how fragile life is. During the short 20 years of LHF history, we have seen a number of church leaders called home. We have reported on the sudden departure of Bishop Andrew Mbugo Elisa, and as we look back we also remember others who once were part of our team and now called to life everlasting.

This involved two bishops of the same church body. Both Bishops Jonas Kalvanas Sr. and Jr., of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Lithuania, were called home over a period of time from January 6, 1993 to 2004, when Mindaugas Sabutis was elected bishop. In Estonia we had early contact with Rev. Kuno Pajula and Jean Kiivit of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Estonia. Our early history in Russia brought us into contact with Bishop Kalnins of the ELCROS (Evangelical Lutheran Church of Russia and Other States) who had his office in Riga, Latvia. These were the German Lutherans

of Russia, as compared to the Ingrian Lutheran Church made up of Finns. Bishop Bomani, Mwanza region of Tanzania, died when a church wall under construction fell on him. In the U.S., we experienced the homegoing of the president of the LCMS, Rev. Dr. Al Barry, who was a staunch supporter of the LHF mission efforts.

Other leaders in various church bodies were called home during this time, including Rev. John Sundaram, LHF India coordinator; Rev. Ranjith Fernando, LHF Sri Lanka coordinator; Rev. Dr. Robert Preus, LHF board chairman; Rev. Kurt Marquart, LHF board chairman; Rev. Roberts Feldmanis, Latvian pastor, head of missions, who was imprisoned during the Soviet era and who is the father of confessional Lutheranism because of his personal mentoring of young pastors following the Soviet era.

April 29 – Rev. Ted NaThalang provided a complete summary and critique of our work in Japan that started with the publishing of Luther's *Small Catechism* enchiridion back in 1995. The language of *Luther's Small Catechism* is very old and difficult to understand and similar to the text in the *Book of Concord* that was printed in 1981. A Rev. Jun agreed to work with Rev. Masaki to complete a total revision of the catechism and print it in a pocket size edition. Later on, the entire catechism will be translated and published. The work in Japan is very slow and tedious and sometimes frustrating.

May 5-21 – Rev. Fandrey journeyed to Eastern Europe and France to meet with translators and distribution directors to review work accomplished and to plan new work in harmony with the budget. It was the first time a personal visit was held between LHF and Dr. Wilbert Kreiss, who has for many years served as our French specialist. The meeting was to discuss the many works authored by Dr. Kreiss and how we might produce these manuscripts in published form.

July 15 – Report from Rev. Nicholas Salifu in Ghana where the Kusaal catechism was released by the LHF and introduced. Rev. Salifu used the catechism to prepare 32 members of the Narentengnoog congregation. He is also involved in making an audio recording of the Kusaal catechism. A *Child's Garden of Bible Stories* is nearing completion in the Kusaal. Work is also going on to complete the Kusaal *Lutheran Service Manual*, which will serve as the standard book for worship in all churches in the Kusasi area. Issues such as lightening, drowning, snake bite deaths, traditional marriage blessing, and many other topics will be addressed in the book.

August 14 – Rev. Nicholas Salifu was ordained by Bishop Kofi Fynn of the Ghana Evangelical Lutheran Church. Nicholas received training at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri, and while there he worked with LHF to complete the Kusaal catechism.

August 24 – Report from Rev. Ted NaThalang, LHF SE Asia coordinator:

“The Chinese *Small Catechism* is almost ready for printing now that we checked the files once again yesterday and made the final corrections. I will ask David to prepare the PDF files for each one of them and send them to LHF if you would like to print them on print-on-demand.

“The Chinese *Small Catechism* should be done before I go back, so I hope to bring some back with me.

“I also would like to ship the Chinese and other books to the United States right away.

“The Vietnamese *Child’s Garden of Bible Stories* file has been corrected by the staff in Bangkok and will be sent to Vietnam with Rev. Jeff Ehlers when he goes there. It should also be ready for printing. I don’t need to go to Vietnam during this trip.

“I will go to Burma today, and I hope that the Burmese *Child’s Garden* will be ready also. At the same time, I will see if the Burmese *Augsburg Confession* is ready for printing. Thomas will be going back to Burma in September. He will start translating the *Summary of Christian Doctrine*. He will be our Lutheran ‘man’ in Burma, teaching and introducing our books. I hope also to finish editing the Thai *Augsburg Confession*, as there seems to be many mistakes in the translation.

“David has finished the layout of the Japanese *Small Catechism*, but I have not yet gone through it.

“Please keep me and the LHF ministry in Asia in your prayers. Thank you.”

August 28 – An article from Rev. Leif Camp’s Russia newsletter:

Books, Lutheran Heritage, and Birthday Presents

Psalms 119:105 “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”

When God called me to Russia as a volunteer back in 1995, some of the tools we had to help spread the Gospel were books translated and published by Lutheran Heritage Foundation and *Good News Journals*. When I returned to Russia as a missionary-pastor in 2000, we still had fairly good access to these books, but already in 2003 after the mission budget cuts, those books and journals were very hard to get for the Ingrian Lutheran Church, even though there were new books and journals being regularly translated. A year and a half ago, I did manage to get a supply of the Russian edition of *Good News Journals*, which I consider a great blessing and tool for spreading the Gospel. I since have tried to see if I can’t get access to Lutheran Heritage books, which I consider another valuable resource.

About a month ago I received an email from someone connected with Lutheran Heritage Foundation, inviting me to order as soon as possible what

books I might need. Because of their budget difficulties, they were closing their warehouses in Russia. I quickly sent back my order – send me all the books you can spare. Their reply was cautious – did I really want about 200 cubic meters of books! I said, “Yes.” Why? Because I trusted that God would open doors, as I see these books are a great resource for the church, especially for educating leaders and laity. I began asking various Ingrian pastors if they had space where they could store large quantities of books. The process was put in high gear when I was informed that the warehouse in Ekaterinburg was closing by July 31 and needed to ship immediately. God did open doors. The parish in Turyo agreed to take the first shipment of about 50 cubic meters of books. I spent a day with several men from the parish organizing and clearing out warehouse space. Konstantin Komarov, who represents LHF in Russia and Eastern Europe, came to visit July 28 through the 30th, and the first shipment of books will arrive Monday or Tuesday, so that will be news for next month. Every Ingrian pastor I have talked to is excited and looking forward to getting these resources for their parish. The rector of the Ingrian Seminary is looking forward to getting these materials for the seminary. I thank God for the doors that are opening and pray He will guide us in using this gift wisely and for the strengthening and spreading of the faith!

August 31 – Rev. Walter Otten, LHF board chairman, and Rev. Fandrey traveled to St. Louis to meet with synod president, Rev. Matthew Harrison, and members of the executive staff. Rev. Harrison lauded the work and impact of LHF globally as one of the largest Recognized Service Organizations of the synod. This was a time to review our status as an RSO and discuss mutual concerns as we move forward. The relationship with Rev. May and the organization, Lutherans in Africa, was discussed in the context of church relations and protocols the synod has with churches with whom we have partnership agreements.

September 8 – Greetings from Phnom Penh. Below is an LHF project update as filed by Rev. Ted NaThalang, LHF Southeast Asia coordinator.

- 1) Chinese *Luther's Small Catechism* – pocket edition, is finished printing.
 - Chinese only edition, is being printed, may be finished by Sept. 20.
 - Chinese/English edition, is being printed, may be finished by Sept. 20.
- 2) Khmer *Augsburg Confession* – finished printing.
- 3) Papau New Guinea books – getting them ready for shipping soon.

- 4) Burmese *Child's Garden* – PDF file is ready for printing in Burma.
- 5) Vietnam *Child's Garden* is finished editing in Bangkok, will send to Vietnam September 11 with Rev. Jeff Ehlers.
- 6) Khmer *Hymnal* – 50 hymns have been translated, it should be ready for printing by September 30
– hope to print in October, if have copyright permissions.
- 7) Japanese LSC, pocket edition – Pastor Jun was able to have it done up to Baptism. He is not able to finish it; I have to find another person to finish it.
- 8) Kusaal *Child's Garden* – being edited, found some missing parts.
Should be ready for printing Sept. 30
- 9) Thai LSC is out of stock – being edited for next printing, should be ready in Nov.
- 10) Khmer LSC is out of print – being edited for next printing, should be ready in November.
- 11) Thai *Bible Stories in Pictures* is out of print.
- 12) Rev. Mangisi would like to launch *Luther on Worship* and *The Way of the Cross* in early November, but I told him that is not a good time for me. He is still editing his book for printing.

Another thing I forgot to mention is that I was able to speak to Lutherans in Southeast Asia (LISA) students, 33 of them, about 14 are women in the deaconess program. One young man is 70 years old, and the youngest is 20. They are coming to us for good Lutheran teaching and books. This is the result of the LHF *Small Catechism* in Khmer that we first printed in 2004. What a story to tell how God can use a little book to plant Lutheran churches! The amazing thing is that their president is only 28 years old, with 15 pastors and 34 churches, and still growing as a church body. About 17 people that came to LISA class this time are not members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Cambodia (ELCC). They have come to know LISA and ELCC through word of mouth and through the Lutheran Hour Ministry. It is exciting to see how they grow, not of money or power, but by the Holy Spirit working through the Word.

September 14 – Jen Bagnall asked for my response to some questions as a background for an article she was writing for the LHF newsletter. Here are my responses to her posed questions:

Hello, Rev. Rahn. I'm writing an article for the next newsletter about your 50th celebration. Would you have time to answer a few questions for me? (Yes, I know the basic answers for many of these questions, but I think our readers would better enjoy reading your words on these topics rather than mine!)

1. When you graduated from seminary (back in the Stone Age, ha!), what did you imagine your ministry would be like? Did you ever think things would turn out as they have?

From the beginning things weren't exactly going according to my plans. My effort to join the chaplaincy was denied. I think the Navy had exceeded demand and simply denied my application because of a "heart murmur" that hasn't appeared again in 50 years. I had also indicated an interest in foreign missions, and I didn't agree that an Indian reservation in Montana was foreign missions. But it was a pleasant preparation on what the Lord had in store.

2. What about the ministry is different now, compared to when you were first ordained? What has stayed the same?

Absolutely different. Starting a new mission in Missoula, Montana, had me on the street making calls morning, noon and night and finding people at home. Today an appointment would be necessary to find someone home. Who remembers Wednesday night being designated by communities as church night? What hasn't changed is the need of a Savior to rescue and redeem sinners. And the use of the term "sin" has definitely changed as worship at the altar of tolerance increases.

3. Briefly, how did the Lutheran Heritage Foundation come to be?

The full story will be told in a soon-to-be released book titled JESUS NEVER FAILS. I made several trips to Russia and saw the interest in learning English as a second language. As a pastor out of work at the age of 55, Calls were not too plentiful. With the wall coming down in Russia, would this be a time to help restore Lutheranism in a country where it once was dominant? Would it be helpful to provide the Lutheran books and materials that were destroyed during the Communist era? A phone call to prominent church leaders provided encouragement and we launched the Lutheran Heritage Foundation.

4. I imagine those first few years with LHF were pretty lean ones. Why did you stick with it? Why is the work of LHF so important?

The organization had as its official start date November 10, 1992, and I told the LHF board that I would take my first paycheck when I knew LHF was a viable organization. My first paycheck came in March 1993. Russia was the only place we decided to go, and today we are in 80 countries by invitation. As others heard about our work, the “Macedonian calls” kept coming and this encouraged us to keep on in the face of challenges. When we look at our bookshelves and see them overflowing, and then visit the huts in places like Sudan, or visit seminary libraries in Latvia, India, and Ukraine with shelves empty, you realize the importance of getting basic Lutheran books published in their languages.

5. What moments stand out to you as the highlights of your ministry at LHF?

There are many. One event, however, remains vivid in my mind. We were in India and distributed *One Hundred Bible Stories* for children. The church was filled and the children had to sit on the floor at the foot of the chancel steps. Copies were first given to pastors and teachers, and then each child received their individual copy. I was struck by the picture I saw – all children sitting quietly and intently reading the book. If this is the result of our work, it certainly reflects a positive picture. Each time I view our LHF video and see the Cambodian girl in the picture gazing at our activity with deep interest, I am seeing anew the need for our work: men, women, and children introduced to Christ through the printed page. I’m then reminded of the thousands who make this ministry possible by their active support.

6. What are your plans for the next few decades/half-centuries?

I suppose this exposes my philosophy of work and retirement. Many think I’m retired, now that the LHF reins have been handed to Rev. Fandrey. I’m going to keep working and thereby be free of any boredom and emptiness that many retirees feel after work ceases. As long as the Lord provides health, I will be spending my remaining years in serving the Lord.

7. Anything else you might want to add?

I thank God for having given me this open door and the words of Revelation 3:7: “He who is holy, who is true, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, and who shuts and no one opens.” God has opened many

doors, and even though there are those who attempt to shut those doors, God keeps them open. While the doors are open, it is time to enter.

September 28 – Rev. Ted NaThalang reported on his trip to Southeast Asia from August 18 to September 20. He announced that three Chinese editions of *Luther's Small Catechism* are now complete: the Enchiridion pocket edition, the full edition, and a side by side Chinese/English edition. Those involved in the completion of the catechism include Rev. Jason Xiaoyu Li, Holy Trinity, Hacienda Heights, California; Rev. Chris Xinhong Yang, St. Paul, Falls Church, Virginia; Rev. Kelvin Li, Hong Kong; Rev. Michael Paul, Taiwan; Sunny Kan, Taiwan; and Linei Sui, PhD student at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri. The project was truly international in scope. This was believed to be a much-improved edition over the first one released.

Also completed were books for Papua New Guinea, including a simplified English edition of the *Luther's Small Catechism*, the catechism in Tok Pisin, *The Statement of Faith* in Tok Pisin, and a side-by-side edition of *The Statement of Faith* in English/Tok Pisin. He reported also that a number of other books would be completed by the end of 2011, including the *Augsburg Confession* in Myanmar, the *Child's Garden of Bible Stories* in Kusaal, *Luther's Small Catechism* in a number of Thai tribal dialects, *Luther on Worship* and *Luther on the Two Kingdoms*, the *Khmer Hymnal*, and *The Way of the Cross* in the Bahasa language of Indonesia. The Vietnamese *Augsburg Confession* has been completed. In the Khmer language of Cambodia, we have *Luther's Small Catechism* being reprinted. Another out-of-stock volume reprinted is the Thai catechism. The Khmer *Large Catechism* is in the final stage of review.

Rev. NaThalang indicated that the Karen *Luther's Small Catechism* (enchiridion) was in the final stages of editing. It would have been completed, but the editor pastor had to visit his congregations in the hill country of Thailand, an area that borders Laos, Burma and China. It is in this region where Karen is the spoken language. This edition is being awaited by pastors who are ministering to Karen people in Guymon, Oklahoma, and Mequon, Wisconsin.

Rev. NaThalang reported that the Cambodian Lutheran Church now has 25 congregations, 2,000 members, and 15 pastors. There are probably more non-Lutherans than Lutherans using *Luther's Small Catechism* throughout Cambodia.

Throughout this book you have been reading about the far-reaching impact these books had on people all over the world, not forgetting the growing need we are experiencing among the many immigrants coming to the United States. More and more pastors are evangelizing using the books

published initially for use overseas. We are more and more aware of the need for missionaries in Word and Sacrament ministries where our books can be utilized. The books and materials provided by the LHF cannot be minimized as Rev. NaThalang states, “Missionaries come and go all the time, but the books will remain for generations to come.”

October 3 – We asked Rev. Dr. Wallace Schulz, LHF evangelist and executive editor of the *Good News Journal*, to give us a report on his current project. He wrote, “This is in response to your email of September 28, 2011, telling me you are finishing your book and you would like an update on the current issue being worked on. We are preparing Issue #39, titled ‘Definitions.’ In his introduction to the book of Romans, and in other places, Luther urges us to study and know the definitions of the basic doctrines of the Bible, including ‘word, covenant, justification, sanctification, Law, and Baptism.’ And, if we do not know these basic and key words used repeatedly in the Scriptures, we will not understand what God is saying to us. In his recent book *The New Doublespeak*, Rutgers University professor William Lutz reminds us that the 500 most often-used words in the English language have 14,000 different meanings. This shows why we have to be sure we define our words carefully and that those we speak to are using the same definition. Otherwise we will talk past each other. There is a lot of talking past each other in today’s cultural religion. Different church denominations use the same word with different meanings. We need to get back to the Scriptural meanings.

“Again and again, we have found that *Good News*, which is a basic catechetical tool, illustrated, is often a lead-in or, the initial step toward deeper teaching in the books printed by LHF in many languages. People need to start somewhere with the basics. *Good News* provides this ‘entry-level’ opportunity. The *Good News* magazine works hand-in-glove with these heavier theological works. What we are doing is not new. *Luther’s Small Catechism* was also heavily illustrated.”

October 10 – The LHF office functions in diverse ways. It is from our Macomb office that the faculty for the Concordia Lutheran Institute for the Holy Ministry in Yambio, Sudan, is recruited. Here is a message that went out from our office in preparation for the new school year starting in January 2012.

Information Sheet for Teaching in Sudan
October 10, 2011

Dear Brother,

You are receiving this as a past, present, future, or potential candidate for a short teaching (or longer if you desire) stint at the Concordia Lutheran Institute for the Holy Ministry established for the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Sudan.

This program was first established in Khartoum and has now moved, along with all ELCS offices, to the South. We have facilities in Yambio, about 150 miles from Juba, and in Baguga, six miles from Yambio.

Should you choose to accept the opportunity, it would be a very challenging one, although conditions are much improved from what they were ten years ago, or even last year. The first seminary graduated a class of about 10 students and the second class of 16 was ordained in 2010. They are now serving throughout Sudan as part of a 25-member clergy roster with around 100 congregations and some 15,000 members. There are also trained evangelists, deacons, and deaconesses helping the clergy.

We are looking for people to volunteer for teaching stints starting January 16, 2012. Sessions will be held in 2012, 2013, and 2015 with a year of vicarage in 2014. The priority is to fill slots for 2012 and then move into the years beyond.

EXPECTATIONS

In order to carry out this volunteer program we have asked that participants generate support for their own air fare, which would be around \$3,000 but it could go higher. If you are unable to generate the amount, there might be some assistance from LHF, although we are paying for all meals and lodging while you are teaching.

You would be expected to teach for two or three weeks, and longer if you desire or can work it out. We expect an enrollment of 25 students or more. If you can take for each student a book or syllabus from which you are teaching it would be helpful. We do get a 20 percent discount from CPH. If you can't find funds for the books, LHF can supplement.

CONDITIONS

Conditions are primitive but improving. The toilets and showers have been outdoor types. Water is heated in a 50 gallon drum and parceled out for showers. Toilets, unless the new system has become operative, are holes

in the floor and require you to be able to squat.

English is the language. Students are expected to know English. Rob Lutz has taught remedial English and will do so again to make sure they understand the language correctly.

Meals are generally good, prepared by our regular kitchen staff. Hopefully you can stomach a lot of rice, sometimes mixed with beef, chicken or goat. No dog or horse meat. That's the basic fare and it is supplemented with bread, kasava, yams, and seasonal pineapple and mango. No salads or lettuce or cabbage.

Travel in is generally by charter, landing on gravel runways. Roads have been improved from their atrocious conditions of the past. An attempt is being made to install electricity and that might happen during the course of the year. A generator provides the lighting for a few hours in the evening. Generally the compound has a 24-hour guard and the compound is fenced, mostly to keep cows from roaming through the area.

Clothing is laundered by the staff, so super-filled suitcases need not be brought. Your luggage weight is limited and there is a charge for overweight bags. Something like 25 pounds is the limit. We do cheat a little bit on that because we generally have books to take in. It is worth paying excess weight charges to carry those much needed books for the library which has been established.

As you look at the curriculum, keep in mind that your field of interest may not coincide with the dates you could go. Be aware that we can make some accommodations to fit you in. It may mean that a subject listed for a certain year is changed. The main thing is that we get all subjects covered. Please ask about your topic of interest and expertise. We can possibly insert it.

For the most part, you will be the only teacher and will be in the classroom from five to six hours a day. Local pastors will assist in leading worship as scheduled by the local seminary officials. These officials include Rev. Nicholas Louis, Rev. Edward Nzeme, and Rev. Japhet Dachi.

Among the expenses you will have is the cost of taxi service from Entebbe Airport to Kampala (usually \$50), the cost of overnight lodging (\$25 at a Christian Center, or \$75 Western-style), and \$100 for a visa. We make all arrangements for you to be met at the airport, taken to Kampala, and assisted in getting your visa.

Always carry with you four to six extra passport photos.

MEDICAL

You will be responsible to get the appropriate shots and most of all the malaria pills, as this is a heavy malaria area. Hospital travel centers in the major hospitals or clinics here in the U.S. can tell you which shots and pills

are necessary for that region. There is a small hospital in Yambio to treat simple medical problems. There used to be a medical clinic on wheels that was operated by the ELCS, but that seems to have been discontinued for lack of medical supplies.

Since the death of their former bishop, Rev. Andrew Mbugo Elisa, leadership has been provided by acting presidents/bishops – Rev. Edward Nzeme and Rev. Japhet Dachi. By the time the seminary resumes a new bishop will have been elected. That is taking place on October 16.

CLIHM Required Courses for a four-year seminary curriculum for the years: 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015.

A minimum of 90 semester hours shall be successfully completed, with a 2.0 point average or higher. All assignments must be successfully completed. Each student is required to receive the CLIHM faculty approval to be a candidate recommended for the pastoral ministry of the ELCS.

The CLIHM curriculum is evaluated each time a seminary class is accepted for the preparation for the Holy Ministry. The present seminary curriculum is taught by volunteer instructors who come from Sudan and other countries of the world. Neither the semester nor the quarter system is practical for CLIHM; what seminary students achieve is the equivalent of a M.Div.

YEAR ONE

<i>Semester One – Year One</i>	<i>Professor</i>
4 Dogmatics I & II	Rev. Art Bolstad
3 Introduction to N.T. (Galatians)	Dr. Bernie Lutz
3 Introduction to O.T.	Dr. Bernie Lutz
2 Homiletics I	Dr. Don Nuendorf
2 Remedial English	Mr. Rob Lutz
3 Liturgics and Lutheran Worship	
2 Research and Reference Methods	
3 History of Christianity	Mr. Raijo Arkkila
<hr/>	
22 Semester Credit Hours	

Semester Two – Year One

Professor

4	Dogmatics III	Dr. Anssi Simijoki
3	Law and Gospel	Dr. Bernie Lutz
3	Introduction to N.T. (Ephesians)	Dr. Bernie Lutz
3	Philosophy of Christian Education	
2	Remedial English	Mr. Rob Lutz
2	Teaching <i>Luther's Small Catechism</i>	Rev. James May
2	Introduction to the Old Testament	

19 Semester Credit Hours

YEAR TWO

Semester One – Year Two

3	Dogmatics IV
2	Methods of Christian Education
3	History of Christianity II
3	Luke
2	Introduction to the Computer
3	The Minor Prophets of the OT
2	The Lutheran Liturgy and Church Music
3	Hermeneutics
2	Homiletics II

23 Semester Credit Hours

Semester Two – Year Two

3	Isaiah
2	Evangelism & Church Planting
2	The Lutheran Confessions I
4	Dogmatics V
3	History of Israel
2	Teaching Pastors to Teach
3	Pauline Epistles
3	World Religions
2	History and Theology of Islam

24 Semester credit hours

YEAR THREE – *Internship/Vicarage Year*

YEAR FOUR

Semester One – Year Four

- 3 Dogmatics VI
 - 3 Church Administration
 - 3 Stewardship
 - 3 Romans
 - 2 The Theology of Missions
 - 3 Dogmatics VII
 - 2 Pastoral Counseling
 - 4 Genesis
-

23 Semester Credit Hours

Semester Two – Year Four

- 3 The Gospel of John
 - 2 The Lutheran Confessions II
 - 3 Acts of the Apostle
 - 2 Official Church Rites
 - 3 African Traditional Religions
 - 3 Galatians
 - 3 The Lutheran Reformation
 - 2 Pastoral Theology
 - 3 Lutheranism, Past and Present
 - 2 Christian Apologetics
-

26 Semester Credit Hours

Further Studies

Introduction to Greek

Introduction to Hebrew

The Concordia Lutheran Institute for Holy Ministry also requires each student to participate in assigned Field Work projects. The Field Work program for Year One includes an assignment to local congregations. Emphasis is on leading the Lutheran liturgy and reading of Scripture. The Second Year Field Work program projects include visits to the prisons, hospitals, and other public institutions, and special work with seniors and youth. Preaching assignments will be scheduled after the students have successfully completed Homiletics I. I could point out that homiletics got short shrift and much more is needed in that field.

The way we had the curriculum worked out was that Dogmatics would cover as follows:

- I. The Holy Bible (source, origin, inspiration, attributes, divisions, purposes and use and the Doctrine of God, natural and revealed, essence and attributes of the Triune God.
- II. The Doctrine of Creation, doctrine of angels and man, original, actual sin.
- III. Doctrine of salvation by grace, justification, saving grace, person of Christ, humiliation, exaltation, work of Christ, office of Christ.
- IV. The Doctrine of Sanctification, conversion, faith, justification by faith, sanctification through faith, good works, prayer, Christian life, election
- V. The doctrine of salvation through the Means of Grace, the Gospel, Law and the Gospel, the sacraments, Baptism, the Lord's Supper
- VI. The doctrine of the church, visible church, government of the church. Office of the Keys, power to remit/retain sins, church discipline, office of the ministry, the Antichrist
- VII. The doctrine of the Last Things, temporal death, state of death, Second Coming, millennium, resurrection of the dead, Last Judgment, end of world, eternal damnation, eternal salvation.

LOCATION

A project was started in Baguga to build a two story 60 x 150 building that would have been the complex for the seminary, worship center, classrooms, and church offices, but due to an incompetent construction firm from Nairobi, the building has not been completed. Some of the construction will have to be torn down and the plan now is to have a one-story building, with the seminary located in Yambio. The building will be used as a school, worship center, and offices if we can find the funds to complete it.

Baguga is the location where several years ago there was a Lutheran school with 600 students. Several years ago they lost most of the straw-thatched classrooms because of a fire that swept through the area in the dry season. Some of these have been rebuilt, but eventually there is hope for a brick school structure. Enrollment has declined severely.

While there currently are close to 150 Lutheran churches where there were none 15 years ago, the opportunities are endless. The late Rev. Andrew Mbugo Elisa, ELCS bishop, related to us that one new church could be opened every week, if manpower and money were available. The LHF was instrumental in bringing the church into existence through the publication of

a catechism, *Prayer Book*, and *Hymnal*. We had to establish our own printing operation because printers were unwilling to print Christian materials for fear of reprisals from the Muslim brotherhood. In the move to the South, the printing operation was left behind and is too expensive to move.

These are the things that come to mind when I think of possible questions you might have. If there are other questions, please ask and we will add it to our Information Sheet.

For the most part, you will be teaching up to six hours a day. Not too much homework can be assigned as there is no electricity and evening lights are dim.

Please prayerfully consider a stint of teaching for the ELCS. You will be the one benefitting the most.

I hope the information provided is helpful for you in making a decision.

R. Rahn

CLIHM Program Director

October 16 – Rev. Fandrey and I visited Yambio, Sudan to participate in the installation of the new Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sudan bishop. Prior to the induction service, a church convention was held in order to ratify a constitution and vote to fill the bishop's office.

This is an article I wrote to summarize our activities in Sudan.

Isaiah 55:11 Return on Word is Full

The promise is from the Lord – MY WORD SHALL NOT RETURN EMPTY. There is evidence everywhere in Sudan that the Word is accomplishing its purpose.

It may have been a slow return, but the ELCS-SS now has its constitution. It is the first time the official language of the church includes the "SS" designation. It was explained that the ELCS would refer to Sudan a nation now of the North, but it is a church that serves the South nation as well. So the designation ELCS-SS makes it a church for both nations that were just formed and officially started on July 1, 2011.

The designation was first recorded officially within the constitution. The first triennial convention of the ELCS-SS took place from October 10-14. After passing their constitution, the next order of business was the election of the second bishop to fill the office held by the late Rev. Bishop Andrew Mbugo Elisa. For this election, the church had gathered an independent election board made up of individuals from other denominations – Roman Catholic, Pentecostal, and Anglican. The church election process had

narrowed the list of eligible candidates to three. The candidates for the ballot were Rev. Wilson Noah Rule Noah, Rev. Nicholas Kumba, and Rev. Andrea Benado.

Rev. Wilson Noah was declared the Bishop on the first ballot.

On Sunday, a Service of Induction took place with over 500 in attendance, including 35 clergy participants. The sermon for the occasion was given by Rev. Robert L. Rahn, referred to as the “grandfather of the ELCS.” The text was 2 Timothy 1:6-13, and Rev. Rahn began by alluding to the fact that this was an occasion when we confront many mixed emotions. We remember the past but we look to the future. For those of us who had a close relationship with the late bishop, it is time to move forward into the new era with Bishop Wilson Noah. It may especially be a time of deep emotion for the widow and family of the late bishop, but together we must move on.

We remember the past, but we heed the words of Paul to a young pastor in the text. These are the points Paul makes in the text:

1. Kindle afresh the flame of faith in you. 2. Do not be ashamed of the testimony of the Lord. 3. Retain and hold fast the standard of the Word. 4. Guard the Treasure entrusted to you.

Rev. Rahn used the illustration of the flame we saw in the fire pit at the guest house as we sat around that fire. Many logs were put together to form hot coals and then a large flame appeared. When the logs were separated from one another, the flames died out. ”Rev. Wilson, you can’t do it alone, but with the help of the brothers here represented and with the members of the ELCS-SS, you can provide the heat of the Word by the flames from the Spirit. It will give you, not a spirit of timidity, but one of boldness, power, love, and discipline.

“It will enable you to hold fast to the standard of truth being abandoned in too many circles today. Guard this treasure according to His purpose and grace, not on the basis of your good works, but by the power of the Spirit.”

Conducting the rite of induction was Rev. Christian Ekong, president of the Lutheran Church of Nigeria. During the rite, Rev. Wilson was asked to prostrate himself completely before the altar and give answer to the questions in which he pledged loyalty to the Scriptures, the confessions, and the constitution of the church.

The attire of the office of bishop were then bestowed – alb, chasuble, stole, pectoral cross, mitre, and staff.

Rev. Wilson was introduced and received congratulations from the members of the clergy, church officials, community leaders, and family members.

With four choirs participating in the service, and the sermon and

greetings translated into Arabic, the length of the service even exceeded the length of Andrew's ordination service of seven hours set on August 29, 1999. This eight-hour service began at 9:30 a.m. with a procession on the streets of Yambio and concluded with special greetings from the government officials, local church officials, and participants from the United States.

The governor, Honorable Colonel Joseph Bokosoro, sent his regrets, but the deputy governor gave a passionate word of thanks, noting the movement of the church. It started in Juba, moved to Khartoum, and then here to Yambio. He noted that Juba and Khartoum are much more blessed than our little village of Yambio, and yet you chose to have this event in our community. He said, "We are from the church, we are part of the church, we stand with the church. I'm requesting you to give full support to your bishop, and I appeal to all churches to pray for our government so that we govern correctly. I salute the election committee for their work. They have conducted a peaceful election, the first in our state. Let our country elections be peaceful as we learn from the church. For us the Bible will also guide our government. This is what the governor would have you know through me, his representative today."

Speaking for another department of the government was The Honorable Norma Fodul, minister of social development and religious affairs. She had also spoken at the convention earlier and had called for unity in working for the good of the people of the South Sudan. "Keep working for freedom which could not have happened without the help from the church. From today you have a responsibility. Put the Bible in your right hand and your constitution and staff in your left. Wherever you walk, take them along for guidance."

The general secretary Rev. Edward Nzeme, interim president Rev. Japhet Dachi, and director of education Rev. Louis Kumbo issued certificates of appreciation to all involved in making for a successful convention.

Rev. Rahn carried a bag of lapel pin crosses. He mentioned that the congregation and pastors would remember other occasions when crosses were distributed. He said, "I see some of those crosses here today being worn by pastors, and they indicate if you were a member of the first seminary class or the second. Others of you will remember the woven crosses given last year to the youth and choir members as they were singing. Some plastic crosses were also distributed on one occasion to all children. I wondered what I would do with these crosses, and the inspiration came to me during a typical sleepless night after long travel and time changes. Therefore, today I'm naming these the 'bishop's crosses.' I'd like to distribute these to the 58 convention delegates, to the nominating committee, and to the youth and adult choirs. These bishop crosses indicate your special involvement in an

historic event, the election of the second bishop of the ELCS-SS. I'm giving the remaining crosses to the bishop for use as he sees fit in his office."

Rev. James E. Fandrey, Lutheran Heritage Foundation executive director, brought special greetings from the LHF board, staff, and donors, and presented Bishop Wilson with a copy of *A Treasury of Prayers*, a large prayer guide using Bible readings based on the pericopes, a daily reading from the *Book of Concord*, the Psalms and prayers. Rev. Fandrey said, "These Bible readings and prayers will sustain you in your service."

The deaconesses of the church were introduced, including Deaconess Pat Nuffer, director of the Hands of Mercy organization, and Intern Deaconess Kaetlin Hiatt, who would be serving the next months in Yambio.

Representatives from the Roman Catholic, Anglican, and Pentecostal churches brought greetings from their church bodies, and all pledged to work with Bishop Wilson and the ELCS-SS in the new nation.

His Word does not return empty. In other words, where His Word is proclaimed, there it is in all fullness. We are seeing it in Sudan in special ways. For the past three years we have stated that there are 100 congregations with around 15,000 members in the ELCS. As we were conversing with the pastors from the Malakal region, we were startled to hear there were some 100 congregations in this region alone. Many of them are smaller and difficult to reach because of poor transportation. Some of them are also enduring persecution. Their report led us to request the general secretary to gather the correct statistics for the church. That process began immediately.

IT WILL NOT RETURN EMPTY

In an interview with the new bishop, I asked him what would be the biggest challenge he faced. He said, "It will be to bring people to faith through a strong evangelism program. It will be important to start with children, teaching them the Lutheran faith."

He then gave an example of a great opportunity for church growth. He told the story of a group of people he has been evangelizing, east of his location in Juba. There exists a community of Atsoni tribe people who were missionized years ago by the British and also by the Anglican church, but they have been abandoned. They became involved with the Lutheran church and are requesting books and materials in their language. The clergy want to to serve as Lutheran pastors. Two of the pastors came to the convention as interested observers. There are many congregations ready to become part of the ELCS-SS. The Word is not returning empty. Together with the ELCS-SS, the LHF is assessing avenues of training for these pastors.

The Word doesn't return empty. The seminary is filling to capacity with 25 students enrolled to start on January 16, 2012. It will have a revolving faculty

recruited through the LHF office in Macomb, Michigan. Rev. Art Bolstad, Arnold, Missouri, will be the first volunteer faculty member. Dr. Bernie Lutz, Crane Lake, Minnesota, a regular faculty member, will take a long stint in May, June, and July. There are many eager candidates for the ministry.

The bishop also sees this as a major challenge in terms of the stewardship required from the church and from continued LHF support. Congregations, groups, and individuals will want to come to the rescue of this struggling but growing church by partnering with the LHF to provide the help needed. Gifts should be directed to LHF.

Immediately following the induction, a special session of the convention was again scheduled for the next day. After lengthy discussions, the convention determined that the present officers of the church should continue in office to assist in the transition. These officers are to serve a three-year term.

One of the items placed on the cabinet's agenda is the discussion as to how the deaconess program will be carved out. Previously in Khartoum, the first set of deaconesses received their training as part of the seminary route. The church needs to address this situation and direct how all programs fit into the structure of the church. HIS WORD WILL NOT RETURN EMPTY.

Other questions will be addressed. Will the headquarters of the church remain in Yambio even though the bishop is serving in Juba? Will the bishop's office be full-time or part-time? Will transportation be available? How will travel costs for his office be covered with the constitution calling for at least two annual visits to each congregation? What will be the best avenue of communication with only 20 percent of the pastors having Internet?

Bishop Wilson called for a continuation of the consultation agreements, that all activities by groups and individuals be coordinated through the ELCS-SS central office of the bishop. This will enable the church to schedule and carry out her mission.

HIS WORD WILL NOT RETURN EMPTY. The desire of the ELCS-SS has been and continues to be the establishment of fellowship with the LCMS. To that end, the church officials are renewing the call for fellowship that was first made some ten years ago.

The distant Malakal delegation of 11 participants was brought to the convention with air travel provided to Juba by the United Nations. This was a great help to the budget of LHF. President Ekong traveled to Yambio under sponsorship by the LCMS.

While at the convention, Rev. Fandrey preached for the closing service of the convention. His text was John 8:36. He spoke about freedom that came to the country and that which comes through continuing in the Word. When the truth is known, it alone has the capacity to give true freedom. To

that end, he also renewed the translation and publishing schedule as the main focus of LHF.

Two books being worked on will be published before the end of the year: The Arabic worship book and the Nuba *Hymnal* in the Otoro dialect. Another project to be continued is the Zande *Worship Book*. Collects and the three year readings are yet to be added. The Moru catechism is completed and needs funding for publishing. With the Juba Atsoni tribe interested in Lutheranism, the Atsoni translation of the catechism will be high on the docket for 2012.

The weapons of mass instruction provided by the LHF in books like these will help to assure His Word will not return empty.

HIS WORD IS FULL.

October 20-24 – Rev. Fandrey, Rev. James May, Dr. Anssi Simojoki, Rev. Samuel Atunga, and I conducted workshops as we released the Swahili *Book of Concord*. The meetings were held in Tanzania at the Uhuru Lutheran Hotel, Moshi; Tumaini University, Mwika Campus; Makumira University, Makumira; and Sauti ya Njili (Voice of the Gospel), a Lutheran radio station in Moshi. All bishops in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Kenya and Tanzania were invited to participate. There are some 30 dioceses in the two church bodies. Special guests were invited to make presentations in addition to those made by the preceding individuals. In attendance were Rev. Albert Mongi, Bishop David Tswaedi, Bishop William Weber of South Africa and Dr. Wilbur Kreiss, former president Lutheran Church of France and Belgium.

The purpose of the seminar was to familiarize the bishops with the *Book of Concord*, then have them organize seminars in each of their areas and distribute the book to the pastors and lay people of their diocese.

This was a press release that was put out about the meeting:

SWAHILI BOOK OF CONCORD RELEASED BY LHF

The Lutheran Heritage Foundation released the Swahili *Book of Concord* on October 20 and 21 in special ceremonies conducted at the Uhuru Lutheran Center in Moshi, Tanzania, and at the Moshi Memorial University College, Mweika Campus.

Bishop Martin Shao of the Northern Diocese of the ELCT welcomed 300 participants. He stated, “150 million people in Central and Eastern Africa now have access to these historic writings.” He cited six reasons why the *Book of Concord* had significance for the church. He stated further, “In two years the ELCT will celebrate its 50th anniversary. This *Book of Concord* is the beginning of greater things to come.”

The work on the *Book of Concord* started at this Moshi Center 16 years ago. Bishop Shao said, “The Lutheran family worldwide is here to participate with us, and we especially welcome Dr. Anssi Simojoki, Finland; Dr. Robert Rahn, USA; Rev. James Fandrey, USA; Rev. James May, Kenya; Bishop Thomas Asiago, Kenya, Rev. Albert Mongi, Tanzania; Dr. Wilhelm Weber, South Africa; Dr. Wilbert Kreiss, France; and Rev. Samuel Atunga, Kenya.”

Over the course of the two days some 500 copies were distributed, and plans were made for introducing seminars throughout Tanzania in the next year. Six essays given by visiting theologians focused on the place and use of the *Book of Concord*.

The seminars ended on a sad note when it was discovered that Dr. Kreiss had died in his sleep. He had presented a paper showing why the *Book of Concord* is a blessing to churches. He said, “When someone says they believe in the Bible and nothing else, you still don’t know what they believe on articles of faith like the deity of Christ, baptism, the Lord’s Supper, and original sin. Today it is fashionable to hold a posture of ‘reconciled diversity.’ The Bible alone is the supreme authority. As sons of the Reformation, we need to keep the Bible and the Book of Concord in their rightful place. A church that is no longer confessional is no longer Biblical.”

Dr. Kreiss had served as the president of the Lutheran Church of France and Belgium and died holding up the Lutheran faith. He was the author of much French material that had never been published. The LHF was preparing to establish a publishing schedule for his work. Rev. James Fandrey had just visited him in France in May to discuss the translation program. Kreiss was 74.

While in Moshi, Rev. Rahn and Rev. Fandrey met with Presiding Archbishop for all of the ELCT, Rev. Alex Malasusa, to discuss the release of another major LHF translation project – a hymnal for the Ev. Lutheran Church in Tanzania in the Swahili language. Bishop Malasusa has ordered full attention to the project and expects this to be off the press in the next month. The LHF has provided funds to print a limited number of copies. The use of the hymnal will allow for review and corrections can be made before a second printing. There are 5.6 million Lutherans anxiously awaiting this hymnal.

November 5 - Members of the LHF board of directors, staff, and friends met at the LHF World Mission Center to dedicate the north wing of the complex in memory of Hugh and Jennie Cotton.

The ceremonies began at the north entrance where the new inscription appears over the door – THE HUGH AND JENNIE COTTON MEMORIAL WING. After the dedicatory scriptures and prayers, the group entered the Hall, and Mr. and Mrs. Tom Cotton, representing the Cotton family, unveiled

the special plaque that featured a citation and a photo of Hugh and Jennie Cotton. The naming of the North wing was to recognize their work on the LHF board and in their congregation, St. Luke Lutheran Church, Oviedo, Florida. While the hall itself will continue to be named the King's Royal Order of Stuffers Hall, the overall north end will be designated as the Cotton Memorial Wing.

Mr. Hugh Cotton served as a member of the LHF board and was instrumental in the construction of the LHF World Mission Center. Mrs. Jennie Cotton was an active promoter of the LHF mission in the Oviedo congregation, introducing LHF as an annual Mission of the Month organization. She also represented LHF at conventions and conferences of the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church (SELC). Members of the family made special contributions to memorialize their parents.

November 6 – St. John Lutheran Church, Fraser, Michigan, and the Lutheran Heritage Foundation Board of Directors hosted a celebration to honor my 50th anniversary of ordination into the Holy Ministry and the kick-off to the 20th anniversary of the Lutheran Heritage Foundation. Activities began with a worship service at which Dr. Wallace Schulz served as preacher and Rev. James Fandrey and Rev. John Merrill served as liturgists. Rev. Rick Nuffer, Fort Wayne, Indiana, and Rev. Walter Otten, Brookfield, Illinois, both members of the LHF board, served as readers. The St. John brass and choir provided special music. Mr. Mel Machemer, St. John music director, served as organist and director for the brass and choir.

Rev. Wallace Schulz used Ecclesiastes 11:4 as his text. It states, "He who watches the wind will not sow and he who looks at the clouds will not reap." Rev. Schulz pointed out that the history of LHF shows that, led by the Spirit, the church must constantly take risks, launch out on faith, and walk by faith. "Through the ministry of Rev. Rahn, the Holy Spirit has given LHF and the church a 'clear hands-on' example. Rev Rahn was never closed to the Spirit's prompting of launching, even if others had fished the same spot all night, as Peter said. The LHF is the most powerful evangelistic organization to work since the days of Luther. When Rev. Rahn and the LHF board let down the nets, it was not what they were doing, but Christ who does it."

An anniversary banquet followed at 5 p.m. in the St. John Lutheran School gymnasium, with Mr. Paul Titran serving a German festival meal. The speaker for the banquet was Dr. Anssi Simojoki, who for 15 years served as the vice president for Africa and was based in Nairobi, Kenya. Dr. Simojoki had just participated with us in the release and introduction of the Swahili *Book of Concord*. Rev. Simojoki served as the primary translator and supervised the project over the past ten years. In his remarks he alluded to

the importance this book will have for Tanzania, Kenya, Congo, Rwanda, and the many places where Swahili is the language of the people. This is the address he gave at the anniversary banquet.

The Lutheran Mission Paradigm Rediscovered

For The Rev'd., Dr. Robert L. Rahn at the 50th anniversary celebration of his ordination and the 20th anniversary of Lutheran Heritage Foundation, on November 6th, 2011 at St. John – Fraser.

“And Hilkiyah the high priest said to Shaphan the secretary, ‘I have found the Book of the Law in the house of the LORD.’ And Hilkiyah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it. And Shaphan the secretary came to the king, and reported to the king. ... Then Shaphan the secretary told the king, ‘Hilkiyah the priest has given me a book.’ And Shaphan read it before the king.’ When the king heard the words of the Book of Law, he tore his clothes. And the king commanded Hilkiyah the priest, and Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Achbor the son of Micaiah, and Shaphan the secretary, and Asaiah the king’s servant, saying, ‘Go, inquire of the Lord for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that has been found’” (2 Kings 22, 8-13).

Time and again, the rediscovery of the Word of God has given rise to unexpected upheavals and renewals in the history of the Christian church. The pure Word of God has so often been lost and hid in the labyrinths of the temple, just as had happened in the times of the successors of David and Solomon. Here, in the days of King Josiah (640-609 BC), the outward repairs of the temple turned to a national, religious reformation once the God’s true Word was rediscovered in the Book of Law. This piece of biblical history serves as a model in understanding the work, its magnitude and proportion, that the Lutheran Heritage Foundation has been doing in 20 years and still is doing around the world.

The great Lutheran revival after the tribulations of the Napoleonic wars (1799-1815) in the 19th century, called Neo-Lutheranism, brought about translations of the *Book of Concord*. I mention here only the English and Finnish translations, since they both were contemporaries from the 1840s. This paramount book of Lutheranism had largely fallen into oblivion in the Lutheran churches. The famous Lutheran author Johann Arndt (1555-1621), a man of profound Lutheran piety, a man who strongly influenced his younger friend, the most notable Lutheran theologian Johann Gerhard (1582-1637), has penned a thought worth of being mentioned here: “Those books that lead most human souls to eternal life lie in dust like did Joseph down in the prison pit.” “Bücher im Staube”, books in the dust: too often

has the *Book of Concord* kept their company. What was new in the Neo-Lutheran revival was the fact that lay Christians found the *Book of Concord* and avidly read it. Judging by sales statistics, the *Book of Concord* was a popular book, not a rarity for pastors, theologians and academics. The *Book of Concord* was not only an object of interest. It was a powerful agent and subject to convert Protestant Christians of the age with unclear, dim tenets and convictions to confessional Lutherans who truly and firmly knew what was their Christian faith.

Neo-Lutheranism gave also new, unforeseen impetus to mission work in overseas. Consequently, in the course of the 19th century Lutheran missionary societies mushroomed in various countries. For reasons, which I cannot elaborate here tonight, it happened that, apart from Dr. Martin Luther's "Enchiridion", the Lutheranism of the *Book of Concord* was largely lost in the missions. Only the old Lutheran church orders and practises maintained Lutheranism in the new mission fields and later gave form and shape to their embryonic Lutheran churches.

With changing times and changing Lutheran churches in the West, the theological backbone of old church orders and their theologically motivated practices, missionary Lutheranism was about to lose its soul. Lutheran understanding of the mission work gave way to a plethora of missiologies that were, more or less, completely devoid of genuine Lutheran understanding of the missions. Lutheran missions and missionaries were exposed to strong radiation from Calvinism, coupled with Anglican ecclesial role-modeling. Add to this seminary bookshelves that were bending under the weight of cheap, light-weight leadership training and business management paperbacks considered as latter-day revelation to successful contemporary church business! As a result of this loss of clear direction, genuine, comprehensive and solid Lutheran missiology was nowhere. In its place there prevailed what I used to call "name-tag Lutheranism" or "slogan-Lutheranism." It means a single Lutheran term or quote is taken, often out of its context, to motivate a missiological opinion and a missionary programme. "Simul iustus et peccator," "sola gratia," and similar precious watchwords, out of their full context, are not enough to make the miracle of transforming something which is not Lutheran to Lutheran. Instead, we can talk of a strong aversion of Lutheran doctrines and confessions in the field of missiology. This diluted and (what I call) "name tag Lutheranism" or "slogan Lutheranism" claimed practicality, forgetting that behind every kind of practice there is always a kind of theology. In unison with mounting secularism in the Western churches and missions, Bible minimalism shook hands with Gospel reductionism. At the end of this road we meet cold

indifference. A missionary was being sent to Africa. He was instructed by his missionary directors what he should do and what he should not do. He should learn languages in the first place. He should not try to plant Lutheran churches. The missionary in question had a question: "What shall I do, if people want to become Christians?" Without hesitation the superior responded: "Send them to the Baptists!"

In the 1990s there were two Lutheran Bobs who believed and also acted differently: Robert D. (Preus) and Robert L. (Rahn). It was the year 1994 that linked me with these two Bobs, Robert D. and Robert L. Robert D. visited a pastors' conference in Kenya. I was his host and driver. After the conference, we discussed matters of mission in our Nairobi home. I was informed about a new organization which had started Lutheran translation projects in the countries of the former Soviet Union. He could not believe my answer when I told him how few were the Lutheran books that had been translated in the period of a century and a half while Lutheran mission work was pursued on the continent. No question about the *Book of Concord*! Robert D. looked serious when he pondered what he had heard. Then he said: "Well, we must do something." Finally he pointed at me with his finger and uttered the ominous, fatal words: "You do it!" This is how it all started, how Robert D. then connected me to Robert L.

Much could be said of this Robert L. Still, I am content to shed light on my former boss with the help of two impressions only. I arrived for the first time in Detroit in spring 1996 to see my new director and superior. There he was with Donna. On our way to Chicago and other places we mostly sat silent. Robert L. on the driver's seat was chewing his trademark toothpick while thinking, planning and solving problems. To me this silence was fine. In Finland we have two national languages. So we can keep silent in both of them. I only wanted to find out whether he was moody for reasons unknown to me. No, he was not. He simply was himself. Then I thought of the recent telefaxes and email messages I had received from this Robert L. Those messages were full of warmth, deep insights, encouragement, new visions, Christian esteem. Their tinges were fine, respectful and caring. They were like tender balm on so many a wound in our family. These telefaxes and email messages were received in a home where the family members had in recent years gone through hard times. Success in challenging work provoked such a disease among missionaries which was and is common, and of which one only seldom hears about, namely jealousy. This jealousy, however, is all too common in mission work. Its venom poisons human relations and kindles destructive passions. These passions do erupt in irrational, destructive bullying campaigns against fellow missionaries and

their families who have been then set out for special harassment for no true reason whatsoever, and too often with fatal consequences. Brainless missionary bureaucrats customarily do nothing to stop this kind of sabotage and obstruction which is being run with God's money, sacrificed by the simple friends of mission. On the contrary, usually these brainless bureaucrats are part of the problem. Then we began to receive messages from Detroit as from a different world. While we were silently driving, I remembered all the warmest, finest, gentlest letters filled with balm of hope and optimism that soothed our bruised souls in Kenya. Looking at the man on the driver's seat I told to myself: "Remember, this is the same man!" Indeed, he was and he is. And I was entering the best period ever in my working career as a pastor and missionary.

Another feature is the trust and confidence that Robert L. always commands. I have tried to analyse this natural confidence and trust. I came to a simple conclusion: whoever is dealing with Robert L. gets the correct impression that, whether it is one dollar or a thousand dollars or ten thousand dollars, my money is in safe and respectful hands with this man. He is committed to spend my donation in the best possible way for best possible purposes.

Without fully knowing, Robert L., in unison with the life-work of Robert D., became a pioneer of a completely new mission paradigm. This paradigm had been in principle dismissed earlier on and later so many times: the mission of the true, visible church in its true identification marks and according to the confessions of the full truth of the Word of God. Fundamentally, it was not the two Bobs' paradigm. It was and it is the paradigm of the book they began to release in various languages. The *Book of Concord* has its own missiology. The pure doctrine of the Gospel ("doctrina evangelii") of the Bible, set forth in the *Book of Concord* is, by definition, missiological since it is throughout christological. Where the *Book of Concord* is given eye and ear, there its christological content begins to take control of everything in us, in the church and in the missions. It is the way Jesus Christ fulfills His promise, "and surely I am with you always to the very end of the age" (Matt. 28:20).

When the Portuguese landed in the 15th century in the area which is today Congo-Angola, one of their first efforts was to produce a catechism in a language called KiKongo. Committed men began their work with translation. This catechism was a modest booklet. It was not produced in large quantities. Still, its influence can be traced until the 19th century. What about us, the Lutherans? The Lutheran mission work commenced in Africa since the beginning of the 19th century. Thus far, the first African

translation of the *Book of Concord* in Zulu was not published before in 1967! The first Ethiopian (Amharic) *Book of Concord* in a church of over 5 million Christians was not published before 2011! The first *Book of Concord* in Swahili, which is the language of c. 100 million Africans, was not published before this year 2011! Two of these versions were produced under the administration of Robert L. When I was singing during the magnificent vesper prior to his banquet, I was in my spirit looking for Robert D., the man with his ominously pointing finger. I wanted to tell him humbly, merrily and gratefully: “Robert D! Indeed, by God’s grace and help, we did it!”

All begins with translation work. Then the book must be published. However, if the book is not distributed, it will remain in a dark corner collecting dust. Even in today’s world, distribution of books can be a daunting task. I would have a number of stories how our published books have travelled to their destinations, but this is not the moment for this kind of story-telling. Regularly after distribution we began to receive calls: “Come over and teach us!” It was partly because of constant teaching duties all over Africa that the translation of the Swahili *Book of Concord* took such a long time before it was completed. There were other reasons as well. Teaching taught us translation. Teaching broke the natural cultural barrier which stands between the confessions of Lutheran Reformation and African pastors who for the first time read the text of these confessions in their own language. During years of teaching I learned this truth that the *Book of Concord* has its own missiology. I also witnessed how the *Book of Concord*, once released, took control and began to address, direct and transform individuals, dioceses and churches. The late Bishop of Mwanza, the Rev’d Nehemiah Bomani, said to me after our sixth teaching seminar in his diocese: “Anssi, can you see that your work is not in vain? You remember their questions six years ago, how childish those questions were. But now, they discuss as mature men and theologians. Do you see that your work is not in vain?” The same has become reality in other places, too.

In mid-October the Swahili *Book of Concord* was inaugurated and commissioned in Moshi, Tanzania. With us also was Dr. Wilbert Kreiss from France, a formidable scholar and staunch Lutheran confessor. He delivered a scholarly lecture, and finally he delivered two powerful sermons on his last Sunday down here. During the night while sleeping, he peacefully glided from this world to the world to come, without agony and struggle. Time and again he finished his presentations by appealing to the last paragraph of the *Formula of Concord* in which Jacob Andreae, Nicholas Selnecker, Andreas Musculus, Christophorus Cornerus, David Chytraeus and Martin Chemnitz motivated their signing of the *Formula of Concord* as follows: “In

the sight of God and all Christendom the entire Church of Christ, we want to testify to those now living and those who will come after us. This declaration presented here about all the controverted articles mentioned and explained above –and no other – is our faith, doctrine, and confession. By God’s grace, with intrepid hearts, we are willing to appear before the judgment seat of Christ with this Confession and give account of it (1 Peter 4:5). We will not speak or write anything contrary to this Confession, either publicly or privately. By the strength of God’s grace, we intend to abide by it. Therefore, after mature deliberation, we have, in the fear of God and by calling on his name, attached our signatures with our own hands.”

I conclude with popular Swahili formula of praise:

BWANA YESU ASIFIWE SANA – MAY THE LORD JESUS BE PRAISED

The Rev’d. Dr. Anssi Simojoki

Koulukatu 19

FIN-23500 Uusikaupunki, FINLAND

Donna and I had earlier celebrated our 50th wedding anniversary and this was also recognized during the dinner festivities.

Rev. Jim Fandrey and Jeff Rahn spoke on the journey of 20 years for the LHF mission and its accomplishments. Special greetings were brought from the chairman of the board, Rev. Walter Otten, Brookfield, Illinois. Rev. David Maier, president of the Michigan District, wrote, “I am sorry that I will be unable to attend your anniversary event because of previous commitments. However, Rev. John Duerr, Michigan District vice president, will be in attendance to celebrate with you and with the Lutheran Heritage Foundation.” A certificate marking the 50th anniversary was presented. Greetings were also brought by various church officials, St. John officers, and friends. The festivities concluded with special gifts presented in honor of the 50th anniversary of ordination/marriage and 20th anniversary of LHF.

END NOTES

End notes, by my definition, are bits of information that are not date-related and are placed into this miscellaneous category.

Caring for the Whole Person

Requests of an unusual nature that may not fit exactly into our mission purpose do reach us from time to time. When they are from our own workers, they require attention. The following request from our chief Russian translator, Konstantin, prompted the idea that we should consider establishing a Christian Care Fund (CCF) that could be used for emergency situations. On this occasion their young son of two years required doctor's care for an entire summer in a controlled environment available in a Riga suburb of Urmula. He had developed some type of nervous disorder that caused stammering and reversing of words. The request was to borrow some funds in order to rent housing instead of paying the high costs of a hospital room. For us it was a small sum (\$300), but for him it was extreme.

There was also the problem I detected with regard to our Latvian translator, Andris, whose two-month-old daughter was ill. She didn't require hospitalization, but I wanted to share a story with you that I don't think many of us have experienced. As I walked down the street with him in Riga, we were passing a Salvation Army store. He asked if I could wait while he went into the store to make a purchase of some formula for the baby. He explained to me that he could not afford to purchase it at a regular store, and some friends at the Salvation Army enable him to buy it at a great price reduction.

These are the same men that serve the LHF so faithfully and strenuously, when in fact they could easily find other translation jobs that paid more generously. They, however, want to be Lutheran and they want to serve the Lord through the LHF.

Looking Back

Over the course of 50 years of ministry, we have had unique challenges and unique opportunities. Most pastors have the privilege to be engaged in ministry in one country and have built on what others have started. As I reflect on these past 50 years, working in over 80 countries, what strikes

me is the fact that we have had the privilege to be part of a number of start-up ministries. The parish I served in Missoula, Montana (Messiah Lutheran Church), was one that was started from scratch. We then started the Lutheran Heritage Foundation that enabled us to be involved in other new starts of ministry that included establishing entire new church bodies, including the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sudan/ South Sudan. We also started a house church in China that remains a secret location. More recently we assisted in getting a new church body started in Cambodia, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Cambodia. We were also involved in helping a new Lutheran church body get started in Finland, the Confessional Lutheran Church of Finland.

Too numerous to mention are the number of church dedications in which we participated, to say nothing of baptisms, confirmations, ordinations, installations and four bishop consecrations. New programs within these organizations were also part of our activity. I recall a successful program initiated at Concordia University, River Forest, Illinois, the “Acre for Christ” program. At Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana we launched an “Associates In Christ’s Vineyard” that featured a monthly businessman’s luncheon on campus. At LHF we launched programs such as Missio Advocates, the YCMM (Youth Corps Mission Movement), the “Building For Tomorrow Today” building campaign and the “Walkway For Truth,” featuring inscribed pavers for the patio and sidewalks in the back of the LHF World Mission Center. There were also programs that were introduced in congregations served. We also managed to recruit a few students for the Concordias.

In all of it we can say with Paul, “Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.” Ephesians 3:20, 21

Strange Endorsements

We reported how LHF provided books and materials to the Latvia Ministry of Religion and how lavish they were in praise of our work. This, coming from atheistic workers, led us to ponder the many segments of global Lutheranism that are beginning to appreciate our work and giving encouragement to continue this unique work. Even “left handed” endorsements are appreciated, such as that given by the Lutheran World Federation, who complained that we were causing a disturbance in the church with the books being published.

Endorsements and Greetings from Friends, Relatives, and Peers

A co-worker responded to an announcement we sent concerning the ordination of men for the ministry in Sudan. He stated, “Thank you for all the risks you have taken, all the works you have started. I know without you willing to go and do what others are afraid to do, there would not be an LHF and things like seminary training in Sudan and other places. I hope the new administration of the LCMS will support and realize the valuable work that the LHF has done through you. God has his unique way of choosing His people to do unique things, especially when we seem to be beaten by adversaries.”

An international co-worker writes, “Once upon a time, there was a doctor in Detroit who never got tired of cultivating relationships in the United States and overseas. You mastered vision, control, and delegating. Therefore LHF constantly grew and strongly inspired even outsiders around the world. Your greatness as a leader was your dynamic concentration on the essentials, your charisma to infinitely inspire, and your humility to let the organization become larger than your own personality.”

A former missionary sends anniversary greetings: “We know that your heart must be thankful today as you reflect on the countless blessings that God has given to you and the Lutheran Heritage Foundation. You have reason to be joyful, for this is a joy that is bubbling over in thankfulness and in some sort of vain pride, as if it all depended on you, and you alone. Today, you give all praise, all honor, and all thanks to a loving God.

“The fifty years includes many gifts, including the gift of a family. Jeff, a son who is intent on sharing the Gospel at home and around the world. The fifty years includes many partners of the faith with whom you have labored in many countries and continents.

“Fifty years is merely a stopping point for you. It is a time to thank and praise God, to raise mission interest and to motivate fellow Christians to join the Lord’s Army as it heeds the command of the Savior.

“Congratulations brother Robert and Donna, as you celebrate fifty years of professional ministry. Congratulations! God give to you and Donna the health to continue this mission work for many years.”

Another international worker writes, “LHF is a wonderful organization which needs prayer support; although the devil will use even those whom we thought will carry on this work to frustrate the plans. But, surely your great work will be felt among many generations. In Kenya where I come

from, I have witnessed some families having only one book. That is the catechism. I am sure if Luther was here today, he would use every mode of printing available. On behalf of the confessional church here in Finland, I want to say Asante sana, God richly bless you for every effort that you have put forth to equip us with literature.”

I am sure that we must learn from past mistakes and not repeat them. Just before China was taken over by the Communists, one Communist officer made a revealing comment to a missionary named Jon Meadows, and here I quote him:

“Your missionaries have been in China for over a hundred years, but you have not won China to your cause. You lament the fact that there are uncounted millions who have never heard of the name of your God. Nor do they know anything about your Christianity. But we Communists have been in China for less than ten years and there is not a single Chinese who does not know or heard the name of Joseph Stalin or something concerning Communism. We have filled China with our doctrines.

“Now let me tell you why you have failed and we have succeeded,” the officer continued. “You have tried to win the attention of the masses by building churches, mission stations, hospitals, schools, etc. But we Communists have printed our messages and spread our literature all over China. Someday we will drive your missionaries out of China, and we will do it by means of the printed page.”

Indeed, today John Meadows is out of China. The Communists were true to their word. But Christianity today is growing at a far greater rate than the Communists really know. The preceding quote reminded me of the work of LHF in Eastern Africa. What the LHF has done for the past 15 years will remain here for generations. This is the best heritage that my people have had from you. Indeed, this is not the time to reduce the work of LHF but rather expand it, because the calls are coming all the time. No Lutheran body has ever done what you have done and achieved in less than 20 years.

J and I join you and all those who gather around you in celebration as you give thanks to the Lord God for His blessings wrought through your faithful, Gospel-centered, cross-focused ministry. We also give thanks to Him for your faithful and loving wife, Donna, who walked at your side all these years, providing encouragement and support, a gracious lady of faith, a prayerful companion, and precious gift from the Lord. The work of the Foundation has played a major role in putting the Word of God into the hands of many “nations, tribes, people and languages” (Rev. 7) around the world.

I thank God that for the last 17 years it has been my privilege to be associated with you in the translation projects of LHF. It was a joy to provide souls the precious Gospel, and at the same time it was a joy to work with you. And now that we both have reached the milestone of 50 plus years of service for the Lord, it is well for us to take to heart the word of St. Paul, “So I run with a clear goal ahead of me, I beat my body and make it a slave so that, when I have summoned others to run the race, I myself may not be disqualified.” 1 Corinthians 9:26,27 When you reach the finish line in the great race, may the Lord give you the crown of life. On this historic date we rejoice with you.

C and I wish we could be with you on November 6, but I continue to serve a vacancy. You always stood solidly on God’s Word and always kept Christ first and foremost in your ministry. You had to face many crosses even within our own church body. But you always knew that the victory was in Christ and His Word, and He truly blessed your work. St. Paul’s words are so fitting for you and your ministry, “I can do everything through Christ who gives me the strength.” Philippians 4:13

I still remember the ground-breaking and dedication for your mission center. Time goes by quickly. You have always been an example to others as one who is willing to serve the Lord with integrity. You are one who does see the total picture of the Lord’s ministry and we appreciate that very much. We know that the Lord has much in store for you and that you will continue to use your talents in the best possible way for Him.

I regret I am unable to be present for the observance of the 50th anniversary. I well remember when you joined us at Concordia University, River Forest, Illinois. Your love of the Lord and His church coupled with your devotion to duty proved to be a great asset to Concordia. Your experience there also prepared you for future years in which you have been a major force in promoting the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ throughout the world. The LHF has been and is a unique blessing to the cause of Lutheran missions. As you heartily agree, your good wife Donna has been a major blessing to you and your ministry. Both in your personal life and in your ministry she has been a help, a comfort, and an inspiration. This too is her day to observe and celebrate.

God's richest blessings as you celebrate 50 years in the ministry and the 20 years of LHF. I thank the Lord that I got to meet you at River Forest and have your mission zeal work off on me! You are an inspiration and a bright light of the Gospel across the world. I pray that the Lord will put a hedge around you and your family as you continue to serve Him.

Congratulations on reaching 50 years of service in the ministry of our Lord. I have known you for close to 20 years, particularly through the LHF and your association with the St. John Lutheran Church Senior Choir. God has truly used your faithfulness to help spread His Word not only to many nations, but also to our local community. I was particularly glad to see LHF get its own facilities and see the printed word reach countries that do not have the resources to print religious materials in foreign languages. In fact, your ministry helps Lutheran missionaries in the proclamation of the Gospel by printing documents, such as catechisms, hymnals, educational, and confessional materials. Thank you on behalf of all the people who have benefited from your work.

On behalf of your brothers and sisters in the LCMS, I join the members of St. John and the LHF in thanking the Lord Jesus for your 50 years of service to his church. May He continue to pour out His blessings on you and your labor in the days and years to come, as you continue to preach his Word and, "plant it home, to men who like or like it not, the Word that shall endure and stand when flowers and men shall be forgot!" (LSB 586, v.1)

Rev. Matthew Harrison, President, LCMS

50 years! What a true blessing you have been to us and thousands of others. Dr. Wollenburg always told retiring pastors that they were not retiring, but just being "repositioned." We know you will always be in the ministry somehow.

Praying that He will fulfill every need and every hope that your heart holds today and for the future as you look back on the past 50 years of marriage, 50 years of ministry together, and 20 years of serving through the LHF. Add to this another 25 years of LIFE and it adds up to 75 years of being

blessed by a God so gracious that He has chosen to use us to serve Him and His people in various ways and places. I rejoice with you and Donna as you have had a hand in putting the true Word into so many languages through the LHF.

Congratulations on your special anniversary of 50 years in the ministry. Your leadership in the various organizations in the church, especially the LHF, has been a blessing in the spreading of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. May the Lord continue to open the doors of opportunity for you in the ministry of the Word. Congratulations to Donna for all her labors as a co-worker with you.

To Sum It Up

There have been many greetings from family, friends, and co-workers on this 50/20 anniversary. The final greeting being recorded here comes from special friends who inspire me to keep on serving as health allows. They write, “H and I are still very involved, just doing God’s work. H will be 86 in February and I’m 81, still active as always. We were married 61 years ago and H has been in the ministry that many years also. We are looking forward to Christmas. Our 14th grandchild is due December 25. As an only child, it’s hard to believe H and I have 52 in our family.” Given this record, by the grace of God, I still have years of service to be given. This is not the time for rest or ease, but to redeem the time the Lord has given. My intention is to continue to serve.

Travel Preparation

The history of 20 years would not be complete without at least a reference to the regular travel to congregations, conferences, rallies, and meetings. The staff, IRPRs, and our board chairman are on the road to bring the mission story of LHF to interested individuals and groups.

If the typical weekend involves preaching, my preparation begins by reviewing the Scripture readings appointed for the Sunday. My practice includes the discipline of preaching on one of the lessons for the day. It means extra time to prepare a message rather than “pulling one from the barrel.”

If planning requires booking a motel, Priceline is utilized. This involves selecting your desired quality level and then submitting an amount you are

willing to pay. It seems that the larger the city, the better the price. Often a room can be obtained in the range of \$40 to \$50.

Quite often it is more than a two-day weekend. There may be an LWML zone rally to speak at on Saturday, then two services and a Bible class on Sunday, followed by a potluck dinner. It might even include a two-day pastoral conference or seminar.

Preparation for the weekend also includes a print-out of donors in the area. The individuals might be personally visited or a phone call made to simply thank them for their partnership in our mission. Our philosophy is that we are not in the fundraising business but in a “friend raising” mission.

With the bags packed, the first step is to place the largest suitcase on a scale to make sure it doesn’t exceed 50 pounds. The magic number is 48 pounds. We also have a roller case weighing from 30 to 35 pounds in which we carry books for the display table. The third bag is a backpack for more books and the limited personal necessities.

Two bags are checked without charge because of an elite status for built-up miles from numerous national and international trips. Occasionally, when fares seem too high, we will apply for a ticket using frequent flier miles.

When arriving at a function, we factor in sufficient time to set up the display. The display includes a sampling of books published. I ask myself at times why so many books are displayed when few are viewed because of the strange languages represented. Perhaps I’ll reduce the number when the weight becomes too big a burden.

The display also includes items from various countries where we work. These items are used as premiums with suggested gift amounts. Some of the items are hand crafted by our Lutheran friends and workers. One of our workers, Marina Solodova, Moscow, Russia, is an artist, and many of her works have been featured.

The proceeds from these premiums always help to underwrite the LHF mission. Whether it is a door offering, budget inclusion, speaker fee, premium gifts, or gifts simply placed in the display offering basket, one can be assured that the weekend proceeds will be thankfully received and the “heavy burden” of luggage will be rewarded. Airline personnel probably consider one of the suitcases the largest and heaviest handled. This case happened to have been provided by Northwest Airlines after a smaller model was crushed in handling. I’m surprised at how durable the model has been, and should it eventually be damaged, I’ll think smaller.

Acknowledgements:
The Word Works

This is not just our “pie in the sky” assessment or a statement that comes from the title of our newsletter, “The Word at Work.” There are numerous references to the power of the word in the Scriptures, and one of those is found in Isaiah where it states, “For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there without watering the earth and making it bear and sprout, and furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater; so will my word be which goes forth from my mouth; it will not return to me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.” Isaiah 55:10, 11

Yes, there are skeptics and those who boldly deny its power and working ability. I suppose one could cite our first parents as among them. The children of Israel would surely be mentioned as not believing in the power of the Word. The Word worked when Moses struck the rock for water, and when manna fell from heaven. But there was still murmuring and complaining, so the Lord sent snakes and a “look up and live” avenue provided salvation for those who thought the Word would not work. The Golden Calf was a monument to “the word doesn’t work” philosophy. It was Moses who interceded and the Lord spared the doubters. You can go right down the line through the judges, prophets, and kings. Even the apostles had their moments of doubt.

But there have also been those who boldly declared with confidence that the word works. “The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church.” Even in our day we can provide names of Lutherans in Somalia, Sudan, and Indonesia who have declared the Word works, and their commitment and testimony resulted in death.

This is the reason we have been providing the “weapons of mass instruction” in the form of books published and introduced. You have helped provide these weapons as you have supported our global mission efforts. We acknowledge your partnership and dedication to the Lord’s mission through LHF.

We acknowledge that this is the Lord’s doing “and it is marvelous in our sight.”

We acknowledge the work of Mary Dahn serving as a proofreader and Amy Benjamin serving as graphic designer, and Jen Bagnall and Jeff Rahn for final editing.

We acknowledge those who encouraged us to write this autobiography/history and the many who sent greetings or joined us for the 50th anniversary

of ordination and marriage, and the 20th anniversary of the LHF. Thank you for being part of our LHF global mission.

Above all we acknowledge the fact that

Jesus Never Fails

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- 3) Rev. Carlton Hein, Loveland, CO
- 4) Rev. Al Luehmann, Gaylord, MN
- 5) Rev. Arthur Weidner, Fergus Falls, MN

LHF PUBLICATIONS

As of January 2012, the Lutheran Heritage Foundation has translated and printed 611 publications in 73 languages:

Afrikaans (South Africa)

Small Catechism with Explanation

Amharic (Ethiopia)

The Bible: God's Handbook for Living

The Book of Concord

Dying to Live

Arabic

The One True God, Friend of Everyone!

Arabic, Sudanese (Sudan)

Small Catechism

Small Catechism w/Questions and Answers

Avokaya (Sudan)

Prayer Book

Bahasa-Indonesia (Indonesia)

A Child's Garden of Bible Stories

A Summary of Christian Doctrine

Exploring Luther's Small Catechism –
Teachers' Guide

Exploring Luther's Small Catechism –
Student Workbook

Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation

Luther's Two Kingdoms

The Way of the Cross

Belarusan (Belarus)

Augsburg Confession

Exploring Luther's Small Catechism –
Student Workbook

Exploring Luther's Small Catechism –
Teacher's Edition

Large Catechism

How to Respond to Jehovah Witnesses

Belarusan (cont.)

How to Respond to Mormonism

How to Respond to the Cults

How to Respond to the Occult

Hymnal

Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation

My Prayerbook

Small Catechism and Preface

The People's Bible Commentary, Genesis

The People's Bible Commentary,
The Gospel of Mark

Bulgarian (Bulgaria)

How to Respond to Jehovah Witnesses

How to Respond to Mormonism

How to Respond to the Cults

How to Respond to the Occult

Hymnal

The People's Bible Commentary, Genesis

The People's Bible Commentary, The
Gospel of Mark

Small and Large Catechism

Burmese (Burma/Myanmar)

Luther's Small Catechism w/Explanation

Exploring Luther's Small Catechism –
Student Workbook

Exploring Luther's Small Catechism –
Teacher's Edition

Chichewa (Malawi and southeast Africa)

Small Catechism

We Believe

Chinese, Simplified

Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation

Small Catechism (Chinese-English)

Small Catechism Pocket Edition

Chinese, Traditional

A Child's Garden of Bible Stories
Exploring Luther's Small Catechism –
Workbook
My Daily Devotion
Teaching Law and Gospel
The Foolishness of God: The Place of
Reason in the Theology of Martin
Luther

Czech (Czech Republic)

Apology of the Augsburg Confession
Augsburg Confession
Formula of Concord
God's Word for Today – Philippians
Large Catechism
Small Catechism with Explanation
The Life and Faith of Martin Luther

Dii (Cameroon, Africa)

Apology of the Augsburg Confession

Efik (Nigeria)

Large Catechism
Luther: Biography of a Reformer
My First Catechism

English

After the Darkness: Morning
By the Grace of God I Am What I Am
Evangelism and Church Planting in East
Africa
Guidelines for Sharing the Faith with
Your Muslim Friend
Life by Drowning
Nine One One – The Aftermath –
The Word Works
Resurgence of the Evangelical Lutheran
Church in Lithuania after the Soviet Era
The Small Catechism of Dr. Martin
Luther with a Study Manual for
Learners and Teachers
The Small Catechism of Luther with
Study Manual and Scripture References
Stories from the Bible
Teach These Things: Essays in Honor
of Wallace Schulz

English (cont.)

Understanding Lutheranism Through Her
Augsburg Confession
The Way of the Cross
What's the Use of Praising God?

Estonian (Estonia)

God's Justification
Large Catechism
Liturgy and Revival (#2)
The Cost of Discipleship (#1)
The Lord's Supper in the Life of the
Church (#3)
What Does the Church Teach on
Original Sin?

Farsi Eastern/Dari (Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq)

Catechism and Book of Prayer

Finnish (Finland)

A Short Explanation of the Creed (#16)
Baptism and Faith (#11)
Bearing of the Cross (#25)
Biblical View on Worship (#1)
Called to Be Praisesingers (#30)
Christianity in the 21st Century (#21)
Commentary on Galatians
Concerning the Nature of Confession
in the Church (#3)
Confession Concerning Christ's Supper
Dream of Jacob (#9)
Dying to Live; the Power of Forgiveness
Enlightenment through Law and Gospel (#13)
Faith and Knowledge (#22)
Following Jesus Christ
For God So Loved the World – What Does
the Gospel of Love Mean? (#15)
God and Man (#24)
God's Justification (#23)
Handling the Word of Truth
Holy Absolution: Word of Life (#28)
Holy People, Holy Lives
Hymnal Supplement
I Will Give You Rest (#20)
Inspiration of Scripture
Invited to God's Home (#32)
Jesus Christ True God and True Man (#19)
Koehler Catechism

Finnish (cont.)

Lectures on Genesis – Chapters 1-7
 Lectures on Genesis – Chapters 8-17
 Lectures on Genesis – Chapters 18-24
 Lectures on Genesis – Chapters 25-31
 Lectures on Genesis – Chapters 32-40
 Lectures on Genesis – Chapters 41-50
 Liturgy and Spiritual Awakening (#5)
 Male and Female He Created Them (#29)
 On Creation: The Biblical Prehistory in
 the Light of the Lutheran Confessions
 (#18)
 Pastoral Letter on Ordination of Women (#2)
 Prayerschool
 Reflections on Contemporary/Alternative
 Worship (#8)
 Repentance and Conversion in the Light
 of the Scriptures and Lutheran
 Confessions
 Sanctification in Lutheran Theology (#4)
 Scriptures and the Office of the Holy
 Ministry (#31)
 Sharing in God's Holiness (#17)
 Simo Kiviranta - Fragments of Life
 The Bible: God's Handbook for Living
 The Church of the Seven Signs
 The Fire and the Staff, Chapter 3:
 "The Fire Spreads"
 The Gift of Prayer (#14)
 The Lord's Supper in the Life of the
 Church (#10)
 The Spirituality of the Cross
 The True Visible Church
 We Are One Body in Christ (#7)
 What Does It Mean to Be Lutheran? (#6)
 What Does the Church Teach about
 Original Sin? (#26)
 Why I Am a Lutheran: Jesus at the Center
 Worship and Full Assurance of Faith (#27)
 Your Word Is the Truth (#12)

Fon-Gbe (Benin)

Small Catechism with Explanation
 Large Catechism

French (France, Canada, Africa, Haiti)

Dogmatics 1 & 2
 Dogmatics 2-3-4

French (cont.)

Dogmatics 4 & 5
 Liturgy: Yesterday, Today, and Forever
 (VHS or 2-DVD set)
 Manual of Christian Doctrine
 Small Catechism
 Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation

Ganda (Uganda)

Small Catechism

Gbaya (Central African Republic)

Augsburg Confession and Enchiridion
 Small Catechism with Explanation

Georgian (Georgia)

Large Catechism
 Small Catechism

German, Standard

Good News about Jesus

Gujarati (India)

Luther's Small Catechism w/Explanation

Gusii (Kenya, East Africa)

Hymnal

Haitian Creole French (Haiti)

Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation

Hindi (India)

Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation
 Hmong, Daw (White) (Thailand, U.S.)
 A Child's Garden of Bible Stories
 Small Catechism

Japanese

Small Catechism

Kannada (India)

Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation

Khakas (Russia)

Small Catechism

Khmer (Cambodia)

A Child's Garden of Bible Stories
 Augsburg Confession
 Catechism Workbook – Student Edition
 Catechism Workbook – Teacher's Guide
 Confession and Forgiveness: Professing
 Faith as Ambassadors of Reconciliation
 Luther's Small Catechism: Ten
 Commandments with Explanation
 and Workbook Exercises
 Luther's Small Catechism
 Overcoming Pastoral Pitfalls
 Preaching Law and Gospel
 Reading the Bible with Understanding
 Women in the Church

Kinyarwanda (Rwanda)

Freedom of a Christian
 Small Catechism with Enchiridion

Korean

By the Grace of God I Am What I Am
 Lectures on Galatians – Vol. 1 1535
 Chapters 1 to 4
 Lectures on Galatians – Vol. 2 1535
 Chapters 5 to 6

Kusaal (Ghana)

Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation

Lao (Laos)

A Child's Garden of Bible Stories
 Exploring Luther's Small Catechism –
 Student Workbook
 Exploring Luther's Small Catechism –
 Teachers' Guide
 Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation

Latin

Loci Theologici; De Coena Domini; De
 Duabis Naturis in Christo; etc

Latvian (Latvia)

A Place to Stand: The Word of God
 in the Life of Martin Luther
 A Voice in the Desert
 Advent Calendar
 Augsburg Confession

Latvian (cont.)

Augsburg Today
 Baptism: Confessional Lutheran
 Dogmatics IX
 Bible about the Bible
 Book of Concord (Study Edition)
 Christian Dogmatics
 Christian Life
 Church Postil – Vol. II
 Church Postil – Vol. III
 Church Postil – Vol. I
 Church Postil – Vol. IV
 Church Postil – Vol. V
 Church Under the Pressure of Stalinism
 Commentary on Galatians
 Commentary on Genesis:
 Vol. I: Chapters 1-11
 Vol. II: Chapters 12-22
 Vol. III: Chapters 23-30
 Vol. IV: Chapters 31-40
 Vol. V: Chapters 41-50
 Concordia Commentary Luke 1:1-9:50
 Concordia Commentary Luke 9:51-24:53
 Concordia Commentary Revelation
 Confession Concerning Christ's Supper
 Daily Bread
 Daily Meditation on Scripture
 Day by Day with God (all 12 month
 devotion booklets in one volume)
 Day by Day with God – April
 Day by Day with God – August
 Day by Day with God – December
 Day by Day with God – February
 Day by Day with God – January
 Day by Day with God – March
 Day by Day with God – May
 Day by Day with God – November
 Day by Day with God – October
 Day by Day with God – July
 Day by Day with God – June
 Day by Day with God – September
 Discipleship
 Doors Leading Home
 Evangelical Lutheran Church and Worship
 Explanation of the Gospel: For the Festivals
 and Apostles' Remembrance Days
 Eyes, Ears and All My Senses: Activities
 for Teaching the Catechism (Parts 1 and 2)

Latvian (cont.)

God Comes to Me in Worship
God Listens to Our Prayer
God Makes Me His Child in Baptism
God Teaches Me His Commandments
Good News about Jesus
Greek Study Workbook Vol. 1
Greek Study Workbook Vol. 2
History of the Evangelical Lutheran \ Church in Latvia
How to Build a Diaconal Church
How to Respond to Eastern Religions
How to Respond to Islam
How to Respond to Jehovah Witnesses
How to Respond to Judaism
How to Respond to Mormonism
How to Respond to New Age
How to Respond to Satanism
How to Respond to Secular Humanism
How to Respond to the Occult
How to Respond to Transcendental Meditation
Intro to Fundamental Christian Ethics
Large Catechism Law and Gospel
Let Us Pray
Let Us Pray: A Handbook for the Family Prayers
Let's Pray with Luther
Life Together: The Classic Exploration of Faith in Community
Love, Truth, Grace: Christian Catechesis A.D. 2000
Luther Discovers the Gospel
Luther the Reformer
Lutheran Pastors Martyred in Latvia in 1919
Luther's Small Catechism
Make Disciples Baptizing
Man and State
Marriage from Creation until Eternity
Martin Luther: An Introduction to His Life and Work
Ministry, Word, and Sacraments
Missionary Robert Feldmanis
My Help Will Come from the Lord
One in the Gospel
Parenting: Blessing and Responsibility
Positive No to Women's Ordination
Post Modernism

Latvian (cont.)

Responding to a New Cult in Eastern Europe
Sermon on the Mount
Speaking the Gospel Today
Table Talks
Teaching God's Children His Teaching
Ten Questions about Sects
That I May Be His Own
The Church of Christ
The Cult of the Virgin
The Great Lie and the Great Truth
The Invisible Church: Sunday School Materials Part 1
The Invisible Church: Sunday School Materials Part 2
The Lord Is My Shepherd
The Lutheran Faith
The Second Martin
The Way of Life
The Word of the Lord Grows
Theological Responsibility of the Church
To You We Say Thanks (Remember the Victims)
Who Are the Lutherans?

Lithuanian (Lithuania)

Augsburg Confession
The Cult of the Virgin
Fundamental Christian Beliefs
Good News about Jesus
Here I Stand
How to Respond to Jehovah Witnesses
Large Catechism
Lithuanian Hymnal
Living with Luther
New Testament History

Luba-Kasai (Dem. Rep. of Congo)

Apology of the Augsburg Confession
Augsburg Confession
Large Catechism
Small Catechism

Luo (Cameroon)

The Way of Life

Maasai (Kenya, Tanzania)

Small Catechism

Mabaan (Sudan)

Small Catechism Enchiridion
 Malagasy (Madagascar)
 2006 Reformation Celebration Lectures
 God's No and God's Yes
 Pastoral Epistles
 Smalcald Articles
 Small Catechism with Enchiridion
 Small Catechism with Explanation

Malayalam (India)

Lutheran Agenda
 Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation
 Standard Bible History
 What Do Lutherans Believe?

Marathi (India)

Luther's Small Catechism

Meru (Kenya)

Luther's Small Catechism

Nuer (Sudan)

Bible Stories
 Small Catechism with Explanation

Nyankore (Uganda)

Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation

Polish

Christian Dogmatics
 Law and Gospel
 Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation
 Luther's Writings against the Enthusiasts
 1543 & 1544

Portuguese (Portugal, Brazil)

A Summary of Christian Doctrine
 Christian Dogmatics
 Com Jesus: Historias Biblicas
 Here We Stand
 Martin Luther Selected Works Vol. 11
 The Proper Distinction between Law
 and Gospel
 Speaking the Gospel Today
 This is My Body
 With Jesus: Manual of Christian Instruction

Russian

A Child's Garden of Bible Stories
 Altar Guild Manual
 American Lutheran Pastoral Theology
 Augsburg Today
 Basic Christian Teachings
 Bible Difficulties
 Book of Concord
 Catechism
 Christian Dogmatics
 Commentary on Galatians
 Commentary on Romans
 Dying to Live
 Eschatology
 Examination of the Council of Trent,
 Part I
 Examination of the Council of Trent,
 Part II
 Fundamental Christian Beliefs
 Getting into the Formula of Concord
 Getting into the Theology of Concord
 God's No, God's Yes
 Good News about Jesus
 Here We Stand
 History of Theology
 How to Respond to Eastern Religions
 How to Respond to Jehovah's Witnesses
 How to Respond to the Lodge
 How to Respond to Mormonism
 How to Respond to Muslims
 How to Respond to New Age
 How to Respond to Satanism
 How to Respond to Science Religions
 How to Respond to the Cults
 How to Respond to the Occult
 Justification and Rome
 Law and Gospel
 Life of Luther
 Life with God
 Light From Above
 Loci Theologici Vol. 1
 Loci Theologici Vol. 2
 Lutherans in Russia
 Ministry, Word, and Sacraments
 New Testament in English & Russian
 NIV Study Bible Materials
 Pastoral Theology
 Pathlight (Primary Division)

People's Bible Commentary – Genesis
 Postmodern Times
 Prayer Book
 Russian Prayerbook
 Selected Writings of Luther
 Small Catechism
 Studies in Creation
 Symbols and Their Meaning
 Teaching Law and Gospel
 Testing the Boundaries
 The Bible: God's Handbook for Living
 The Christian Faith
 The Cross of Ekaterine
 The Foolishness of God: The Place of
 Reason in the Theology of Martin
 Luther
 The History of Lutheranism in Russia
 The Lord's Supper
 The Lutheran Liturgy
 The New Testament Documents: Are They
 Reliable?
 The Peoples' Bible: Genesis
 The Renaissance and Reformation
 Movements
 The Spirituality of the Cross
 The Word of the Lord Grows
 Way of Life
 We Believe in God: Old Testament
 Religion Lessons Book 2 (green)
 We Believe in God: OT Religion Lessons
 (Student Edition) Book 1 (blue)
 We Believe in God: OT Religion Lessons
 (Teacher Edition) (gray)
 What Jesus Means to Me

Rwa (Tanzania)

Hymn Book

Sinhala (Sri Lanka)

The Apology
 Augsburg Confession
 Book of Concord
 The Lutheran Church & the Charismatic
 Movement: The Ecumenical
 Polarities of Lutheranism
 Power of the Pope, Smalcald Articles,
 Small Catechism

Somali

Good News about Jesus
 Light from Above
 Small Catechism
 Small Catechism with Explanation
 Understanding Christian Faith

Spanish

Bible with Small Catechism Appendix

Sukuma (Tanzania)

Hymnal
 Small Catechism (Enchiridion)

Swahili (Kenya, Tanzania, East Africa)

Book of Concord
 Church Leadership, A Brief History of
 the Leadership of the Ev. Luth.
 Church of Tanzania
 The Freedom of a Christian & Letter to
 Pope Leo X
 Good News about Jesus
 Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation
 Mini Book of Concord
 Small Catechism (Enchiridion)
 Stories from the Bible

Tamil (India)

Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions
 (reader's edition - limited press run)
 History of Reformation
 Lutheran Agenda
 Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation
 Reformation Songs (on cassette & CD)
 Standard Bible
 Understand Your God Through Small
 Catechism

Telugu (India)

Augsburg Confession
 Baptism (excerpt from Large Catechism)
 Did My Baptism Count? (excerpts from
 Luther's Works on Baptism)
 Large Catechism
 Luther's Small Catechism
 Small Catechism with Explanation (Kuske)

Thai (Thailand)

A Child's Garden of Bible Stories
 Bible Stories in Pictures
 Exploring Luther's Small Catechism –
 Student Workbook
 Exploring Luther's Small Catechism –
 Teachers' Guide
 Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation

Tok Pisin (Papua New Guinea)

The Small Catechism of Dr. Martin Luther
 The Small Catechism of Dr. Martin
 Luther with a Study Manual for
 Learners and Teachers
 The Small Catechism of Luther with Study
 Manual and Scripture References
 A Statement of Faith
 A Statement of Faith (Tok Pisin/English
 side-by-side edition)
 Tswana (Botswana)
 Apology of the Augsburg Confession
 Augsburg Confession
 Bible Stories with Pictures
 Ecumenical Creeds and Catechisms
 Epitome
 Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration
 Large Catechism
 Rapelang, Bomorwa-rre!
 The Small Catechism of Dr. Martin Luther
 and Its Explanation
 The Word of the Lord Grows

Tumbuka (Malawi, Zambia)

Small Catechism

Turkish (Turkey)

The Fire and the Staff, Chap. 3
 Handling the Word of Truth
 How Should I Pray?
 Large Catechism
 Lutheran Confessions
 Luther's Small Catechism with Explana-
 tion
 Martin Luther - The Man of Faith

Twi (Ghana)

Small Catechism

Ukrainian (Ukraine)

A Child's Garden of Bible Stories
 Apology of the Augsburg Confession
 Augsburg Confession
 Basic Doctrines of the Bible
 Best of Portals of Prayer
 The Bible: God's Handbook for Living
 Book of Books: A Brief Introduction to
 the Bible (on CD)
 Book of Concord
 Catechism
 The Church and Her Fellowship, Ministry
 and Governance
 Christian Faith
 Civil Government, God's Other Kingdom
 Confessions Volume
 David and Eileen
 Doctrine of Millennium
 God's No and God's Yes
 Good News about Jesus
 How to Respond to Eastern Religions
 How to Respond to Jehovah's Witnesses
 How to Respond to Judaism
 How to Respond to Muslims
 How to Respond to Satanism
 How to Respond to the Cults
 I Believe: A Study of Luther's Small and
 Large Catechisms
 Large Catechism
 Life of Luther
 Ministry, Word, and Sacraments
 My First Catechism
 My Prayerbook
 Outlines of Doctrinal Theology
 Pathlight (Preteen 1)
 Pathlight (Primary Division)
 The People's Bible: Exodus
 The People's Bible: Galatians, Ephesians
 The People's Bible: Genesis
 The People's Bible: Mark
 The People's Bible: Romans
 The People's Bible: Second Corinthians
 Power and Primacy of the Pope
 The Proper Distinction Between Law and
 Gospel
 Revelation: The Distant Triumph Song
 Small Catechism
 Ukrainian Hymnal

Ukrainian (cont.)

Ukrainian Service Book
We Confess Jesus Christ
We Preach Christ Crucified
Who Are the Lutherans?
Who Is Martin Luther?
Worship Book

Urdu (Pakistan)

Good News about Jesus

Vietnamese

Augsburg Confession
Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation

Zande (Sudan)

Hymnbook
Our Daily Life
Small Catechism
Small Catechism with Explanation
Sudanese Prayer Book

Zulu (South Africa)

Commentary on Micah
Dogmatics, Vol. 1
Dogmatics, Vol. 2
Dogmatics, Vol. 3
Hymnal
Teach to Observe All Things That Were
Commanded by Christ



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