

JESUS NEVER FAILS

VOLUME 2

THE CONTINUED HISTORY OF THE
LUTHERAN HERITAGE FOUNDATION

2012 - 2018

REV. ROBERT RAHN

LHF Founder

Jesus Never Fails, Vol. 2 – Printed June 2022 (1,000 copies)

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LUTHERAN HERITAGE FOUNDATION
51474 Romeo Plank Road
Macomb, MI 48042
www.LHFmissions.org
Email: info@LHFmissions.org

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ACRONYMS IN THIS BOOK

Anyone familiar with the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod (LCMS) knows that we use a plethora of acronyms and initialisms to shorten the names of other church bodies, mission groups, and so on. It can be difficult to keep them all straight. If you come across an acronym you don't know, refer to a list in the appendix of this book, page 516.

JESUS NEVER FAILS VOLUME II

Happy New Year 2016.

These lines are being written at the start of the year of our Lord, 2016. What is written will be a continuation of Volume I, which was an autobiography and history of the Lutheran Heritage Foundation. This edition will be less autobiography and more LHF history. The reason for writing this second volume can perhaps be summarized best by quoting the opening verses of the Gospel of Luke: “Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the Word, it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write it out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus; so that you may know the exact truth about the things you have been taught” (Luke 1:1-4 NASB).

This Lukan thought sums up my intentions in recording the history of the LHF. I intend to follow the format of the previous book by putting things in a consecutive order so future generations will know the exact history of this work that has been directed by God. For those of you who may not have read the first volume, it might be good at the outset to explain the title, Jesus Never Fails. I will quote from the first volume that describes my life on a rural Minnesota farm and speaks of the death of my father and mother within a relatively short time of each other in February and July of 1993.

“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 farm 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 farm homes in the late 1940s and 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 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... 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?”

Those lines provide you with insight into the titles of these volumes as well as the Gospel booklet of the same name, “Jesus Never Fails.” Long before the plaque was hung on the wall, Moses spoke to the Children of Israel as they were about to enter the promised land without him by the decree of the Lord: “Be strong and courageous, do not be afraid or tremble at them, for the Lord your God is the one Who goes with you. He will not fail you or forsake you.” And, a few verses later: “The Lord is the One Who goes ahead of you; He will be with you. He will not fail you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed” (Deuteronomy 31:6, 8 NASB).

A day before the New Year and the writing of this history began, an anonymous note came in the mail: “We are often amazed and humbled to see what has been accomplished through the ‘little’ organization you started years ago. It’s been a blessing to so many. So, here’s a little recognition of that and a note of thanks for all the work of your organization.” Who would have believed 25 years ago that this “little” organization would move out of a basement, into rented quarters on Garfield Ave., Clinton Township, and then into an office building built and quickly paid for at 51474 Romeo Plank Road, Macomb, Michigan? Yes, there were skeptics and those who predicted a quick demise, yet, here we are in a facility valued at over two million dollars, operating with an annual budget of a similar amount. How can this be done?

One more note of significance underscores the blessings God has provided for the LHF in a rather short span of time. I want to highlight one gift that will be of historic significance. In 2017, Mr. & Mrs. K will provide the final payment on a life insurance policy that, when the Lord calls them home, will provide the LHF over two million dollars. Thus far, it is the largest single individual gift LHF has ever received. This contribution is just one generous example of Christian stewardship and commitment; however, every gift, no matter its size, enables the LHF to continue to carry out its mission.

Whenever a report is given in the pages to come, you can always look behind the story to see the men, women, and children of God providing the gifts to make it all possible. At the end of this book you will find an Appendix that references our website listing 782 books.¹ By the time you check online, the list will have grown to over 1,000 titles. You will also find the names of board members (past and present), and all staff members in the Appendix. They are the team, along with our King’s Royal Order of Stuffers (KROS), and IRPR’s (Independent Regional Promotion Representatives) who enable us to allocate the gifts that the people of God are providing. How can we properly give God the glory for all

¹ Readers should note that some statistics, including this one, have changed since the writing of these emails, newsletters, reports, and the like.

the gifts He has showered on the LHF? He truly deserves a raucous TE DEUM that hopefully will be part of our 2018 celebration. “We praise Thee, O God, we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord!”

The first volume of *Jesus Never Fails* ended with a report on my 50th ministry anniversary celebration that took place at St. John Lutheran Church in Fraser, Michigan, where my family holds membership. The special speaker for that occasion was the Rev. Dr. Anssi Simojoki, LHF Vice President for Africa. This celebration took place on November 6, 2011 and it is from this event that we continue the LHF historic review for *Jesus Never Fails: Volume II*. We will follow the format of the first edition by selecting significant items to report year by year. It was my intention to make this a history book with monthly meditations that were written for the St. John Lutheran Church—Fraser, church newsletter. Because of the length of this work, those meditations were removed. The plan is to compile an LHF devotion book that will contain them.

The goal is to spend intervals over the next year to complete this volume so that it can be released in the year 2018* shortly after several important historic dates.² In 2017 we will observe the 500th anniversary of the Reformation (October 31, 1517), the 25th anniversary of the LHF (November 10, 1992), and the 15th anniversary of the dedication of the LHF World Mission Center (October 13, 2002) where our staff collaborates to produce books and materials to be distributed and introduced in nearly 100 languages and 100 countries. This doesn't mean, however, that the year 2016 is without significance. Permit me to slip briefly into autobiography-mode. For me, 2016 marks 55 years of ministry, 55 years of marriage, and the year both my wife and I reach an age of fourscore. My son, Jeff, who serves as the LHF director of operations, and his wife, Becky, will be celebrating their 20th wedding anniversary. It's also the year their daughter, Mackenzie, turns 16, and son, Carter, becomes a teenager at 13. In honor of all these events, we will embark on a celebratory family cruise.

This is an exchange between the late Dr. Anssi Simojoki and myself as we reflected on the past and wrote in terms of sailing, an activity with which Dr. Simojoki was quite familiar, living, as he did, on the shores of the Gulf of Bothnia, Uusikaupunki, Finland. The thoughts expressed here later became part of a funeral homily for Dr. Simojoki on July 31, 2020.

Dear Friend Anssi,

The Trident, that's a good ship to sail on the waters of Europe and beyond. It's a sturdy ship filled with a precious cargo—the Word and work of God. A lot of good shipmates will help to steer the proper course. I think back to the sailing we did together over the highways and byways of Africa. Specifically, I

² The best-laid plans of man.

remember one interesting trip to an area where right now our work is dormant—Malawi. The WELS (Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod) seems to be more active in that country where you conducted a training session for translators in the Chewa and Tumbuka languages. Remember those signs above the doors of two rooms where people speaking those languages were gathered. Is that where we swam in the lake and recalled the work of Livingston? And is it where we spent the night in tents?

Now you are moving more towards the straits of Ethiopia and engaging Maxamed Gurhan to test the waters. His coming to Karen and the resultant work as an LHF translator and now his personal embarking on the voyage to complete his studies while turning the rudders to the land around Jijiga, Ethiopia. We hope these uncharted waters will find a harbor for the desired church body being formed- the Somali Lutheran Church. With the compass of God's Word giving direction, it should be a safe landing.

The "Trident International Ship" will certainly successfully sail under the flags of LHF, LHF-Africa, and the Mission Province Church of Finland. Who would have known that when we gathered around the captain's table in what was the backyard of your Karen home in the LHF compound that one day our dreams would have become a reality; although different players and different organizations would be represented on the galley. Even the distant stars in the night did not clearly show the current manifestation [of global work that would be carried out by LHF]. I still have the picture of us two mates wearing the hats of the jungle while sipping our tea. While there were no charts or maps laid out on the table, some distant ports were being visualized. It was a setting that we duplicated under the tree in front of our Khartoum guest house, a place where other plans were scoped and shaped for another launching.

Now the ship is being steered into the roiling waters of Finland Bay where the dangers are more than ice flows and shallow waters. The voyage has met with the offloading of captains at the helm and lesser trained and less noble helmsmen have come aboard and taken the ship where charts are neglected, even despised. Able captains have had their documents thrown overboard and dismissed from service. As a result, the old charts and compasses are now directing and steering the ship into the province land. There, a new ship has been christened and set afloat. New harbors are opened, and lighthouses are showing the way. The Mission Province Church of Finland has become the lifeboat being steered by helmsmen who studied and know the manifest that will take thousands to the new shores of a heavenly land.

So, others are invited to come aboard the ship, not a shiny new ship, but a ship that has sailed the old course and ways. Come along and stand in the mist of the old ways, listening and heeding the word of warning, "Remove not the old land-

marks thy fathers have set.” See ahead the light of the harbor and recognize it as a safe haven where the anchor can be set on the solid truth of God’s Word.

Sail on oh soul of mine, come drink and dine, for the food is of a substance fine, where gates to eternity are truly thine.

Sail on, oh, lift up thy sail, the mission, it shall not fail, though winds may buffet thy tail, His grace and mercy, they alone avail.

Your shipmate,

R. Rahn

To: Robert Rahn

Subject: Sailing

Dear Founder, Dr., Brother, and Friend,

Thanks for your “sailing” epistle! Indeed, in those remote days of starting our work in Africa I never anticipated what and how much would stem out of it. Yet, here we are witnessing how our mission is bringing fruit. LHF, LIA and now Mission Diocese are coming together to share the delightful responsibility for Matt. 28, 18-20. Robert Preus rejoices elsewhere [that is, Heaven]. You can have the great consolation that your life’s work was not in vain. So many men squander their heritage and lot. So many missionaries squander huge sums of money and perform nothing because they don’t know what they are doing. It was pure grace and your faithfulness that made it all become reality. I thank God for being allowed to join the crew.

In Christ,

Anssi

MAY 15

LHF's Executive Director Rev. James Fandrey made an extended tour, covering parts of South America that included visits to Argentina, Chile, and Brazil. He traveled with Rev. Nilo Figur, Lutheran Hour Ministries' area counselor for Latin America and the Caribbean, who graciously served as a guide and interpreter. The purpose of the trip was to visit locations where the Spanish *Bible with Small Catechism* had been distributed with help from Lutheran Hour Ministries (LHM). Fandrey attended the synodical convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Argentina and heard how the books published by LHF are being used widely in that church.

At a Lutheran Church in Santiago, Chile, the Bibles were placed on chairs of the sanctuary, ready for Sunday morning worship. At the Lutheran School in Valparaiso, the Spanish Bible is used daily for their religion classes, even though 90% of the students are not Lutheran. The Spanish Bibles line the shelves of the school library. At a church in the city, the Bibles and hymnals are stacked on a cart at the entrance of the church for use in worship every Sunday.

The Chilean Lutheran Church actively reached out to survivors of the 2010 earthquake and tsunami and used the LHF Spanish Bible to share the Gospel.

In Brazil, the work of the LHF was cited by the Rev. Mario Lehenbauer, first vice president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Brazil. As in Argentina and Chile, Brazilian church leaders request pamphlets and tracts they can use for outreach.

AUGUST 25

"A GREAT ACCOMPLISHMENT," commented Rev. Dr. Albert Collver, LCMS director of church relations, when the Rev. James Fandrey presented the *Book of Concord* in the Swahili language in the office of Dr. Matt Harrison, LCMS president. "This is a great accomplishment and will be of potential service to the 100 million Swahili speakers worldwide," said Dr. Collver. "Such works have been of great service to missionaries, professors, and partner churches. The Recognized Service Organizations (RSOs) of the LCMS are a great blessing to the church and have tremendous potential to maximize our work and life together."

NOVEMBER 6

Robert and Donna Rahn celebrated the 50th anniversaries of both their marriage and Rev. Rahn's ordination. The day also marked the beginning of the 20th

year of the LHF. The accounts of the celebration and anniversary speech given by Dr. Anssi Simojoki were recorded in the first volume of *Jesus Never Fails*.

DECEMBER 20

From: Nelson Unwene
To: Robert Rahn
Subject: Anniversary Acknowledgement

Dear Dr. Rahn,

We join you in thanking God for His faithfulness and love to you and our dear LHF. We continue to dust off dust from the plaque that you gave us—fixed on our kitchen cupboard—Jesus Never Fails. It has been true that the Lord’s faithfulness is forever. I also cherish your words at the anniversary celebration: “As long as the Lord provides the health and strength, we will use our energy in the Lord’s service... resolutely resisting the dream of retirement...” We pray our loving God to renew and strengthen you in the years ahead to His own glory.

In Christ!
Nelson Unwene
Nigeria

DECEMBER 23

From: Nelson Unwene
To: Jim Fandrey
Subject: Understanding Lutheranism Through Her *Augsburg Confession*

Dear James,

A number of people who read this book by Dr. Nelson Unwene, *Understanding Lutheranism Through Her Augsburg Confession*, praise it highly even as Dr. Alfred Inyang does, who teaches physics at the University of Calabar. He was at one time chairman of the Board of Governors of our Jonathan Ekong Memorial Lutheran Seminary, Obot Idim, Nigeria.

Another reader sent a text message which says, “Etubom Unwene, I have completed your book. I am asking how you may bring this book home to the LCN to bring us from the abyss. I am completely with you in your exposition of the truth. But, what must be done? The book has been quite timely. It is certain that our recently instituted bishops and their episcopacy do not like the book. My prayer and encouragement are that the bishops and people study the book.”

Thanks for your concern over what happens in the work God has given us to do here in Nigeria.

In Christ,
Dr. Nelson Unwene

JANUARY 2

From: Robert Rahn
To: Anssi Simojoki
Subject: RE: Yambio

I received your commitment of dates to teach for the Concordia Lutheran Institute for Holy Ministry (CLIHM) in Yambio. I have slotted you in for the dates you requested. You'll notice I have listed Dogmatics III and Ephesians as topics, as outlined in the schedule below.

I'm reserving "Research" as Prof. Schumacher of the St. Louis Seminary indicated interest in teaching that topic, and I'd like to get him over there if at all possible. If he doesn't make it, I'll assign it to you. It appears, however, that you'll have a full schedule teaching Dogmatics III and Ephesians.

RR

JANUARY 3

A blessed New Year to all interested in the Sudan mission.

Today, Rev. Art Bolsstad is on his way to Nairobi and then will proceed to Yambio to begin his stint as the first faculty member serving on the staff of CLIHM. With the beginning of this new term for the seminary, it appears that there will be a total of 20 students enrolled. We thank God that there were 27 candidates from which the 20 were selected.

This might also be a good time to [apprise] you of the agreement reached by the consultation team when we met on several occasions. Each time, we underscored and agreed on especially two important issues. First of all, we agreed that all activity in Sudan would be channeled through the leadership of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of South Sudan/Sudan (ELCSS/S). Since we now have elected a new bishop, that means we will work through the office of Bishop Wilson Noah Rule in Juba. The second agreement made by the consultation committee was that we would give the highest priority to seminary education.

This is especially important this year when we have the [largest] number of students in seminary training. Over the past 17 years, the Lutheran Heritage Foundation has invested very heavily in all facets of the ELCSS/S ministry. We want to make it clear that this year, we will need your help and urgently request that you support the seminary program as the first and primary need. It will be impossible for LHF to add the stipends for 20 students and still support those anticipating stipends. Would you venture a guess as to how many that might be? Re-

cently Rev. Edward Nzeme sent us a listing of all those receiving stipends in 2011. The total number was 62. This includes pastors, vicars, deaconesses, evangelists, deacons, and staff personnel. I would like to urge everyone to avoid tackling new projects other than the seminary, urgent as they might be. I view the seminary and stipends for workers as being the critical area of need to which we should focus our collective attention. I'm inviting synod officials, district officials, RSOs, and other agencies to step up to the plate with us to share the load. Together, the work can be accomplished.

These are not easy days for the ELCSS/S and they, too, will have to become proactive in finding ways to become more independent. The Malakal region is especially in need of our prayers as they continue to be confronted with persecution from hostile [Muslim extremists].

And pray for the entire ELCSS/S and her leadership, that the church might move forward in spite of many challenges. Pray that the Word and Sacraments be delivered with power so that the faith of the hearers is strengthened. And pray that God would bless all our efforts to join hands with our fellow Lutheran Christians in the ELCSS/S so that God would receive the honor and glory.

With hope and confidence entering the New Year,

Robert L. Rahn

CLIHM Program Coordinator

From: Robert Rahn

To: Lutz Bernie

Subject: Sea Foam

Bernie,

The Sea Foam [Sales Company] check just arrived. The amount was designated for CLIHM. Praise the Lord for this gift and two others of the same size that came in on Friday. Yet another gift for \$50,000, an insurance designation, is being contested by a family when the beneficiary said LHF. We will be forwarding the funds for the seminary building immediately. When Jim returns, we will be discussing the entire scope of the Sudan mission for 2012. Last week I submitted a PLAN FOR SUDAN in 2012 that included the bread making business, but it wasn't given immediate endorsement and now we wait for Fandrey to return to discuss this.

RR

JANUARY 4

From: Robert Rahn

To: Jeff Rahn; Fandrey, Rev. James; Bagnall, Jennifer

Subject: Book Distribution

Releasing book (*Jesus Never Fails*) when it arrives.

[Below is] a letter to those who sent cards, emails, gave gifts, attended the [20th anniversary celebration] dinner or participated in some way. There are 418 names on that list. If it gets to the printer on January 9 as I have proposed, it would possibly be here for the mailing and could be part of the mailing. If there was a line (“request copy of *Jesus Never Fails*”) in the coupon, the people would have a way to respond and they would possibly have the book before they get the newsletter??? I wasn’t sure about including the amount coming in for the event, but people have been asking about it. I think it is a significant and might even encourage others who forgot. Here is the proposed letter as part of the distribution of the book *Jesus Never Fails* [Vol. I].

RR

Dear Friend,

“God be gracious to us and bless us and cause His face to shine upon us—that Your way may be known on the earth, Your salvation among all nations.” Psalm 67:1, 2

At long last the book we have been working on for the past two years – and more intensely the final three months of 2011– is off the press.

In the process of writing the book, I reviewed all my trip journals that were written during my travels internationally. I also went through three drawers of files reviewing the correspondence with international personnel and contacts. The final process was reviewing all minutes of the LHF Board of Directors recorded during the past 20 years.

We are now entering the distribution phase that does not include the selling of *Jesus Never Fails, An Autobiography and History of LHF*. We are enclosing a free copy for you to read. As they say, “You can’t judge a book by its cover.” If after reading it, you judge it to have been of interest, you are invited to use the enclosed envelope to make a gift to help cover the postage and the cost of the second printing. At the anniversary service and dinner, there was some jesting over the fact that I always have an envelope ready.

Donna and I covered the cost of publishing the first printing, as we were not presumptuous to think everyone would be interested in the autobiography portion and this should not be an expense to our LHF mission.

The book is being sent to all those on our regular personal Christmas mailing

list and to all who in anyway participated in the celebration of our 50th anniversary of ordination, marriage, and the beginning of the 20th year of LHF. It is another way in which to thank you for your kindness in making the celebration one to be forever remembered. Thank you very much for your greetings by card, phone, email, letter and attendance.

Another significant part of the celebration was observed when you followed the suggestion made by the celebration committee that gifts of honor should be given to the LHF mission. The volume of gifts was overwhelming. You might be interested to know that those gifts are still arriving, and they are approaching the \$50,000 mark. What a blessing for the global mission of the LHF! They are indeed a great honor and I thank God for your generous participation.

Now we have entered a New Year, and the challenges of sustaining this mission are again before us. As “God has blessed us and caused His face to shine upon us” in the past, we are confident He will do the same for us in the future so “that His way may be known on the earth and His salvation among all nations.”

Gratefully in Christ,
Rev. Robert L. Rahn

JANUARY 5

From: Robert Rahn
To: Dr. William Schumacher
Subject: Yambio

Dear Will,

Thanks for your willingness to serve [on the faculty of the Concordia Institute for the Holy Ministry, Yambio, South Sudan]. Would it be possible for you to start on July 5 and go until the 24th? It means you would probably be leaving the U.S. the afternoon of July 3, arriving in Uganda the evening of July 4 and leaving for Yambio early on July 5??? We could have Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) pick up your visa so you'd have to spend less time in Kampala. They have also reported that you could get a visa at the airport in Yambio, but they were pretty much in a disorganized state when we flew in there in October. We continue to monitor the best way to travel to Sudan. Bolstad is going to be in Nairobi for a few days prior to his going to Sudan so he is going to fly to Juba and get a flight from there with a new airline working that route. We, however, still want to use the time and tested route.

We would have Neuendorf adjust his schedule so that two classes could be held each day. If there is an Old Testament or New Testament book you'd be comfortable teaching, you could go with that also. Dogmatics III is being picked up by Simojoki later in the year. So far, we have Galatians and Ephesians covered.

Thanks for working on this for us and with us. – RR

Travel Troubles

Serving as the Program Director for the Concordia Institute for the Holy Ministry, Yambio, South Sudan involves recruiting pastors, professors and teachers to serve as faculty. While recruiting and scheduling instructors is difficult in itself, nothing compares to the troubles encountered in obtaining the visas for travel and being aware of new restrictions on travel at any given moment.

Instructors are being advised to start the visa process at least three months before their scheduled travel. There have been all sorts of horror stories in regards to the obtaining of a visa. First of all, you have to be aware of holidays that are followed by consulates. They definitely do not follow the holidays of the U.S. Each country has their own specific days that are considered holidays. It is not at all uncommon to have a visa application submitted well in advance, but attention is often not given to it until some days before one has to depart. If you are not persistent in your follow-up, the visa could arrive the day after you were supposed to leave.

It's not just the visa you need for South Sudan, but if you travel through Nairobi, Kenya, you will need a visa or a transfer, depending on the amount of time spent in the country. Most instructors are counseled to avoid traveling through Juba, the capitol of South Sudan, but to fly to Entebbe, Uganda and obtain a visa at the airport. Timing is of the essence as the flight from Kampala, Uganda to Yambio leaves at 6:30 in the morning. You fly with Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) and the passenger number is limited, as is the weight of luggage.

Travel arrangements include having transport from Entebbe to Kampala, about an hour-long trip. Arrangements are made to have an escort and taxi driver waiting for your arrival and taking you to an arranged hotel for the night's lodging. Sometimes it is recommended that the instructor remain two nights in Kampala to counteract the normal jet lag. Arrangements have to be made so that you are able to fly on either Tuesday or Thursday, the only days MAF flights are available.

Because of the unrest and tribal warfare in various parts of South Sudan, it is not uncommon to have the government put restrictions on how, when and where you can fly. Sometimes these decisions are made on the spur of the moment.

Because there is a need for books and materials, food and clothes in the country, instructors often are overweight in their luggage. On one trip, Dr. Bernie Lutz and Dr. Rahn had 17 suitcases to get into the country, most of which were filled with Bibles and Bible commentaries. It meant that the suitcases had to be parceled out over several flights and could arrive weeks later. LHF has arrangements with MAF for payments to be made for fares and luggage via wire transfers. This makes travel a little more convenient from Kampala to Yambio.

Coming back from Yambio, again arranging a Tuesday or Thursday flight, in-

volves coordinating your arrival in such a way that you are able to connect with the flight out of Entebbe that usually leaves in the evening. Sometimes the flight is direct to Entebbe and sometimes it is back to Kampala, which means transport from Kampala to Entebbe. It means that travelers will need an extra amount of patience in dealing with uncertainty due to flight changes and broken schedules. Instructors are asked to be prepared for this.

JANUARY 6

From: Donald Baron

To: LHF

Subject: Chinese catechisms

Dear friends at LHF:

I see in *LCMS Reporter* that Chinese catechisms are available, and I would like to request that you send me two copies at my postal address [in Hawaii]. Upon receipt of the catechisms, I will of course send a thank you gift to LHF.

On another matter, I wish to encourage you to consider a fresh revision and [replication] of this classic theological tome in Chinese, i.e., *Quest for Holiness* by Adolf Koberle. I believe that the Ft. Wayne seminary some years ago sponsored a reprint of that book in English. I have been in touch with Dr. Thomas Yu, president of the China Lutheran Seminary in Taiwan, who is [interested] in this undertaking as an important contribution to [seminary] education. I can only bear witness that this book had a great impact on me as a seminarian, a book that I continually return to for theological refreshment. It would be a priceless thing to place such a book into the hands of Lutheran pastors and seminarians in Chinese-speaking areas of the Lutheran world! I understand that the printing division at China Lutheran Seminary still lacks the funds to carry this project forward. Please do consider this seriously as a vital contribution to the Lutheran world from LHF.

Sincerely,

Pastor Donald W. Baron, M. Div., M. A.

[While there isn't always a response given to a request that is made, it should be generally noted that every request is handled almost on an immediate basis by the LHF mail department.]

From: Robert Rahn
To: Japheth Rev. Dachi
Subject: Request to send funds

Dachi,

Today LHF received a request to forward money to Sudan because we are the safest way in which to send it. It is nice to have that reputation. Your name was mentioned, and we are interested in finding out details as to what the gift means. It is coming from C. H. and is for supplies for the Wau congregation. What supplies are needed for the Wau congregation in the amount of \$5,000? Is it building material or something else?

We continue to be a little more than concerned when we see the continued efforts on the part of those “doing mission work” and producing funds for social welfare-type programs or to build buildings. At the same time, we battle more and more for the needed funds for seminary education and support of pastors. Next week I have a message going out to all those wanting to do mission work in Sudan. It will be a reminder as to what the last two consultations concluded in terms of Sudan support.

What light can you shed on the Wau activity?

I trust you have had a nice visit with your family over Christmas and now ready to tackle the challenges ahead with the start of the new seminary program.

God bless you to be a blessing to many.

RR

From: Rev. Dr. John Wohlrabe
To: Robert Rahn
Subject: LHF Mission Sunday

Robert,

I will announce my retirement this Sunday at the 1:30 p.m. voters' meeting. Your prayers would be appreciated. Looking at the calendar, I think that May 6 would be the best Sunday [for an LHF mission Sunday]. We would have Holy Communion at the 8 a.m. service but not at the 10:30 a.m. service. Also, there is Sunday school and Adult Bible Class at 9:15 a.m., during which time you could give a presentation to the adult Bible class. You would be welcome to stay in our guest bedroom at the parsonage. I hope and pray you have a blessed New Year as well.

In Christ,

Rev. John Wohlrabe

[Rev. Rahn readily accepted the invitation.]

JANUARY 7

From: Andrew Simcak Jr.

To: Robert Rahn

Subject: Wally Schulz

The Epiphany of our Lord + 1, 2012

Good Doctor Robert,

A happy New Year and Epiphany of our Lord to you and yours! Is Wally Schulz A-OK? I have not received the *Good News Journals* for oodles of months. Is he still publishing it? What's the latest on Wally Schulz and *Good News Journal*? May the blood-bought blessings and benedictions of our living, loving Epiphany Lord lodge with you and yours always!

Tex Simcak

Visitation Pastor

Good Brother,

Thanks for your concern relative to Schulz. Yes, he's still hard at it, but his budget has been cut way back and it will possibly mean that there is only one issue per year. He has been doing some investigating in the electronic possibilities as an alternative. Otherwise he is healthy and well able.

RR

From: Wallace Schulz

To: Robert Rahn

Subject: Let Ron Paul be your earthly idol for age...wrs

Dear Robert,

Thanks for "checking in," thereby giving both of us an opportunity to compare notes as to what is happening, especially in the LCMS. There is certainly plenty of commotion in the church. Frankly, I feel there is plenty of demand for a forward movement!

As I have said, repeatedly: I have appreciated your leadership in the past. As far as the future is concerned, I think you need to take a good look at one-time Lutheran and now Baptist, Sen. Ron Paul, the same age as you are, running for president of the United States. He still has something to say. He has the largest following of young people, by far! There is no reason that you cannot have a similar influence in the church. God bless you in 2012.

Let me close my short epistle to you with the following. In April 2011 Kathy and I were in Oregon where I made a presentation to LCMS pastors and congregation members. While there we had the chance to visit the rugged Oregon coast near Newport. As we looked out over the Pacific, we were led to remark what

courage it must have taken, a century or two ago, for men and women to embark on wooden ships to cross these deep waters, knowing they would be battered and thrown around, endlessly, by the waves.

For this reason, you and I need an “anchor” for our soul!! And we have it in God, in Christ! “In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an oath, in order that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we may have strong encouragement, we who have fled for refuge in laying hold of the hope set before us. This hope we have as an anchor of the soul” (Hebrews 6:17-19).

wrs

Wallace,

Thanks for your strong suggestion that I follow the example of Ron Paul. I’m definitely in it for the long haul like Paul the politician and Paul the Apostle. As long as health holds out, I, too, am a holdout. One of the things that encourages and strengthens is the strong encouragement I have always received from you and Kathy. It has meant a lot, and the best way I could demonstrate that is to do things like speak at the anniversary event and suggest you to be the speaker at the church up the street [St. Peter Lutheran] when they first inquired about Fandrey or myself as another option after suggesting your name. You can help us draw more of those people to the LHF mission as being “just down the street” or a “mission in the neighborhood.”

There may be some rough days ahead in light of growing persecution of Christians around our world and around our government. Now is not the time to rein in the team but to go full steam ahead, snorting and sweating but pulling with might and mane, to get back to the horse illustration. It’s good to be on your team as we continue to make hay under the power of God’s Spirit.

New skirmishes are being reported in Sudan. Sad to say, it isn’t the north (Muslim) against the south (Christians), but tribe against tribe. The Nuers are kicking up their [heels] and it is usually about their cattle. Like the Maasai, they hold their cattle sacred and think they can go anywhere. People with gardens for their livelihood don’t like cows [trampling] their crops, and the fighting begins and escalates. Could be as many as 3,000 people killed. It is a region where we aren’t represented, as far as I know. Maybe that’s the problem: the Gospel needs to be brought instead of letting the old Esau/Jacob rivalry raise its ugly head.

JANUARY 8

From: Larry Krieg

To: Robert Rahn

Subject: Quarterly Missions offering coming your way

Dear Pastor Rahn:

I'm writing to ask for fundraising information about your organization. Our Missions Committee recently designated Lutheran Heritage Foundation as the recipient of our January-March quarterly mission offering at St. Luke Lutheran, Ann Arbor. We designate the members' mission offerings during each quarter of the year to a different organization, sending that organization whatever donations we receive shortly after the end of the quarter. In order to inform them about the organization they're giving to, and to encourage them to give generously, we like to provide the members with both written and video information near the beginning of the quarter.

I'll be happy to hear from you when you have a chance. Feel free to suggest using whatever material from your website you feel is appropriate. You can send material by reply email, or for large video files, mail to us at the address below.

Blessings in Christ,

Larry Krieg

Chair, Missions Committee

St. Luke Lutheran Church

Ann Arbor, Michigan

JANUARY 9

From: Robert Rahn

To: 'Larry Krieg'

Subject: RE: Quarterly Missions offering coming your way

Larry,

A package of materials for you. Recently a mission committee of a church in our area was considering our mission and I sent them a page of statements as to why LHF was worthy of mission consideration. I am sending you a copy below. It will give some general information and might even be something you could share with the other materials we will be sending. Thank you again for your support of the LHF mission. You are welcome to use anything from our web page. Watch for something from our public relations office.

R. Rahn

LUTHERAN HERITAGE FOUNDATION

- Mission: To translate, publish, distribute, and introduce Lutheran books and materials that are Christ centered, Scripture-based, and Reformation-driven so that the church may grow.
- Neighborhood charity in Macomb, Michigan.
- Entering its 20th year of service in the year 2012.
- Global dimension—80 countries/90 languages, over 200 native translators and workers overseas.
- Recently went over the 600 mark in the number of titles published.
- Nearly 3,000,000 copies in print.
- 65 language editions of the catechism completed, ten more currently in process.
- Seven editions of the *Book of Concord* published. The Swahili edition released and introduced in Tanzania October 20-24.
- *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* done in eight languages, more coming.
- Swahili hymnal being completed in Tanzania.
- Most books given away free of charge.
- Growing need for our books developing among immigrant groups in U.S.
- Moving to electronic readership.
- *Jesus Never Fails: An Autobiography and History of the LHF* being readied for release in February.
- Founder and former Executive Director took a reduction in salary and increased workload in area of development during economic downturn.
- All staff work below salary guidelines suggested by comparable positions in the LCMS Michigan District and other Lutheran charities.
- LHF built its World Mission Center in Macomb, Michigan in 2002. No mortgages or debt services being paid with donor gifts. LHF is debt free.
- Auditors commend LHF accounting and record keeping practices.
- No support received from LCMS or Michigan District mission budgets. A growing number of [regional] LWML's are giving grants.
- Dedicated group of 100 volunteers on our King's Royal Order of Stuffers (KROS) list, who assemble five mailings a year.
- Five Independent Regional Promotion Representatives (IRPRs) serving in several U.S. regions on a limited part time basis.
- Books published and introduced in seminars have been a key in starting Lutheran churches where before there were none (Sudan, Cambodia, Somalia, China) and two are now organized church bodies (Evangelical Lutheran Church of Sudan and Evangelical Lutheran Church of Cambodia).
- November 6 marked the 20th anniversary of the LHF. Rev. Rahn's 50th anniversary in the ministry was also observed on the same day with a service at 3:30

p.m. at St. John-Fraser. A German dinner followed in the school gymnasium.

- A seminary faculty is recruited by the LHF office to assist in preparing the current 20 students attending the Concordia Lutheran Institute for the Holy Ministry, Yambio, South Sudan. The last class of 16 graduated in October 2010.
- The website for LHF is found at www.LHFmissions.org.

*“Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to They Name give honor and glory,
for Thy mercy and Thy Truth’s sake.” Psalm 115:1*

JANUARY 12

Support for LHF’s mission is collected in many different manners. In Wisconsin, Brookfield Lutheran Church chose to support the Foundation by means of a Mission of the Month program which involved effective publicity and LHF personnel being interviewed in person prior to the services.

From: Patty Kilvinger

To: Robert Rahn

Subject: Brookfield Lutheran Mission of the Month

Dear Robert,

Nancy Wolck had informed you via a letter that the Lutheran Heritage Foundation was selected as the Mission of the Month at Brookfield Lutheran for February 2012. As stated in the letter, we would like to have you attend our services on Sunday, February 12 and participate in a three to four-minute interview session with the pastor in front of the congregation in order to lift up your ministry. I am contacting you as Pastor Whitfield’s representative to communicate a few things regarding that Sunday. Our services are at 7:45, 9, and 10:45 a.m., but you would not need to arrive until 8:15 a.m. for your first presentation. A “host” will greet you and help you with your set up and directions for the Sunday. Any photos or PowerPoint presentations to be shown as part of this session should be sent to the email address from which this message came. If the file is too large, you may either send a CD or deliver a jump drive to the church with the contents on it. These files should be to the church by Thursday, February 2 at the latest.

With regard to the interview, the following questions will be used as a guide to the presentation: Please give us a brief description of your mission. How do you carry out your ministry? Can you share a story of how your ministry has touched someone’s life or brought them to Jesus?

A table will be available for you to display items in our Fellowship Center as well as answer questions from our members after services. I look forward to hearing from you. God’s blessing on your ministry.

JANUARY 14

From: Robert Rahn

To: Don Kovac

Subject: Missions at St. Luke-Oviedo, FL

Dear Don,

A blessed New Year. By now you are already used to listing 2012 as the year on correspondence and documents.

This past week I spent time working on my schedule for 2012 and am looking for some input from you, assuming you are still head of the Mission Committee for the congregation. What plans might the congregation have in terms of featuring LHF as a monthly mission? Has that been decided and is the month of March the designated month for LHF? I'm asking because this year is the year when we have conventions both for districts and LWML districts. We are trying to attend as many as possible and I have the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church (SELC) District and Florida-Georgia District conventions held at the same time (June 22-24) in Oviedo and Lake Mary respectively. I plan to cover both with help from a layman in the area. I also want to reserve a March date for [St. Luke Lutheran Church in] Oviedo if the mission is being emphasized at that time.

The Lord's blessings.

R. Rahn

Dear Sir,

Receive many Epiphany Christian greetings from Arusha, Tanzania where I accompanied Rev. Art Bolstad [from Arnold, Missouri] who visited some of our places where we work. We had a long travel from Nairobi to Kibwezi, Kenya and Kitui where LHF supported the work and [Bishop] Obare removed the pastor and left those Christians without a pastor. Rev. Bolstad preached in both of these places and I interpreted his sermons. We also had Eucharist because these Christians for the last one year have never seen a pastor. After Kitui we visited South West Diocese of Asiago. We came back and left for Arusha Makumira University. Rev Bolstad wanted to visit the short time he was in Nairobi waiting to leave for South Sudan.

Today we were at the university and finished; now we are in town waiting until tomorrow, whereby Rev Bosltad is assigned to preach at a wedding and on Sunday, he will preach in a church before we leave for Nairobi. I have been able to show him all our work and what we do.

Concerning teaching, I am willing to teach this time Introduction to New Testament. Of course I have been teaching 1 and 2 Corinthians, and also taught

1, 2, and 3 John. I also taught Stewardship. I will write more when am back to Nairobi.

Yours in Christ,
Rev. Samwel Atunga

Dear Brother Bolstad,

I called over the weekend and left a message on your cell phone as I tried to track down the pastors being supported [in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Sudan/South Sudan (ELCSS/S)]. I asked Rev. Japhet Dachi [Dean of Students at CLIHM] to report as I don't have email addresses for all pastors and not all pastors have access to the Internet. It looks like we have to substitute another pastor for Gibbs [as the selected recipient is ineligible]. My recommendation is that the support be transferred to Rev. Joseph Otto of Yambio. I would prefer to keep it in the Yambio area so that Dachi can observe and report.

We are getting some complaints that pastors have not been paid for several months. This may very well be true. It is sometimes difficult for donors to understand how this happens. I'll try to explain by giving you the information that these weeks we have been busy preparing the LHF 2012 budget. We ask each area to send us their anticipated needs. Sudan sent us two budgets, one for the church and one for the seminary. Combined, they were over \$300,000. We told them straight out that this amount was way beyond our capability, even though it might be what they see as their need. On Thursday, our board meets to approve the 2012 budget and the amount for Sudan will be \$175,000 and that is \$25,000 more than last year.

The church is responsible for spending. We are not going to babysit their disbursements. If they decide that the amount they are receiving doesn't cover expenses and they have to disburse it as they see fit, it may mean that what they had budgeted for pastor's salary may be reduced so everyone receives at least some amount; that's their decision, not ours. It may mean that the \$100 you designated for Kazimilio [the student] is going to be only \$50 in order that everyone gets something.

This year as part of their budget process, the ELCSS/S has developed a stipend scale for all workers. It is their guide for paying stipends. Even though they have that as a guide, they may not be able to achieve the levels indicated because they were not able to come up with additional funds to support their budget, except for what they receive from LHF. This would all be an easy process if their budget was met. We could easily keep track of who is getting what. Because they are not able to meet their budget, this becomes a little more difficult, especially keeping the integrity of the donor. We appreciate your willingness to support the pastors and we hope you can understand the dilemma.

We want to be upfront with you in this regard. This year, as you have seen, we have been pretty outspoken in terms of groups wanting to support various individuals and projects. Unless it is authorized by the church, no projects should be undertaken. If we are the major provider of funds, we want to know what is going to be supported. If pastors find donors to build them a church or provide some other need other than what is in our budget, how will a seminary operate or how will pastors be paid, little as it might be? Unless synod and groups step up and support the budget items the church has requested, the possibility exists that the structure could collapse. It is for this reason that the consulting group has indicated that the number one decision is that all activity be approved by the church leadership.

You also asked about a group going over this summer. This certainly would be helpful if they would be geared to do some general maintenance of the buildings—painting, clearing of brush, and reconditioning tables and chairs. So far, a good job isn't being done in the upkeep of property and a volunteer group could help with that.

If you were to teach, as you have offered, what subjects or topics would you bring? Except for late summer and early fall, our teaching schedule is arranged; although you could hook on to take an hour a day or so for something you would present. If you want to discuss any of this further, please give me a call. Always remember my “refrain” when anyone wants to discuss the situation—”this is Africa.” That means not everything works like it does in the good old USofA. People have a hard time envisioning this, especially as it relates to Sudan.

God's blessings and thanks for your patience and understanding.

R. Rahn

JANUARY 23

Rev. John Temple was a missionary to Sri Lanka before serving as pastor of a congregation in Ladue, Missouri. Rev. Rahn wrote to him asking if he had heard anything pertaining to the mission field where he formally served. Mervyn Fernando and Raja Fernando, pastors of the Lutheran church of Sri Lanka, were attempting to present themselves as leaders of the church body upon the death of Ranaldo Fernando. Rev. Temple responded to Rev. Rahn's inquiry.

From: Rev. John Temple

To: Robert Rahn

Subject: Sri Lanka, etc.

Dear Bob,

Greetings in Christ! We thank God for your birthday, ordination, and your many valuable years of service in His church!!! What a blessing that so much

money has been raised for the ministry! Pat and I would like to pass on a tithe from a personal gift that we received recently, specifically earmarked for the Tamil *Book of Concord* project. We first would like an update on that project. If you could inform us, we would appreciate it.

I am not surprised that Mervyn Fernando continues to use your letterhead and claims an official standing with the LHF. That is standard fare. When we saw him in Gampaha in June 2010, he was also declaring that I was official LCMS and “owed” him. I could not convince him that Pat and I came as individuals not representing any entity?

Regarding the Synodical Mission Board: yes, there is a board. It is trying to set policy under the new convention regulations. Pat sends her regards.

May God bless us all as we attempt to serve Him.

Your brother in Christ,

John Temple

From: Robert Rahn

To: Edward Sunge Nzeme

Subject: Information

Dear Edward,

I was just on the phone with a pastor from Buffalo, New York, who has been involved in a rescue operation of getting a family out of Ethiopia and they are currently in Khartoum. Their rescue required funds to be given to some group for helping them. He wanted help getting funds to this family in Khartoum.

Instead of immediately offering our channel, I suggested that the first step would be for the family to be in touch with our pastor in Khartoum and then some arrangements might be able to be made. Who would we have in Khartoum to be the best contact and with whom we would have the best opportunity for communication with email? Could you send me the name and the email? Who else do we have to give us reliable help?

Please let me know. Eventually I might put this pastor and our Khartoum man in contact with each other. I did, however, feel a church connection was the item of first importance.

Thanks for your help. One never knows what calls come our way.

God's blessings.

RRahn

The following message comes from a pastor from Kenya who moved to Helsinki, Finland and whom we encouraged to start an English/Swahili speaking church service. We began to send support in the form of English books and materials, including outdated Sunday school materials. When Rev. Richard Ondicho

Otiso's wife, Kirsi, received them, she cried because she had never seen such beautiful lessons. We then dutifully asked the Lutheran Book Store, Eastpoint, Michigan and St. John Sunday school, Fraser, Michigan, to save unused materials which could be shipped to Finland. Rev. Otiso shared his deep feelings as a pastor.

Dear Rev. Dr. Rahn,

Greetings from cold Helsinki. The main of writing this email is to thank you for the Sunday school materials that we had received in November. My wife has been organizing them so that they share the responsibility among other Sunday school teacher. Yesterday evening they had the Sunday school teachers' meeting and it was so nice that the materials that you have been sending are a wonderful tool for our Sunday school work. For now, we have 20 children attending our Divine Service. In this respect therefore, I will never ever forget the great support that you have given to us as a congregation. As I took the train to church this morning to meet somebody there, I read something from the materials that you had sent us, and it was the right time. I have been on a shaky state for the past three months, but this brought me joy and contentment. My wife Kirsi is soon going to be unemployed as their work is finishing and due to this, I have been worried of our financial status now. When I share this, it does not mean I am asking for help – not at all, but I just wanted to share where I am and the challenges that I have faced.

Most of my members from outside Finland have become more and more sensitive on some issues, although I have pretended as if I don't have any problems, but these foreigners are much sensitive to every small comment. In Finland racism has gone up and indeed it is now rooted in the Church more than any other time.

All in all, I thank God that I have a chance to serve here at St. Barnabas. "God never fails" so did you say and so do I believe. I would want to get a copy of the book that you just wrote [*Jesus Never Fails: Volume 1*]. If you are able, we would need catechisms, even if they are ten or so. They can be sent with folks visiting our congregation from the U.S. I shall keep you posted on our developments. I once again say thank you for your sacrifice for us "immigrants."

God bless you.

Rev. Richard Ondicho Otiso

Pastor: St. Barnabas International Evangelical
Lutheran Congregation Helsinki-Finland

JANUARY 28

From: Abel Andrew
To: Robert Rahn
Subject: reports

To Robert Rahn,

I am the very one who is serving in an area where Muslims are having big [problem] with my congregations and they burned the Church where we do [prayer] and it was not easy to have [prayer] at 9:00 to 11:00. I could send you a report because you all should report to the head office. I also report all this to head office. It appears that all I'm sending is not reaching you because the war, which is in our area, affects so many things, including the lack of communication. I forwarded this to the head office to provide information to help me do church work in the Nuba Mountains. Although it is sometimes difficult for me to be found, Dr Phillip Giessler managed to find me when he came to Sudan, even talking to me in regard to problems I was facing. Thank you and grace and peace of our Lord be to you.

FEBRUARY 1

For a time, much work was being done in Sri Lanka, but there are failures to report. LHF had a significant project underway with a group of confessional Lutheran pastors, including Rev. Fernando, a tireless worker who had translated the Sinhalese *Book of Concord*, which LHF proceeded to publish. When the infamous tsunami of a few years ago hit India and Sri Lanka, Rev. Fernando and his wife were killed when the train they were riding on was swept from its tracks. Hundreds of people died. There were several attempts to resurrect our work, but the individuals involved were imposters, only interested in tapping a money supply. One of the staunchest pastors was the Rev. Rudge Pereira, who referred to himself as being a member of the "Concord Church," namely the one that accepted the *Book of Concord*. He warned me of the Lutheran imposters. To this day, I still have regular contact with Rudge, who feels that Lutheranism in Sri Lanka is lacking a genuine confessional basis. This was a concern he addressed on several occasions.

FEBRUARY 2

From: Arthur Bolstad
To: Robert Rahn
Subject: Hi from South Sudan

I am here, as you know, teaching. I have covered the *Small Catechism* first—as I needed something to do while waiting for my books to come. Then I realized

the students did not know the catechism and I felt they needed at least that as a foundation. I am still a bit concerned that the philosophy in Dogmatics is higher than they are ready for, but we will see. I hand out the books tomorrow.

I am feeling very welcome here. Everyone helps to keep me happy. Saturday I will tour a refugee camp and an orphanage locally. We'll see what that implies.

Personally, I would rather travel the buses than pay the extra for the airlines and taxi travel, but that is probably a personal preference concept. It does seem that it would take about the same elapsed time—although the fatigue factor for bus travel should be taken into account. I believe we need to work out a freight system with the buses to keep the cost down of sending books and other materials to South Sudan.

The rains are threatening but not yet. I am singing with the students for an hour a day, getting them to know a few of the old traditional Lutheran songs from the hymnal.

Thanks again for the opportunity to serve here.

In Christ,

Arthur Bolstad

Dear Art,

Good to have news from you in Yambio. I can well imagine how basic the need is there for theology. We now have the catechism booked for Rev. James May to teach at the end of the first year because that fits best into May's schedule. It will work out [well] to have them exposed to it and then another review of it at the end of their first year. I really don't mind the duplication of that and other topics as they won't get it all the first round.

Glad to get your assessment of needs and I pass those along to Jeff and Jim Fandrey. I'm sure we will get those improvements. We sent the money to finish the seminary building. I wonder if you'll get to move in before you go. There is also a professor's study attached that will probably need furnishings.

I had someone call today wondering if they could send a team of volunteers to Yambio and if there would be work. I'd say there was a lot of maintenance and upgrading work on the buildings that could be done. They don't seem to keep things up the way they should. What do you see?

It's good you are singing the hymns. They get stuck on just a few like "Rock of Ages" or "Just as I Am." How is the hymnbook supply? You took some along if I remember. I hope the books have arrived. Today is Thursday, so there should have been a flight.

If you can figure something out with their help on the shipping of stuff, that would be a big bonus. You don't want to hear about the first container we shipped at a cost of about \$25,000 before it all ended. I would think the guys would have

a little more ingenuity to help in those details, but they just don't seem to be able to come up with ideas or want to.

But you can come to all your own conclusions and we can compare notes when you get back. We will pay for a flight from St. Louis to Detroit for a meeting. [The meetings] are helpful for us to keep things in perspective.

[The ELCSS/S leaders] will soon receive the disappointing news about their budget for 2012. We have to get others into the helping mode, especially synod taking some initiative and ownership. You can talk to the Bishop about getting fellowship with [the LCMS]. I think they have made some moves in that direction for the past ten years without action taking place as of yet.

It's good to have you there getting things off on the right foot. Thanks so much for your most important contribution. Your role as a veteran is perfect for the "early innings."

God bless you and keep you healthy.

RRahn

FEBRUARY 3

An ongoing problem is directing support to harmonize with the mission of the LHF.

From: Don Neuendorf

To: Robert Rahn;

Subject: Sudan church and seminary update

Dear brothers,

I received the letter (below) just a few days ago. I'm sure you have received similar entreaties. Not wanting to encourage competition for gifts or cause hard feelings, I hope to raise some funds or gather some practical gifts to take with me next fall in my teaching slot. If any of you have good ideas for how to coordinate support that we can provide for the current students, and for the pastors of Sudan, I'd appreciate the guidance.

Don Neuendorf

Senior Pastor, St. Paul Lutheran Church

Ann Arbor, Michigan

Hi beloved in Christ how are you with all the families?

We are all OK with the rest of the family doing the same pastoral work, even if it is difficult work we are still doing it. God is there to help us for His work can never fail. My Teacher I am really very poor after graduation and ordination. I have no proper church building or even chalice for the Communion service. Please kindly in Christ can you help me? We are the same family in Christ. Pass my regard to all the faithful on Sunday. Bless we God.

Greetings Don,

Thank you for your concern about the students and pastors for whom we are encouraging support. The practical gifts you may gather are certainly appropriate and may be distributed as you see fit. Any monetary support should be directed through LHF, as we have just spent many hours on preparing the budget and we would appreciate all students and church workers to be treated equally. The best way for that to happen is for the church to be the dispenser of the funds that we provide through our budget. Since LHF continues to be the primary investor in the ELCSS/S and works very closely with the church treasurer and executive officers, we are pretty insistent on this.

We are also beginning an effort to impress on the workers the fact that they cannot continue to serve with the expectation that we are going to always be standing by with payments. It is up to them to ascertain avenues whereby they can support themselves. It may mean doing some gardening, whereby they raise their basic food source. We do not expect everyone to have a cell phone, motorcycle, or other amenities that require even more monthly payments for phone charges, fuel, etc.

If you provide funds and find that you would like the funds designated for a certain student, that could be arranged. The student or pastor should not assume that this then becomes something over and beyond what the church has designated their stipend to be. We have seen the church take some steps forward this year by developing ten grades or levels of stipends and we think that is a good effort. We want to try and educate them to become more self-sufficient and have advised them that our intention each year is to reduce the stipends they receive.

Right now, there is a congregation in Massachusetts that is supporting three pastors, and one of those is the man you heard from. He, of course, has an advantage over others in that he has access to email. That may be contributing to the fact that he is having financial difficulties.

This year, it appears that we are raising the budget for Sudan by \$50,000 and we look to sources of support that would help us cover this. Most of it goes towards stipends. We have indicated in this past year that we will hold back the portion that we consider needs to be used for translating and publishing, an item of neglect for the past ten years.

I hope this is helpful as we view things from a global perspective.

Thanks for asking for our view.

RR

FEBRUARY 7

From: Japheth Dachi

To: Robert Rahn

Greetings in the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ who is the center of our preaching. I am taking this time to thank the church in Massachusetts for accepting to sponsor me, Rev. Kazimilio, and Rev. Gibbs. Kazimilio is serving in Tambora about 200 miles away from Yambio in Giaara congregation. Gibbs is in Saura. As from May 2008, I was the principal of CLIHM, and as from October 2010, I was elected to the interim president of ELCSS/S up to last year in October, when our second bishop was elected. Both Revs. Kazimilio and Gibbs were my students.

In 1 Cor. 3:06, Paul was very clear and is still clear that he planted, Apollos watered, and God made the seed to grow. On behalf of all who are being sponsored, allow me to thank them for using the gifts given to them by God for a good course and that is to help in the preaching of the Gospel.

May they be blessed.

Dachi, Principal, CLIHM

Dear ELCSS/S Partners,

This will serve as a brief update on the activities pertaining to the seminary functioning in Yambio. The third class of students began their session on January 16 with an orientation by the officials of the seminary, including Japhet Dachi, Nicholas Louis, Edward Nzeme, Wilson Noah, and others. Our first instructor, Rev. Art Bolstad, arrived on the scene on January 24 and is now settled into his teaching routine at CLIHM. We are pleased to report that two more students have joined the class, bringing the total to the expected number of 20. Japhet informs me that there could be one more student joining this class, making a total of 21.

In past consultations, the participants indicated that the primary focus of activity in Sudan would be seminary education. Other high priorities included the necessity of all activities by individuals and groups to be coordinated through the office of the Bishop; this would help to avoid duplication of efforts and enable the church to strive for common goals and objectives.

We have been pleased to hear from several churches indicating their willingness to adopt a pastor or student. This certainly is commendable since we need to provide stipends, not only for the students, but for the pastors already in the field. We have just finished an intense effort at establishing the LHF budget for 2012. It will be presented to the Board next Thursday. Even though we are suggesting an increase in the Sudan budget, we are not able to provide the amount requested

for the ELCSS/S or CLIHM. If any other groups are making commitments for the work in Sudan, it is important that Bishop Noah and LHF [are] aware of it. We earnestly suggest that consideration be given to support the students, pastors, and other church workers. We need this help so that LHF can get back to its primary work of translating and publishing the books and materials that are needed in the seminary and church. Students or pastors can be adopted with a monthly commitment of \$100.

Above all, please continue to hold up the ELCSS/S in prayer during this critical year of growth and expansion. The opportunities for growth are phenomenal. We have added manpower, but we need to provide for their needs so that they can carry out important study and ministry.

The Lord's blessings during this Epiphany (mission) season.

LHF Staff

This article appeared in the Lutheran Charities Newsletter published out of Addison, Illinois, written by Rev. Tim Hetzner, executive director:

Reverend Robert Rahn of Lutheran Heritage Foundation Seeks Support for Sudanese Seminary

Reverend Robert Rahn of Lutheran Heritage Foundation is seeking support for a Lutheran seminary in Sudan. He explains... The Lutheran Heritage Foundation, sponsor of the Concordia Lutheran Institute for the Holy Ministry (CLIHM), Yambio, South Sudan, is looking for help to cover travel expenses for volunteer pastors who serve on the seminary faculty from Finland, Kenya and Tanzania. They do not have a way to generate support for their travel as do pastors here in the U.S. Our first volunteer going over is Rev. Art Bolstad and he will be there for three weeks. He personally is covering most of his own expenses. The second need is for help to cover the monthly stipend of the 20 students who will be in the seminary program. This is to help sustain their families while they are attending the seminary. We provide them with a modest \$75 per month and it amounts to \$750 for ten months for each student, and for the 20 students that means \$15,000 for each year. We try to fund this outside of the regular budget of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Sudan/South Sudan for which we provided \$100,000 in 2011. CLIHM is hosting its third group of students who will be in training for the next four years. Anyone interested in serving as a faculty member can email Rev. Rahn, LHF founder, for more information.

FEBRUARY 14

Students arrived in Yambio for the beginning of their second year of classes at CLIHM in Yambio, South Sudan.

FEBRUARY 19

Classes began, but Rev. Dr. William Schumacher's arrival was delayed due to lack of space on Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) flights from Kampala to Yambio.

FEBRUARY 26

Rev. Schumacher conducted a one week intensive due to his late arrival. The class day was lengthened, enabling him to cover the topic. It was crucial to make reservations sooner so the remaining instructors were assured of connections for an on-time arrival. Nothing was certain when the country was and continues to be in a constant state of turmoil.

APRIL

During this month, Rev. Fandrey made an 18-day trip through four countries to release and introduce three new titles. He stopped first in India, where a new edition of the Tamil-language *One Hundred Bible Stories* was given to Lutheran schoolteachers and children.

"Almost 75 years back, the missionaries from the LCMS used this book to teach the Bible," said Rev. J. Samuel, president of the India Evangelical Lutheran Church. For many years, this book was out of print. LHF reprinted the book about five years ago, but those copies were quickly claimed by families throughout India and the island nation of Sri Lanka. "The work of LHF is very important all over the world, particularly in India where diversified groups exist," President Samuel said. "LHF complements the Lutheran Church in doing the Lord's ministry.

Three days and 5,000 miles later, the next stop was St. Petersburg, Russia where Rev. Fandrey met with Leif Camp, overseer of the new distribution of materials to the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ingria in Russia. He also met with the bishop of that church body, Rev. Arri Kugappi. Through an interpreter, Bishop Kugappi voiced his appreciation for the influx of LHF books into his area of Russia, saying LHF's help is vital to fortifying both the Ingrian laity and pastors with proper confessional Lutheran understandings. The next book to be published will be a reprint of Luther's *Small Catechism* in Russian, which is in great demand.

While in Latvia, a new edition of the *Book of Concord* was distributed to pastors and lay leaders who were excited to have this foundational book of the Lutheran faith. More than 60 people attended a mini-symposium at the Lutheran

consistory in Riga, the nation's capital. Prior to the distribution, four speakers gave presentations on the importance of this volume, including the Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia (ELCL), Rev. Janis Vanags.

Rev. Fandrey's tour concluded with a stop in Kiev, Ukraine, where children received the same book distributed in India, *One Hundred Bible Stories*, this time translated into Ukrainian. Rev. Slavik Horpynchuk, bishop of the Ukrainian Lutheran Church, reflected on how things have changed in Ukraine since he was a child. "If we had tried to print and distribute this book then, all books would have been immediately confiscated by the Communist Russian government," he said. "In the best case, there would be a small fine. In the worst, my parents would have lost their jobs and also me. I would have been taken away from the family and transported to an orphanage to keep me away from 'harmful Christian influences.' Thanks be to God that times have changed."

JUNE

Every three years, there are conventions of the LWML districts, and LHF strives to be represented at each gathering, including the national convention. LWML's "mighty mites" help to spread the Word. Pennies, nickels, dimes, and quarters—day after day, these mites are saved by women across the United States and Canada. The LWML faithfully uses these hundreds of thousands of dollars to fund mission projects at the local, national, and global levels. Dozens of local LWML societies have sponsored proposals on LHF's behalf. As a result, LHF mission projects were on the ballot at over 20 district LWML conventions in the U.S. in 2012 alone. LHF projects were approved at conventions in the New England, California-Nevada-Hawaii, Oklahoma, and Montana districts.

JULY 1

Each year around this time, the LHF sends a suggested project for Sunday and parochial schools to potentially adopt. Each group is invited to utilize the provided materials to enhance each child's or adult's understanding of the scope of the mission. Usually, there is a short video depicting how the project assists intended beneficiaries. LHF receives many compliments from teachers on the easy-to-use materials sent to interested groups, including maps, pictures, posters, craft ideas, and even recipes for food native to the targeted area.

In some West African countries like Benin and Burkina Faso, the people continue to practice the animist traditions of their ancestors, worshipping the spirits of nature. In Haiti, voodoo remains a strong influence while the great cathedrals of France stand empty. Into this darkness, donors could help the Gospel

light shine! For the “Sharing Jesus in French-Speaking Africa and Haiti” project, children were asked to consider contributing towards the publishing of Luther’s *Small Catechism* or *A Child’s Garden of Bible Stories* into French at five dollars per copy. Some schools prepared a graph that showed how many books their chapel offerings were going to provide.

JULY 10

A faculty for the 2013 academic year of CLIHM in Yambio, Sudan began to gather. Each faculty member has been asked to generate enough funds to provide for their travel to Sudan while LHF covered other expenses.

JULY 14

The value of books published by LHF and used in various settings is demonstrated best by the comments of a pastor who is actively working in prison ministries while using LHF materials (as reported in the July 2012 *Word at Work* newsletter). These comments are reminders and validation of the great value donors’ gifts are in bringing the Gospel in a variety of settings.

“Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them...”

Hebrews 13:1

Through the ministry of Rev. Karl Heimer, El Paso, Texas, the Spanish *Bible with Small Catechism* finds its way through the locked gates of the El Paso Detention Center in Texas. “There are several challenges when sharing Christ’s love with prisoners there. Many inmates don’t speak English, and there is a lack of good Christian materials available in their languages. Books like LHF’s Spanish *Bible with Small Catechism* open the gates to inmate’s hearts.”

Rev. Heimer reflected that, of all the different Bibles available to the detainees at the El Paso Center, LHF’s Spanish *Bible with Small Catechism* is the only one prisoners ask for. Inmates truly appreciate the catechism. “They see it as a guide to understanding the Bible, and it’s easier for them to locate certain aspects of faith, doctrine and beliefs,” he said.

Pastors believe that the Bibles and catechisms provided by LHF make an important difference in the spiritual and day-to-day lives of the prisoners. “You see the Holy Spirit really working in the lives of the inmates, how their attitudes and hearts change as we visit them every Saturday,” Rev. Heimer said. “This is very encouraging, because we know this is a real and urgent need, but there are not a lot of pastors serving the jail population.”

The summer newsletter also carried an article announcing changes in the Thrivent Choice Dollars program. The program is designed by Thrivent to give clients an opportunity to direct gifts to their favorite charity. The amount avail-

able is based on the investment in the company. “We’re very grateful to the donors who have directed their Thrivent dollars to LHF. This program has allowed LHF to translate and publish books that would have otherwise lacked funding,” said Jeff Rahn, LHF’s director of operations.

Donors were instructed contact Thrivent to see whether they qualified, and if so, to direct their Choice Dollars to LHF. LHF announced that the first volume of LHF history, *Jesus Never Fails*, was available as an eBook and in paperback. The 330-page book is available for a suggested donation of \$10.

SEPTEMBER 5

(From the September 2012 “Word at Work” newsletter)

A long journey in Burma: “I’ve learned we should baptize babies”

by Jennifer Bagnall

It was a long way for many of the conference participants to come. Though some had traveled on top of a bus for three days and two nights to get to Yangon, a large city in Burma (also called Myanmar), the spiritual journey they were about to take was even more intense.

LHF had invited about 30 Christian Bible college teachers from a variety of denominations (Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist, Reformed) to attend the “Reformation and its Impact Today” conference. There, LHF’s Executive Director Rev. James Fandrey, and Rev. Ted NaThalang, LHF translation coordinator for Southeast Asia, were among the pastors introducing them to the Burmese *Small Catechism*, *The Augsburg Confession*, and *A Child’s Garden of Bible Stories*—all very Lutheran books in a country where only four percent of the population is Christian, and only a handful are Lutheran.

With little background in Lutheran teachings, many attendees grew obviously uncomfortable as the conference progressed. When discussion turned to the Sacraments, “that’s when the rubber hit the road,” said Rev. NaThalang.

“It’s like you worship Luther,” said one man.

It was then that Rev. Fandrey took the opportunity to explain to the group about the five “solae” of the Lutheran faith: sola Scriptura (Scripture alone), sola gratia (grace alone), sola fide (faith alone), sola Christo (Christ alone), and soli Deo Gloria (glory to God alone). It was a radically new way of thinking for the Christian teachers.

“Lutherans always go back to Scripture and what God says and not just rely on our logic,” said Rev. NaThalang. As study of the *Small Catechism* progressed, one participant challenged, “How can Christ be present in the bread and wine?”

“It is a matter of honoring God’s Word,” said Rev. NaThalang.

Even more telling was a statement made at the end of the conference, when participants were asked to tell the group what they had learned that day.

One member spoke for his group and said, “Today we have learned that we should baptize babies and infants.’ Though we had doubted, the Holy Spirit was obviously working in the room that day... These Christian teachers will bring back to their students the idea that Lutheranism isn’t just a denomination, but it is the Faith, a way of looking at Scripture that gives God the honor, the praise, and all the glory.”

OCTOBER 5

LHF prepared a program brochure that was sent out to all LWML groups. For those out of ideas, the proffered list could help these groups find a mission to support. On that list, “Preachers and Teachers,” for instance, is an LHF mission program that focuses on the birth of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of South Sudan/Sudan and its need for pastors to shepherd the people. Included in the related kit is a six-minute DVD about LHF’s work in South Sudan/Sudan and the seminarians who minister to the people there. The kit also includes a Bible study and prayers. And if the meeting concludes with good food (highly likely), the kit contains several simple and tasty recipes for authentic Sudanese foods, including Sudanese cinnamon tea and peanut macarons. Participants were encouraged to consider supporting the “Preachers and Teachers” mission project. Even the smallest amounts help provide room and board for a Sudanese seminarian.

NOVEMBER 1

Three months after Rev. Herb Graf “retired” from the ministry, he realized he would have no permanent position of service, but what Graf did have was plenty of energy and a passion for mission work. He heard about a young mission organization that was just getting started: LHF.

Over the years, LHF has had a number of retired pastors and teachers who fit the criteria for an Independent Regional Promotion Representative (IRPR)—“recently retired, yet energetic.” We devised the IRPR program and contracted positions where our representatives work out of their homes to contact congregations in their areas. They visit with pastors, attend conferences and conventions to set up preaching dates or speaking events, and they come up with other ideas for ways a congregation can help support an LHF mission project. The arrangement worked especially well for Rev. Graf and a dozen other members of the IRPR team. Graf has put LHF on the Texas map with his relentless work above and beyond anything LHF ever expected. As he prepared to retire, LHF was wishing they had about ten more Herbs serving. Who couldn’t learn something from a man who is so enthused about his work that when he gets up in the morning, his first question is “What can I do today, for the Lord and for the LHF mission?” Herb was known to ask complete strangers to help the LHF mission cause.

Rev. Herb Graf, IRPR, gave notice of his retirement after over 17 years of service to LHF in Texas.³ “One of the best things that happened in my life was my contact with the LHF,” proclaimed Rev. Graf. “It’s provided a wonderful opportunity to bring Jesus and God’s salvation to souls throughout the world.”⁴

NOVEMBER 7

Much the same as any school, CLIHM requires curriculum and instructors. Earlier in the year, a preliminary 2013 schedule was sent out to potential instructors. The schedule was fine-tuned during the ensuing months and then published on this date.

3 Even after he announced his second retirement, he was always ready to help out when needed for conference or convention. His wife, Harriet, was a great help and Herb stated, “It’s important for an IRPR to have a supportive spouse, and it helps if they are willing to travel.”

4 Please pray for Herb. Since his retirement, he suffers from Parkinson’s and dementia. Harriet keeps us informed as she cares for him. Herb has been known to preach old sermons to residents of the facility he is in and he has even conducted a full Elder’s meeting in the dining hall. The fruits of his labor continue to be harvested in Texas. Praise and thank God for this amazing talent used in LHF service.

JANUARY 10

The year began with an encouraging announcement regarding a matching gift from one generous and anonymous LHF supporter. This donor had announced that their foundation would match gifts to LHF up to a \$200,000 threshold. “Obviously, the matching donor is very supportive of LHF’s mission of translating the books of our Lutheran faith into the languages of the world,” said Rev. James Fandrey, LHF executive director. This was a 2-to-1 match for anyone who had never given a gift to LHF before, or if more than 13 months had passed since their last gift.

JANUARY 23

(From the January/February 2013 “Word at Work” newsletter)

Grafting Ukrainian branches into an American family tree: “God created us to be together.”

by Jennifer Bagnall

Few would choose to be on an international flight into the U.S. on this date, but Heather and Chad Tidwell of Cheyenne, Wyoming, were thrilled because they were bringing home a new member of their family: a 12-year-old Ukrainian orphan named Jonathan.

They had traveled a long and tedious road before the pieces began to fall into place. It had all started when, over the radio, they heard about a program that helps American families host Ukrainian and Latvian orphans in their homes for Christmas. After a lot of prayer, the Tidwells (including 14-year-old Caleb and 10-year-old Charleston) decided they would act. The family chose two children from Ukraine to join them for the holidays: Yulia and Anton.

To prepare for their arrival, the family began searching for Christian materials in Ukrainian. To Heather’s delight, she came across the LHF website and found the Ukrainian translation of *A Child’s Garden of Bible Stories*.

“As a family, we always do devotionals, and we wanted Yulia and Anton to be a part of that,” Heather said. “Their background papers said that they spoke a little English, but we found out after they arrived that they really didn’t speak any English.”

The books of Bible stories bridged the language barrier. “Every single night while Yulia and Anton were here, we would read a story,” Heather recalled. “We’d read in English, and they’d read in Ukrainian. To hear them reading these stories from the Bible in their native language, here in America, and to be able to give

them that opportunity...it was a blessing.” After spending a couple of weeks with Yulia and Anton, the Tidwells decided they would pursue adopting the siblings. They bought clothing and toys, preparing for Anton and Yulia to officially become part of their family. But before anything could be finalized, their father wanted back into Yulia and Anton’s lives, and the adoption was off.

But God had another plan. There was also a couple in California who had hosted Jonathan, another boy from Ukraine, during the holidays. The family heard about the Tidwells’ disappointment and promoted the idea that they consider adopting Jonathan.

Ten months after starting the hosting process, Heather and Chad Tidwell brought home Jonathan, whose name means “gift from God.” Though there are challenges, their new son is doing well in school and has settled into being one of the family.

Since Anton and Yulia took their Bible storybook with them, a second Ukrainian *One Hundred Bible Stories* was provided by LHF for Jonathan and his adoptive parents. “We’re so happy Jonathan’s with us, and we know for sure that God has called us to be his parents. Adoption is such a beautiful picture of what Christ did for us, because we were all adopted into His family, too. With His death on the cross, His burial and resurrection, we’ve been adopted and become part of the body of Christ,” said Heather.

FEBRUARY 24

The installation of Rev. Larry Rockemann as the newest LHF staff member took place at Bethany Lutheran Church, Naperville, Illinois with Rev. Walter Otten (LHF board chairman), Rev. James Fandrey (LHF executive director), Dr. Robert Rahn (LHF founder), Rev. Timothy Rossow (senior pastor of Bethany), and Rev. Jonathan Fisk (associate pastor of Bethany) participating in the Rite of Installation. In his new position, Rev. Rockemann will be responsible for developing strong connections with churches, foundations, and other groups who might play a part in the LHF mission. “Ever since I came to learn about LHF and what is going on there, I’ve been impressed with the naked power of the Word of God to convict people of their sin and turn them to their Savior in Christ Jesus,” Rev. Rockemann said. “Putting the Word of God into people’s hands, in their language, is just simple, basic stuff, but wow! Talk about the dynamite of the Gospel.”

Rev. Rockemann has begun opening new avenues of support, especially on the East Coast. With family connections in Illinois, Kansas City, and Louisiana, he is available nationwide. Prior to joining LHF, Rev. Rockemann was vice president of pastoral services and chaplain at Lutheran Life Communities in Illinois. He has also been a parish pastor for several congregations, campus pastor at Con-

cordia University-River Forest, Illinois, and director of placement and dean of students at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis.

MARCH 15

(From the March 2013 "Word at Work" newsletter:)

"We intend to provide a Swahili catechism to each child"

by Jennifer Bagnall

The 11-year-old boy scans the unfamiliar Kisumu street, a little unsure of himself for the first time since the heated argument with his father this morning. In a small space between two shops, he spots a couple of boys his size. Feeling more confident, he walks over to say hello. But something is wrong. The other boys' speech is slurred, and their eyes can't seem to focus on his face. Uneasy once again, the boy turns and continues his aimless walk down the street, searching for a place to rest.

In Kisumu and other cities of Kenya, these kinds of scenes happen every day. It's estimated that upward of 100,000 young boys live on the streets, a thousand of them in Kisumu. The boys survive by begging and stealing. They sleep on sidewalks in town, in small abandoned shops, and on occasion, in the underground sewers. Most, says Rev. Dan Schmelzer, become addicted to sniffing cobbler's glue they buy for a few shillings (two cents), resulting in physical symptoms such as slurred speech, unsteady gait, clumsiness and lethargy. Long term, the chemicals destroy the boys' lungs and impair their cognitive development.

While other social programs provide places for the boys to sleep and meals for their bellies, Rev. Schmelzer and his wife, Patty, have seen the boys' greater need to be part of a family. They see the boys' need for Jesus.

Finding a better way

Rev. Schmelzer (a volunteer pastor in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya) and his wife moved to Kenya 11 years ago to be administrators of a home for street children. As they gained experience, the Schmelzers discovered that many of the street children had families who wanted them. To put their new outlook into practice, the Schmelzers ventured out on their own and founded Capstone Ministries in 2005. "The name was derived from Psalm 118:22 – 'The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes.' We felt this verse captured our vision for street children: restored to community, reconciled with family and redeemed by God," said Rev. Schmelzer.

Each week, the seven staff members spend time on the street, meeting the boys in their environment. As trust builds, the boys are invited to the Lutheran compound in Kisumu where they can bathe, wash their clothes, play games, sing, hear the Word of God, and receive individual counseling. From there, steps are taken

to reconcile the boys with their families. “Our staff has become very skilled in the processes of counseling rural families,” Rev. Schmelzer said. “They accompany the boys to their rural homes – a critical emotional and spiritual time for the boy, his family and our staff.”

Putting down roots

Capstone has instituted eight pastor-led Bible studies in the Kisumu area, made up of family members who have had a boy reconciled from the street. They have also started yearly Capstone Camps, where boys who have persevered through challenging circumstances can participate in spiritual lessons, Scout activities, community service, games and fellowship.

Now, Rev. Schmelzer wants to start giving each child (and his family) a Swahili-language *Small Catechism*. Each morning, a pastor will lead a lesson on the 10 Commandments, the Lord’s Prayer, or baptism. “This is often the most moving and emotional time at camp, as the boys stand in prayer, waiting to be baptized, receiving the seal and power of their faith in Jesus,” Rev. Schmelzer said.

The Schmelzers’ vision has been successful. To date, Capstone has reconciled 249 boys to their families. By sending a catechism home with each boy, the Schmelzers believe the family’s bonds to each other and to God will be strengthened. “This tool (the catechism) will empower families to dig deep into the Word of God,” he said. “They can put down roots into God’s Word.”

MARCH 17-19

The following report points out how difficult it is to conduct a seminar in a war-torn area while living under the threat of attack and loss and of life and materials.

Introduction of Gbaya Catechism in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Central African Republic (ELC CAR)

by Rev. Daniel Abou Touka, project coordinator

Originally scheduled from March 7 to 10, the introduction of Gbaya *Small Catechism* in the ELC CAR has been postponed until March 17-19. The rationale for this change of time: The trouble in this country made that only four pastors were present for this seminar. It was not possible for the leader of that Church to participate fully.

So, we decided to focus the seminary to the Gbaboua area and invite more catechists because they are those in charge of Christian education. Despite this inconvenience of time, the introduction workshop took place in the new period of time.

Facilitators: There were 3 facilitators.

- Pastor Daniel Abou Touka, LHF project coordinator
- Rev. Andrew Golike, president of Republic of Central Africa (RCA)
- Rev. Dr. Toué Ndanga, director of the Theological Seminary of Gbaboua

Participants: Instead of 30 participants, they were 43 from the 45 persons invited. The participants are all church workers (pastors, evangelists, catechists, leaders, and youth leaders).

Introduction schedule: We have observed the original schedule with some small modification. Instead of working until 17:30, we stopped at 16:45 because of the fear of rebels. So, we reduced time of work groups and discussions. We were also obliged to move to Cameroon on Sunday early in the morning.

Matter arising: The seminary was very participative and participants saw their capacity built as far as preaching, teaching and ethics was concerned. It was clear that Christian faith has been decreased during the last 10 years. Some reasons for that situation are:

- Lack of catechism. The catechism they used was without explanation and was out of stock many years now.
- Teaching catechism and Christian education was neglected over the years. Instead of six months to one year of catechism class, its duration varied between one week to two months.
- Building the knowledge capacity of church workers is very weak.
- Gbaya liturgy and songbooks are lacking.

Difficulties: The main difficulty was the war in this country. We were worried that rebel army will attack us and take off all what we had for this seminar.

Perspective:

- The church needs a good program of capacity building for catechists. Many of them must be recycled.
- A new project for Gbaya liturgy will be presented to LHF
- A good appointment planning is needed for the best Christian education.

Thanks are to God who rendered this seminar possible. There wasn't any case of illness and we were all protected.

“We want to thank LHF for this great event in RCA Church at a critical moment of war. We want to celebrate the presence of LHF in Cameroon, which to us is ‘grace upon grace.’ The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Cameroon has never had Luther’s *Small Catechism with Explanation* for Christian education. Today, 1,000 copies of this book are available for the Gbaya people. Our thanksgiving to God for all those who support the LHF program around the world,” said Rev. Touka. Thanks to Reverends Golike and Ndanga for their teaching during this introduction workshop and their encouragement.

Prayer request: the Central African Republic is now in a critical situation of war. Christians are suffering so much because rebels are attacking them regularly.
In Ngaoundere,
Pastor Daniel Touka

APRIL 21

Missionary Matt Heise reported on the Kyrgyz *Small Catechism*:

Members of Lutheran Church Concordia received the *Small Catechism with Explanation* in Kyrgyz. The Lutheran Church Concordia (LCC) is a daughter church of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. On April 21, 2013, several Kyrgyz-speaking members of the LCC ventured from their villages and towns into Bishkek to help celebrate the completion of the *Small Catechism with Explanation* in Kyrgyz. Bishop Kenjebek Botobaev showed the uniqueness of the LCC by preaching his sermon while alternating between two languages, Russian and Kyrgyz, for those gathered for the worship service.

After the service, Bishop Botobaev, praying in Kyrgyz, and Pastor Jakub Mamedov, in Russian, oversaw the dedication of the *Small Catechism* books. Rev. Jon Muhly, LCMS area facilitator for Russian and Central Asia, addressed those gathered, greeting them on behalf of their brothers and sisters in Christ in the LCMS, as well as exhorting them to supplement their reading of God's Word by studying the catechism. Afterwards, the catechisms were distributed to the Kyrgyz-speaking members, many of whom expressed their appreciation for this resource in their native language. Additionally, the catechisms are being delivered to the numerous groups and members who were unable to attend the Sunday celebration. Bishop Botobaev gave thanks to LHF for providing this resource.

APRIL 22 - MAY 6

Southeast Asia Trip Report

by Rev. Ted NaThalang

April 22-24—Translation workshop in Chiangmai for our Thai, Lao, Lahu, Hmong, and Akah translators. The purpose of the workshop is to teach and train them how to be a good translator to do LHF projects. These translators would translate from Thai to their dialects. Gunya [NaThalang] and I are the main presenters. I have asked Jo and David to help explain the editing and layout process. We did many case studies on translation work. About 15 people participated in the workshop.

April 28—Went to Cambodia for LHF Translation Workshop.

April 29-May 2—The LHF Translation Workshop in Cambodia. Purpose for this workshop is to teach and train them how to be good translators.

May 3—Go to Medan (Indonesia) to follow up on distribution of LHF books with Rev. Bonar Lumbantobingand and Rev. Mangisi Simorangkir.

May 4-6—Meeting with ALI (Indonesia Luther Academy) board, Rev. Mangisi, Rev. Bonar, and Rev. Nelsen. I was hoping to meet with Edwin also, but his wife was sick and he could not join us. It was a very good meeting to get LHF books distributed through direct phone contact to individual persons and to many synods giving them special discount.

Also, discussed with Rev. Bonar and Mangisi about *Book of Concord* translation project and Luther's Works, Vol. 31, "Freedom of a Christian." These books will be a great blessing to the Christians there. They also asked if they could use some of *Good News Journal* articles in their newsletter. I told them I will let them know when I have the answer.

APRIL 23-MAY 3

Rev. Fandrey filed this report on his trip to South Africa/Kenya:

Thursday, April 25, Pretoria, 3:30 a.m.—All flights were on time from Tuesday, April 23, 3:18 p.m. departure from Detroit Metro Airport through Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport to Johannesburg. I was met by Tobias Schmidt-Dahl, a three-month volunteer from Germany and Ethiopian student. Settled in guest housing at 6:30 p.m. The guest house is neat and clean, but very spartan.

Thursday, April 25, Pretoria, 7:30 a.m.—Had brief exchange with Dr. E.A.W. Weber and Dr. Wilhelm Weber, Jr. Attempted email connections with limited success; system is very slow. Maybe someone can give further assistance this p.m. Dereje from Ethiopia and Nicholas from Sudan are to arrive today.

Friday, April 26, Pretoria—Had quite a day with the Bishop's sister and family. The Bishop's sister, Renata, appeared at the seminary around 8:30 a.m. I had met her previously. Then, the Bishop appeared from his office asking me about my plans for the morning. I said that I needed a few miscellaneous items and would walk to acquire them. Renata and the Bishop insisted I allow Renata to drive me to the store because "it was too far to walk." "Okay," I said with some reluctance. The result: While I shopped, Renata met a lady friend and they both invited me to join them for breakfast, the occasion being Renata's birthday. I (LHF) paid the bill.

Friday, April 26, Pretoria, 1 p.m.—Presentation of Tswana *Book of Concord* all morning.

The History of the Tswana Translation of the *Book of Concord*

Presented by Dr. E. A. W. Weber

Most honourable bishops, honourable professors, dear friends and brothers in

the service of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,

It is a day to celebrate and to thank God. He has motivated Lutherans to love the confessions of the Lutheran Church which are for Lutheran pastors and congregations the binding exposition of the Bible, the inerrant, and infallible Word of God, to love them so much that they translated them into Setswana, thanking God for all those who will be mentioned by name in this presentation who got involved with the translation; thanking God also that he opened hands and purses of brothers and sisters in faith overseas enabling the Lutheran Heritage Foundation to give the green light last year to publish the Lutheran Confessions in one volume.

The time of translating the Lutheran confessions till the publication of the *Book of Concord* in Setswana covers a time of over 50 years, from 1960 till 2013.

In the beginning, the work was supported by the superintendents of the Bleckmar and Hermannsburg Missions. Teachers also at the Marang Lutheran Theological Seminary made use of the translation of the *Augsburg Confession* and the *Large Catechism* as study material. I mention with gratitude the missionaries Hermann Greve and Heinrich Voges, and mission superintendent Otto Brümmerhoff. Since the late 70s, the translation work was supported then by the Mission Directors of the Bleckmar mission and the bishops of the Lutheran Church of South Africa (LCSA), since the middle of the nineties of the previous century financially by the Lutheran Heritage Foundation.

They could celebrate in 2011 the *Book of Concord* in Swahili in a fine edition. Dr. Simojoki then supported the Tswana translation to be published in one volume. From the side of the staff of the LHF, the idea found full support. I mention by name: Rev. Jim Fandrey, the successor of Rev. Dr. Robert Rahn as head of LHF, and Mr. Jeff Rahn, the director of operations. A great thank you to them. The appreciation for the support of LHF is expressed on page two of the *Book of Concord* as follows: "The translation of the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church and the publishing of the confessions separately had been made possible by the Lutheran Heritage Foundation during 1997-2009." The publishing of the *Book of Concord* in one volume was made possible through the thoughtful gifts made by friends and relatives in honour of three 2011 events—the 50th year in the ministry of Rev. Dr. Robert L. Rahn, the 50th year of marriage of Rev. Dr. and Mrs. Robert L. Rahn, and the beginning of the 20th year for the Lutheran Heritage Foundation.

Some of the confessions of the Lutheran Church had already been published long ago in Setswana. The Apostolic and the Nicene Creeds were published in hymnbooks and in the editions of the catechism. I had used a few articles of the Athanasian Creed in my first sermon on the Sunday of Trinity in the Seminary chapel in Pretoria.

Still, during the seventies of the previous century, Pastor Dr. Friedrich Wilhelm Hopf, the director of the Mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Free Churches, (today the Mission of the Lutheran Churches) kept on motivating me to carry on with the translation of the confessions of the Lutheran Church in Setswana. For that reason, he even sent me the literal translation of the “Apology” from the Latin original into German by Prof. Dr. Horst Georg Pöhlmann (1967) to be of great help with translating the “Apology.”⁵

The translation work was attacked with greater zeal when Bishop Dr. David P. Tswaedi once came back from a meeting in Kenya in 1995 or 1996 bringing the message that Prof. Dr. Robert Preus from the Concordia Theological Seminary-Fort Wayne had promised that the Lutheran Heritage Foundation will support financially the translation of the confessions of the Lutheran Church into Setswana and their publication. This promise included a stipend which John Fehrmann deemed necessary for the director of the Tswana Translation Project for buying a computer with printer, paying for paper and ink for the printer, supplying the translators with dictionaries, etc. Later, when expenditures were to be reduced, I did not ask anymore to include this stipend into the yearly budget.

Bishop Tswaedi called pastor Josef Sephai in order that we three carry on with the translation work. We agreed that I should finish the translation of the *Apology*, pastor Josef Sephai to take the *Smalcald Articles*, and bishop Tswaedi the *Formula of Concord*. Pastor Sephai finished the translation of the *Smalcald Articles*, Bishop Tswaedi the translation of the “Epitome,” and after he finished a part of article two of the “Solid Declaration,” I finished the translation of the rest of the articles.⁶ I translated the *Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope*, also the preface to the *Book of Concord* of 1580, the Marriage Booklet, Baptismal Booklet, (the “Table of Duties” had been published with the *Small Catechism*), the Catalogue of Testimonies, both of Scripture and Orthodox Antiquity. We three could meet from 1996 till 2009 twice a year to revise the translations with the financial support of LHF for travelling and a daily allowance during meetings for pastor Sephai and bishop Tswaedi.

The translation of the confessions of the Lutheran Church could be published separately over the years. This agreement made it possible that the confessions could be in the hands of the Tswana already for several years before all could be published in one volume. I mentioned already when the *Augsburg Confession* and the *Large Catechism* were published in Setswana the first time. The 2nd edition of the *Augsburg Confession* appeared in 2003, the 1st edition of the *Apology* in 2004, the 1st edition of the *Smalcald Articles* together with the *Treatise on the Power and*

⁵ Philipp Melanchthon: *Apologia Confessionis Augustanae*. Übersetzt und hrg. von Horst Georg Pöhlmann. 1. Auflage. Gütersloher Verlagsaus Gerd Mohn, Gütersloh. 1967.

⁶ I asked Tswana speaking students at the seminary in Tshwane to translate some of the articles. Only the student Motlhatlosi Sebeelo delivered the translation of Sol. decl. 4.

Primacy of the Pope in 2007, the Creeds of the Ancient Church together with Dr. Martin Luther's two catechisms (the *Large Catechism* in 2nd edition) in 2007 together with the "Table of Duties," the Baptismal and Marriage Booklets, the 1st edition of the Epitome in 2003, and the 1st edition of the Solid Declaration in 2009.

I want to mention also another problem concerning translating into Setswana. Coming back to the sore issue why we have to oppose those who do not agree with our church in doctrine and confession, why we have to oppose them, and why we do not support them? We have to keep clear, how Christ wants his Church to be [built], mission work to be done, and the saving faith of Jesus Christ be kept pure and the administration of the sacraments intact in teaching and confessing "for Christians who are of weak faith, diffident, troubled, and heartily terrified because of the greatness and number of their sins, and are not worthy of the precious treasure and the benefits of Christ, and who feel and lament their weakness of faith, and from their hearts desire that they may serve God with stronger, more joyful faith and pure obedience."⁷ Bishop Dr. Jobst Schöne referred to this passage of the *Solid Declaration* in one of his published sermons to show why it is necessary to reject false doctrine and to be faithful to our conviction to be bound to the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament and to the confessions of the Lutheran Church.

Let me thank all of you for the interest shown through your presence, thanking the University of Pretoria that the presentation of the *Book of Concord* in Setswana could take place at these beautiful premises, and thanking the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Tshwane together with its rector and staff for planning the presentation, and all involved for catering and other duties. Let me close with a praise to God that he made it possible that the *Book of Concord* could be published in Setswana and with the prayer that it will serve many to be confirmed in the saving faith and the scriptural and evangelical administration of the sacraments and to be motivated to act accordingly—to build the Church and to expand the kingdom of God as Christ wants the Church to be established, the Word of God to be preached and taught distinguishing Law and Gospel according to the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions, all decisions in the Lutheran churches and missions among the Tswana to be taken and pastoral and missionary work to be done accordingly, and last not least: May God grant us all to believe and to be convinced that the Word of God, the preaching of the Gospel and the Sacraments are and fulfill what they promise to be and to fulfill.

I thank you for your attention.



⁷ Sol. decl. 7:69.

Rev. Nicholas Louis has been appointed Dean of the Seminary and Rev. Japhet Dachi principal.

It is noted that there are new Lutheran church bodies emerging in South Sudan. Groups in the USA are sending money to support these new church bodies. The town of Bor is one of the sites where a Lutheran church has been planted. The ELCSS/S is attempting to have merger talks with church leaders.

Rev. James Frandrey discussed the status of the ELCSS/S and noted that it was becoming more self-sustaining due to necessary funding cuts by LHF. The seminary program was also reviewed. The question was raised whether a deaconess program could again be incorporated into the seminary program.

Friday, April 26, Pretoria, 3:15 p.m.—Dereje Tilahun, translator and editor from Ethiopia (layman)

1. *Book of Concord*: ready for second printing, maybe Sept./Oct.; necessary to reduce font size and line spacing; 972 pages 1st edition, with changes—529 pages.

2. There are two major Lutheran churches in Ethiopia with one more emerging. These include the Ethiopia Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus—6 million members with Tilahun Menedo as the Bishop. There are 7823 congregations, 2658 pastors and 4999 evangelists. The second body is the Ethiopian Evangelical Lutheran Church with 1 million members.

3. *Book of Concord*: The first printing was an introductory edition of 800 copies. It did not provide sufficient coverage for the 8,000 congregations, 3,000 pastors and 5,000 evangelists.

4. Theology of Martin Luther (Althaus): This is the next project and translation is underway. It should be ready for printing: August 31, 2013.

5. Three additional projects (2014-2016) will be *Hammer of God* (2014), *A Child's Garden of Prayer* (2015), and *People's Bible Commentary: I and II Thessalonians* (2016).

6. There has been a recent separation from Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and Lutheran World Federation mostly on disagreements over positions on homosexuality and women's ordination.

7. The government monitors money flow and therefore money sent in bulk should be avoided.

Friday, April 26, Pretoria—videos

Book of Concord presentation, video of hymn: "We Are Praising God" (Tswana)

Video, Africans saying, "Jesus Christ Is Lord," in the following languages: Zande, Swahili, Arabic, Tswana, English, Arabic, Zande, Sepedi, Runyankore, Zulu.

Saturday, April 27, Pretoria—Mike Rodewald

1. Intro *Book of Concord*, Ethiopia
 - a. \$45,000 might be available; shipping catechisms may not be possible; funds (if available) would go to LHF for this activity
 - b. “Keep in touch” on various Ethiopia *Book of Concord* printing and intro
 - c. If Collver has funds, use them first
2. William Schumuacher
Need to have better follow up from William Schumacher to Mike Rodewald
3. Togo
— Tim Quill should make contact with Togo personnel.
4. Ghana—Rev. Nicholas Salifu
—Mike Rodewald impressed with Rev. Nicholas Salifu
—Mike Rodewald: “Keep President Kofi Fynn informed.”
5. Kenya
—Mike Rodewald will talk with Bishop Obare
6. Theological education in Africa
—“It all hinges on Dr. Timothy Quill.” (Mike Rodewald)
- 7/8. Sudan/Bishop Noah Wilson
—Mike Rodewald: “I don’t have any perspectives on Wilson”
9. ELCSS/S treasury—sources of funding
—I know only rumors.
10. Translation questions
11. Madagascar
—Mike Rodewald: Rev. David Rakotonirina highly involved in church politics, uses many circumstances for political gain
12. Somalia—Mohamed Gurhan
13. Tanzania
14. Office of International Missions: Rev. Charles Froh in Kenyan (Mtongo seminary); reports to Rev. Timothy Quill

Sunday, April 28—Light breakfast and conversation with Dereje Tilahun who leaves this morning for a two-week seminar in Nairobi.

Off to the Mission Festival at 8:15 at which I am the “presenter.”

E. A. W. Weber (project priorities)

1. Sermons on Gospel (Tswana)
2. Sermons on Epistles (Tswana)
3. Day by Day (Luther) (Tswana)
4. Selected Psalms (Luther’s Commentary) (Zulu)
5. Law and Gospel (Walther) (Tswana)

April 28, Pretoria, 7 p.m.—Mission Festival this morning. Not terribly impressive: little passion, too long, too German in the presence of Tswana and Zulu traditions. On a personal note: Weber Jr. had long ago requested that I be a “presenter” at Mission Fest. The implication was I was to make “significant, major” presentation, for which I prepared a PowerPoint presentation (30-60 minutes, “depending”). This morning I discovered that I (LHF) was not on the program at all. When I inquired of Weber, I was then allowed to “bring greetings” from LHF, “as brief as possible.” I used five minutes of the two-hour, 20-minute Mission Fest.

April 30, Nairobi—Lunch, followed by very interesting, stimulating, and helpful conversation.

Subjects discussed with Bishop: 1. Theological education in Africa; 2. Synodical leadership; 3. LHF programs in Africa; 4. Synodical mission strategy; 5. Mekané Yesus separation from ELCA and LWF; 6. African pietism and Christian liberty; 7. Biggest need in francophone Africa: books!

May 2, Nairobi, 9:30 a.m.—Now at LHF-Africa compound. James May provided copies of translations (Swahili and Ekugusi) issues from the “What About...?” series. The files will be made available to LHF. LHF then could offer these to LCMS and/or LHM, suggesting that they be posted on respective Web sites; perhaps also LHF website. The following “What About...?” issues were provided with files available: Living Together Before Marriage; Holy Baptism; Death and Dying; Being Lutheran.

Throughout my stay in Nairobi, I heard again and again about the great need for French materials, particularly the writings of Wilbert Kreiss (i.e. *Dogmatics*) plus Brief Statement, selections from *Book of Concord*, and J. T. Mueller’s Christian Dogmatics. Relative to Mueller, the church in France possesses a significant quantity (poorly bound), but they are available only “for sale.” Relative to Brief Statement, selections from the *Book of Concord*, and Mueller, LHF-A has a digital file of each, and now is in need of funds to publish.

MAY 9

On this date Rev. Fandrey announced that he had accepted a Call to Grace Lutheran Church, Wood River, Nebraska and that he would conclude his service to LHF on June 30. Thankful for his service, the Board regretfully accepted his decision.

MAY 15

(From the May 2013 “Word at Work” newsletter)

**Important New LHF Resource for Muslim Outreach:
Arabic *Small Catechism* available soon**

by Jennifer Bagnall

Can a Muslim possibly convert to faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior? Some might doubt. “Why do we put restrictions on the Gospel?” challenges Rev. Karim Baidaoui, missionary-at-large for the LCMS Texas District. “Look at Paul. He was the notorious Osama Bin Laden of the New Testament! He bragged about pulling children and mothers out of their homes, putting them before the Sanhedrin. But God can transform!”

Rev. Karim has personal experience to draw upon. The son of a devout Muslim father and a Jewish mother, Rev. Karim grew up faithfully studying the Quran, the Muslims’ holy book.

“But there is no peace in Islam,” said Rev. Karim. “There is no assurance of salvation. The term ‘love’ is literally absent in the Quran. I fasted; I prayed five times per day. I worked and worked because I couldn’t be sure I had done enough.” Rev. Karim began reading the Bible as a challenge to himself to find error. “But as I read, I realized that...Jesus died for me, so that I would not have to die. God helped me understand His grace.”

Lives transformed by God’s grace

Fadi Khairallah (director for MELM, the Lutheran Hour Ministries office in Beirut, Lebanon) has witnessed this same transformation. “We at MELM cannot witness to Muslims face-to-face, as this is both illegal and unsecure for the person witnessing,” Khairallah said. So, MELM relies primarily on radio broadcasting to share the Good News. When listeners call for more information, the office sends them materials in the Arabic language.

“I come from a Muslim background, but some of the criminal acts that were committed [by Muslims] in God’s name repelled me. I became an atheist who did not believe in any religion,” wrote one listener. “Your program showed me a different way, a way revealed by the cross of Jesus. As you said, ‘God is love.’”

The rise of radical Islam in the Arab world is a significant challenge to spreading the Gospel, a challenge that Americans in particular often feel unprepared to answer. But soon, a powerful tool of the Holy Spirit will be available from LHF, in partnership with Lutheran Hour Ministries: Luther’s *Small Catechism* in the Arabic language.

“The catechism goes right next to the Bible”

The *Small Catechism* was first translated into Arabic in 1982 by MELM staff, but only a few copies remain. As requests for Arabic Lutheran materials have

steadily increased in the United States, LHF approached Lutheran Hour Ministries about reprinting the book.

Rev. Karim is excited to share the catechism with the 28,000+ Arabic-speaking refugees who live in the Dallas area. “The catechism goes right next to the Bible,” he enthused. “When you have questions about what the Bible means, you go right to the catechism. It has the pillars of the faith: the 10 Commandments, the Lord’s Prayer, the Creed, the Office of the Keys. In the *Small Catechism*, we see Christ. We see how God works salvation and breathes His peace.”

While former Muslims do find the peace they’re seeking in the Gospel, earthly peace doesn’t often follow.

“Persecution comes in different forms when Muslims convert,” Rev. Karim explained. “They are cut off from their community and their families, and they ask, ‘Where will I go?’ “I want them to see my family, my Lutheran church,” he concluded. “We have such a beautiful doctrine, and we are so confident about our faith. We have a great heritage! We need to be zealous in telling the world how sweet the Gospel is.”

JULY

Report on Higher Things Gatherings

by Rev. Larry Rockemann

Permit me to reflect a bit on the two Higher Things Youth conferences I attended (Scranton Pennsylvania and Lafayette, Indiana).

Youth attendance at Scranton was about 250 and at Purdue/Lafayette about 1,400. Youth were extraordinarily well-behaved, well-spoken, and well-attuned to God’s Word and the mission of the Church to bring that Word to the nations.

Whenever I could talk with them about LHF, teens and adults were truly interested, and many had follow-up questions. As were the adults, the young people appreciated the opportunity to see/handle the books, especially Luther’s *Small Catechism* and *A Child’s Garden of Bible Stories*.

LHF is a “known” and greatly appreciated ministry among many of those at these Higher Things conferences. Both adult chaperones and kids could relate how their churches/youth groups/Sunday schools had been engaged with LHF missions in the past/present. People were glad to see us there!

I definitely believe the costs/energy to exhibit/be present at these Higher Things conferences was a PLUS for LHF, and I would heartily encourage us to begin planning now to exhibit at the next trilogy of Higher Things gatherings.

We are showing our support for the sum/substance of this (type of) youth event in our synod. We are present among many folks who know of and support the mission of LHF. We are building a base of knowledge and support among young people. Many of them are already engaged in the larger mission of the

church and LHF enables that to happen with focused intentionality. Being present at youth gatherings of this sort certainly helps us in anchoring a good foundation for future work.

(From the July 2013 “Word at Work” newsletter)

National LWML votes to “tell the next generation” in Southeast Asia

Thanks to the faithful giving of LWML women all across the nation, 15,000 children and families in Southeast Asia will soon be introduced to the Savior, Jesus Christ.

At its national convention in June, LWML delegates voted to grant LHF \$72,000 for LHF to translate and print books like *A Child’s Garden of Bible Stories* and Luther’s *Small Catechism* for Buddhist countries such as Thailand, Cambodia, China, and Vietnam. “We are deeply thankful for the LWML’s support of the LHF mission,” said Rev. Robert Rahn, LHF interim executive director. “For generations, the Holy Spirit has worked powerfully through their gifts to spread the Word of God.”

JULY 15

(From the July 2013 “Word at Work” newsletter:)

In Madagascar, healing for body and soul: Medical mercy teams share catechism

by Jennifer Bagnall

In Madagascar, an island nation off the east coast of Africa, simple everyday ailments can become major health problems. Untreated hypothyroidism results in melon-sized goiters. A simple fungal infection spreads from between the toes to above the knee.

A continent and an ocean away, medical mercy teams from LCMS World Relief and Human Care have been moved to volunteer their time and money to bring health and healing to the Malagasy people. And now, one team also hopes to bring spiritual healing to the people they treat, using the balm of God’s Word found in the Malagasy-language *Small Catechism*.

Care for the caregivers

Rev. Jeff Kuddes, a pastor from southern Minnesota, will serve as chaplain when the team of doctors, nurses, pharmacists and other medical personnel depart for Africa in early August.

Typically, the chaplain’s primary responsibility is to minister to medical staff. As the days go by, the team is often overcome by frustration and feelings of futility. Skilled medical care is hard to find outside of the cities of Madagascar, and most people are too poor to afford good healthcare, even if it were available.

As medical teams realize the immensity of the problem, “they’re frustrated because of their inability to do anything about it,” Rev. Kuddes said. “They’ll say, ‘If we were at home, we could do this for this person...’ but they can’t. So to have regular devotions, to have God’s Word applied to our situation, is critical.”

“We’ll find a way.”

So, as he was preparing for his August trip, Rev. Kuddes decided to contact the Lutheran Heritage Foundation to see whether he could get Luther’s *Small Catechism* in the Malagasy language.

“The catechism is such a wonderful tool of telling and teaching the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ,” Rev. Kuddes explained. “It literally tells all that we need to know about the life and salvation of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our life in Christ, and that’s for the Malagasy people, too.”

LHF’s answer was yes! Though LHF had translated and published the Malagasy catechism in 2007 and then reprinted it in 2009, the books were quickly claimed by the more than 4 million Lutherans in Madagascar. None remained.

Reprinting the catechism in 2013 wasn’t in LHF’s budget, but the staff believed a way would be found. Amazingly, before LHF could begin to seek funding for this unexpected project, funding came to LHF! Out of the blue, a check arrived in the mail from the Central Illinois District LWML, earmarked for Madagascar. The women of the district had collected more mites than they’d expected and agreed to send some of the extra to LHF.

Then, Rev. Kuddes’ churches (St. Paul in Hollandale and Trinity in Waltham, Minn.) decided to support the remainder of the cost for 3,000 catechisms. The printed books now await the medical team’s arrival in Madagascar. Rev. Robert Rahn, LHF’s founder and interim executive director, simply smiled. “God’s work, done in God’s way, will never lack God’s supply,” he quoted.

Children’s mission project 2013-2014: Spreading the Gospel in Somalia

Somalia is often called “the country most hostile to the Gospel” – a seemingly impossible mission. In the militantly Muslim country of Somalia, Christians face intense persecution. In fact, the threats to physical safety are so great that only 0.01% of the population dare to call themselves Christian.

It would seem impossible to share the Good News in such a hard place, but God provides the opportunity! As Somali people pour into refugee camps in Kenya, LHF shares with them the Good News of Jesus Christ.

With God, all things are possible! The Somali people are hungry for the Gospel. Never before have they heard of forgiveness so freely given. No one has ever told them that they are beloved children of God, who gave His only Son so that they might one day live with Him in heaven. So LHF gives to the Somali people free books, translated into Somali and Arabic, that tell about Jesus – books like

Luther's *Small Catechism* and *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories*. These small books can easily be concealed beneath clothing or packed with personal belongings, so that the new believers don't need to fear for their safety.

JULY 17

The appointed search committee for a new LHF executive director met for the first time. The committee members were Mark Angott, Rev. Rick Nuffer, Mr. John Wittenmyer, Mr. James Rall, and Chairman Rev. Walter Otten. Mr. Angott prepared a profile document for prospective candidates. The committee listed a number of important credentials which would guide their search. The ideal candidate would be faithful to the Scriptures and confessions, known in church circles, acquainted with the mission field, have friend-raising capabilities, administration experience, and a strong work ethic.

JULY 18

(From the July 2013 "Word at Work" newsletter:)

Thank You For Serving the Savior

Rev. Robert Rahn

We will serve the Lord!

Joshua announced his servant attitude when he stated: "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

The above words were spoken by Joshua as he considered his service to His Lord. They are appropriate words to consider as we enter a transitional phase in our ministry at LHF as interim executive director. First and foremost, we are here to SERVE THE SAVIOR. As I visit individuals, I have reminded them that their support isn't just for a human organization with the LHF name. By their prayers, gifts and service they are SERVING THE SAVIOR. Over my 50 years of service to the church, I have observed that an organization can be money-driven or mission-driven. My goal will be to continue to place the mission of LHF in the forefront, knowing the words of Hudson Taylor to be true: "God's work, done in God's way, will never lack God's supply."

SERVING THE SAVIOR is what we can do together. Helping each other to keep our focus on the Savior will be an important ingredient during this interim period. This is our time to reassess LHF's goals and mission to determine how we can best SERVE THE SAVIOR. We have made some gigantic strides under the blessings of the Savior. Where do we go from here and with whom? Joshua said it well: "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. You can be SERVING THE SAVIOR by remembering to pray for the Lord's leading as we serve Him through the mission of LHF. We are confident that we will be able to continue to move forward as we seek His will and lean on His strength. Together we are

SERVING THE SAVIOR.

JULY 19

During the LCMS Convention in St. Louis, there was a discussion with Rev. Dan McMiller, executive director of Luther Academy, to have Luther Academy become a division of LHF and for McMiller to serve as LHF's executive director. Another conversation, this time with Dr. Wallace and Kathy Schulz, concerned the *Good News Journal* coming under the auspices of LHF. These were proposals in the discussion stage.

JULY 26

On this date Mr. Jeff Rahn began a discussion with Rev. Michael Adoga relative to the dissatisfaction with the printing of the Yala *Large Catechism*. The poor quality of the final product was pointed out and arrangements were made to have the book reprinted. Quality control is a constant need and concern.

Report From Ghana

JULY 2013: MONTHLY KUSAAL LUTHERAN MISSION NEWS AND PRAYER NEEDS

by Rev. Nicholas Salifu

“As long as it is day, we must work the works of Him who sent me, night is coming when no one can work.” John 9:4.

Greetings from your brothers and sisters in Ghana. By the grace of God, I have returned safely home after nearly two months visit to the USA. Presently, although the planting period is over, some farmers are still sowing their crops with the hope that the rainy season will be longer.

Baptism: Six people were baptized in Ziako and Kpalugu churches.

Leadership training: There was no class because all the leaders had to work on their farms.

Translation: Lawrence Akidaug is translating the *Large Catechism*. Revision work of Luther's *Small Catechism* is also going on well. Keyboarding the translated material has been a problem for the translation team since none of them is computer literate.

Printing of translated books: The Lutheran Heritage Foundation has printed the following translated books for us: *Kusaal Lutheran Service Book* and the *Augsburg Confession*. They are being shipped together with the *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* from Thailand.

Literacy class: When books are translated and printed, there must be people who can read to make good use of the books. Since most adults cannot read and

write even the local language, the adult literacy classes are teaching adults how to read and write Kusaal. The most effective classes are at Sakpanatenga and 44 Market. Soon some of the members would graduate and would be able to read Kusaal literature (Bible, catechism etc.)

Concordia Preparatory School: The third term of the first year ended July 26. The Lord has blessed the school which has an upward enrollment of 160 children. The school is very grateful to congregations and individuals who made donations for the construction of additional classrooms for the children.

AUGUST 15

LHF worked to complete *God's Word For You* that has a supplemental teacher's guide and student workbook. By producing our own books, we are not obligated to pay copyright fees to other publishers. Rev. Ted NaThalang reported on the project:

Attached are the samples of 70 Bible stories done by Diane Grebbing, *God's Word For You*. This project was not in the official 2013 budget because we didn't have budget to do it. But we have been talking about having this kind of Bible stories book, so we don't have to depend on Concordia Publishing House's (CPH) version. The last time I met her, she told me that the Bible stories are almost done. She is certain that all the Bible stories will be done in 2013 for sure. Since the work will be done, I told her that we should have enough money to pay a portion this year and another next year.

I am still working on the analysis of the LHF books status for 2013. At this time, there seems to be many projects that will not be done this year such as the Hmong, Japanese, printing in China, etc.

Project: *God's Word for You*

Bible Stories for Teens (for Southeast Asia; it is for older children).

- 70 Bible stories with colors artwork for each story to attract teens.
- done in English
- will use to translate into other languages throughout the world.
- will have teacher guide, outlines.
- will have workbook for users.
- LHF has copyright
- Still trying to find someone to do the artwork. Last year we were talking about getting Lutheran school students who are gifted to do them. We may come up with a project to compete for best artists for some kind of prizes, or money prizes. We can talk about this project.

At this point, the text for 70 Bible stories is done, but needs to be proofread by Dawn. The workbook is halfway done. The Teacher Guide will be done in 2014.

There will be two payments, one in 2013, and one in 2014. This includes description for each artwork but will not include the artwork itself.

Let me know if you have other questions.

AUGUST 15—SEPTEMBER 11

Southeast Asia Trip Report - Rev. Ted NaThalang

Countries visited: Thailand, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Korea, Myanmar.

Aug. 18—Met up with Doug Rutt and Imelda around 3 p.m. in Medan. Left for Parapat, five hours on a very dangerous van ride. There were so many near collisions and accidents while on the roads in Indonesia. Thank God He is watching over us.

Aug. 19—Went to visit Hepata, a school for the handicapped belonging to HKBP (the Batak Christian Protestant Church). They have not gotten LHF books. Many of them are blind. But some can read. Doug and Gunya never been to Nomensen's tomb so we stopped to see it. Doug and Gunya wanted to stop by HKBP hospital to see what evangelistic helps they may need. The biggest hospital in the area with about 230 beds. They would like *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* in Batak language. Most of the patients are Batak.

Aug. 20—Went to Tarutung to participate in the HKI (the Indonesian Christian Church) Synod Convention; about 3,000 people participated. Had the chance to speak to them about LHF and its books. Gave the Bishop Dr. Rahn's book, *Jesus Never Fails*. ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) people were there also and informing proudly of their new first woman bishop. It was ironic that for some reason the Bishop mentioned earlier that they do not accept gay and same sex marriage in his opening speech. Stayed overnight in Tarutung.

Aug. 21—Went back to Medan to do presentation on LHF at Abdi Sabda Seminary, about 2,300 students. Stopped along the way to meet with Rev. Nelsen, who is on the Academy of Lutherans in Indonesia (ALI) Board. He is the head of Lay Training Department of HKBP. He wants us to come and help train their Sunday school teachers and lay evangelist next year. He shared with us that Darin Storkson would like them to help start a Lutheran seminary in Singapore when they retired. But they don't think it will happen because it is a very expensive area.

Aug. 22—Did presentation at Abdi Sabda the whole day. Gunya and Doug and Imelda spoke on LHM (Lutheran Hour Ministries), I spoke on LHF and Lutheran theology. Stayed overnight in Medan. Most of the students are from "Lutheran" churches, but some from Reformed.

Aug. 23—Left Medan to Balige. Traveled the whole day. Stopped to visit Edwin and his wife in Porsea. She is expecting a child in January. Edwin has to be with her all the time and had closed down his printing business. I asked him to

send us the files of LHF books when he can. He has to go to Medan to get the files himself. Also, he still has about 3,500 copies of Luther's *Small Catechism*, and 2,400 copies of the *Augsburg Confession* at his house in Medan. He said he will send them to Bonar at the end of September.

Aug. 24—Prom Balige, went to Siantar to meet with Rev. Bonar about translation projects, then came back to Balige about 10 p.m. Met with Rev. Bonar after funeral service. Talked to him about files of LHF books and balance of LHF books still at Edwin, *The Way of the Cross* seminars in November, Luther's Work—*Freedom of a Christian*, meeting with Bishops to share them of LHF and ALL, editing and print more *The Way of the Cross* for the seminars, translation of *Book of Concord*, print Luther on Worship for HKBP pastoral conference in October, need computer for *Book of Concord* translation project.

Aug. 25—Participated in the 80th Anniversary Jubilee celebration of HKI in Porsea, at noon, left celebration early to go back to Medan to meet with Rev. Mangisi at 6 p.m. Gave Bishop the *Book of Concord* on behalf of LHF. He would like to see it translated and printed for his congregations. Meeting and having dinner with Rev. Mangisi in Medan. He mentioned that the Lutherans on Nias would like to translate and print Luther's *Small Catechism* in Nias language for their people. They would like to have 4,000 copies, and it would cost about 72 million Rupia (\$7,200). They have shown much interest in wanting to turn back to Lutheran teaching.

Aug. 26—Going back to Bangkok, and stopped by Southeast Asia office to deliver Bahasa books.

Aug. 27—Went to Southeast Asia office to follow up with Jo and David on translation projects: Chinese Simplified *Augsburg Confession*, *Teaching Law & Gospel*, Vietnamese *Book of Concord*, Vietnamese *Reading the Bible with Understanding*, Vietnamese *Large Catechism*, Sunday school Teaching Guide, Thai *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories*, Thai *Bible Stories in Pictures*, etc.

Aug. 28—Went to Hong Kong, 5 a.m., arrived at hotel in Hong Kong about 4 p.m. 5p.m., had meeting and dinner with Kelvin and Sunny, gave them the Chinese books that we printed in Bangkok and asked them to review them. They suggested some improvements on each book to improve its quality

Aug. 29—Had meeting with Michelle, Southeast Asia coordinator from 10 a.m.-1 p.m.; 1:30 p.m.-10p.m., had meeting and dinner together with Rev. Kelvin Li and Sunny Kan. Continued to discuss the publication of each book so that they are more professional—from cover design, fonts size, fonts style, margins, space between lines, spelling, page layout. Discussed the translation of the *Book of Concord*. Sunny had done the draft on everything, except: *Formula of Concord*, Luther's *Small Catechism*, and preface from page 1-12. Kelvin will start editing it after he is done with *Large Catechism*. Kelvin can only spend about three hours a

day for editing work because of his health.

Discussed what to do with page 58, *Augsburg Confession*, article 28, line eight. We decided to translate in Chinese according to the original in German and Latin. Discussed the list of Lutheran theological terms that WELS (Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod) has compiled and what improvement could be made to make it more useful. We also discussed a potential person to help with translation in case Sunny doesn't have time. She is working in tutoring which pays more than LHF.

Aug. 30—10 a.m.-11 a.m. had meeting with Joel Scheiwe to follow up on distribution of LHF Chinese books. Joel gave me the report: no books left, donations for the books is \$5,943. He will wire the money to LHF Southeast Asia account in Bangkok. He will send the request for more books. He also asking if LHF could get copyright and print the book, *Martin Luther, Pastor of God's People* in China. They will pay for the whole cost. They tried to get copyright from CPH and was denied because they plan to sell the book and cannot guarantee to CPH that this book will not be sold for profit. I told him that I will bring it to LHF for discussion.

11 a.m.-2:30 p.m.- Meeting with WELS at their ALS location. About ten people attended; Brad Wordel meeting with us also via Skype on screen. Things we discussed: Translation seminar in July 2014; they appreciated our books very much and using them for study and devotion every day; they hope to continue to communicate, coordinate, cooperate with each other; Chinese theological dictionary; printing books in China; books each one of us are working so we are not working on the same project.

2:30 p.m.-4:30 p.m.- Meeting with Kelvin and Mr. MK, a young man working for Bishop of ECLC-H, a partner of ELCA. He likes our books, I gave them Luther's *Small Catechism with Explanation*, Luther's *Small Catechism* pocket edition, *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories*. He will give them to the bishop and let me know what the best way would be to distribute them in his church. He has written a liturgical book on worship for his church.

Aug. 31—Getting ready for hymnal seminar in Bangkok, follow up with Jo and Pastor Niran, and David, etc.

Sept. 1—Fly to Seoul, Korea.

Sept. 2—Had very good meeting with President Um and Prof. Kim at the headquarters of LCK (Lutheran Church in Korea). He informed me that the LCK income this year is not good because of less income than expected from the rental of their building. Also, the LCK has a plan to reprint 40 books for the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. Because of these things, they don't have funding to pay for the translation and editing of Korean *Book of Concord*. Because to do *Book of Concord* it means that they won't be able to do other books.

President Um mentioned that his last term as president will end at the end of October. He doesn't know who the president will be. There are three candidates, two from the other group who doesn't care much about Lutheran teaching, and one from his group. Things could change a lot if the other group is elected.

I asked President Um what good options are to proceed with the *Book of Concord* project.

Another thing is that when President Um retires, he probably will be teaching at the university also. If that is the case, he probably will be able to help with the *Book of Concord* project. The bad part about working through the university is that they don't have budget for the *Book of Concord* project. It means that LHF will have to pick up the whole cost in translation, editing, and printing. But maybe the translation and editing cost would be less. I have asked Prof. Kim to give me an estimate on the translation and editing cost. I think working with Prof. Kim and the university/seminary is the best option because it has the credibility and he likes our *Book of Concord* and willing to put effort to have it done by 2017. I feel that he is honest and [has a] good relationship with me and LHF. Through Prof. Kim, the Korean *Book of Concord* will be done well. It will be used by Luther University/Seminary to teach their students and LCK pastors and other Christian denominations. I know the Korean *Book of Concord* project may be much more expensive than other *Book of Concord* projects, except the Chinese one. But the Korean *Book of Concord* is the only project that we actually working with LCMS partner church and will be included in their 500th Reformation Jubilee Celebration. But most important is that they would have our new *Book of Concord* to use in their university/seminary and synod. As I have traveled and visited many Lutheran churches in Asia, LCK is probably the most confessional one, our good partner and who really likes Luther theology. They are the leading partner in the ILC (International Lutheran Council) in Asia and biggest confessional Lutheran church body in Asia.

Sept. 3—Got on the city bus and visited some historical places to learn more about the Korean culture.

Sept. 4—Flying back to Bangkok. Prof. Kim drove me to the airport and had some more discussion about Korean *Book of Concord*. He has quite busy schedule, teaching four classes at the Luther University, being the Dean and Chair of the Old Testament department.

Gunya became sick and it was serious enough that she was taken to the ER. They admitted her and was in the hospital for two days. She could not eat so they have to give her saline solution through IV. Stayed with Gunya at the hospital.

Sept. 5—Sent in passport for express Burmese visa. Later went to Southeast Asia office to follow up on LHF translation projects and get ready for hymnal seminar on Monday and for the Myanmar trip.

Sept. 6—Went to Myanmar with Rev. Jeff Ehlers. Thomas picked us up at the airport and went to see his Concordia Center ministry at his house. And discussed some about the current translation project. Went to Lutheran Hour Ministries—Word of Hope office. Meeting with Mar Lay, the director, about the inventory of LHF books. She said all the books have been distributed and needs some more Luther’s *Small Catechism*. She told me that one small group led by a lady likes our Luther’s *Small Catechism* so much that she is forming her own Lutheran group. Mar Lay knows about her group when she came to ask for more Luther’s *Small Catechism* and finding out that because of LHF books, she wants to be Lutheran.

Jeff Ehlers and I met with Bishop Andrew of Myanmar Lutheran church and his assistant, James Aung, at the Lutheran Hour Ministries office.

This group has all their churches in the Chin state, but their office is in Yangon. They called themselves Lutherans before they really know much about Lutheran doctrine. It seems that they are Pentecostal from the way they pray and talk. They didn’t seem to want Lutheran materials much, now that Randy is not coming. They showed interest in wanting to translate Luther’s *Small Catechism* into their Khumi dialect. They are from the same area as Martin, the other Lutheran group. These groups are quite small.

Discussed with May Lay about printing more Burmese Luther’s *Small Catechisms*. I gave her the Luther’s *Small Catechism* file from Bangkok to edit. She will let me know when it is ready. The best way to send money is through Thomas’s account in Bangkok. He can withdraw money through ATM machine and give it to Mar Lay. Thomas will try to have the book, *Reading the Bible with Understanding*, done by September.

I think that for Myanmar and other Southeast Asia countries, *Lutheranism 101* would be a good book to use. It is easy to read and understand and translate. It covers many essential parts of Lutheranism and Reformation theology.

Sept. 7—Flew back to Bangkok since I got done what I intended.

Sept. 9—Started Lutheran hymnal seminar in Bangkok. Rev. Vanarith and Vichet came to seminar to help the Thais on this project. Vichet helped the Thai team a lot on how to translate and produce a hymn. We were able to translate four hymns on the first day and got one hymn completely done. This is quite a big accomplishment. Now that they know which program to use and how to use it, then it was not that difficult.

Sept. 10-11—They continued to work on translating and producing Thai hymns with Vichet supervision. The Thai team will try to translate hymns that are in Khmer hymnal. Pastor Niran will be the one overseeing the Thai hymnal project. Their first finished hymn is “Gloria in Excelsis.”

Sept. 11—Because I could not go to Laos, I had assigned Pastor & Mrs. Niran

Temsakun to go to Laos to meet the Christian leaders to discuss about printing *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* and maybe *Bible Stories in Pictures* in Laos. They really like our books, even the Luther's *Small Catechism*, but we will probably have to print them in Laos. It is safer for everyone but will cost more.

AUGUST 30

From: Robert Rahn

Dear Brothers Serving the Savior,

Today I had some exchanges with Mr. Harry Wolter, whose name might still be familiar to those of you who were around when we started the Rich Valley Mission Center. Harry was president of the Rich Valley congregation that provided for the building funds that were squandered by the Adventis [Construction Company] in Nairobi. Who could forget such a mismanaged company? He hesitatingly asked if anything had come of the building and I told him that I had written and asked some questions; my message to him...

About a month ago I addressed a message to the Bishop and the leadership and asked some basic questions: Whatever happened to the large generator that was provided years ago? Whatever happened to the sawmill equipment that was provided years ago to set up a lumber yard? Whatever happened to the two medical vans that were provided ten year ago? Could they be fixed up and used for transportation, instead of asking for a Land Rover? Whatever happened to the brick making machine that we were going to use to make the bricks for the Rich Valley Center? Doesn't the UN [unit centered in Yambio] have some heavy equipment you could request to be used to tear down the one end of the faulty center? Couldn't we find some individual who had construction know how to at least build the one end of the building so it could be used for a church or school and offices? Is there anyone interested enough to pursue any of this?

So far, no answer. But they will be asked again when we get into the budget process. And here is the message I sent to you a few weeks ago...

When Dr. Lutz returned from his trip to Yambio he reported on his trip that not only included obligations as an instructor but also as our designated LHF ambassador. His report was encouraging to us even though it included the challenges you continue to face in serving the church as Bishop. We continue to pray that you will be strengthened in your task.

We were pleased to hear that you were taking up residence in Yambio in order to more centralize the leadership of the church. We were asked to provide some help so that your house could have bathroom facilities installed. To that end, we herewith notify you that we are authorizing \$1,100 for this improvement. We hope you will find a way to accomplish this with the funds we are authorizing. This amount should be taken from the last wire and the amount will be replen-

ished in the August wire when it is sent. The transaction should be recorded in the Excel file and receipts should be obtained to document the expenses as per your usual practice.

Here is a recommendation if feasible... when equipment was purchased for the Baguga project, did it not include bathroom fixtures? If it is so and if they are still available in storage, we suggest you take a sink and stool from that supply, according to our authorization. Regarding the Baguga property, is there any capable construction firm that could tear down the one end and build up the other end as a church/school/office structure? Does the U.N. have heavy equipment for the tear down?

Bernie mentioned getting a group of volunteers to come and do major maintenance on the buildings so that they can be preserved before falling into complete disrepair. We will look into this possibility. Would you welcome such?

I have presented many questions, but the information is important to us as we continue to concern ourselves with the stewardship and ownership of buildings, grounds, and equipment. Thank you for your patience and for your commitment to SERVING THE SAVIOR.

Serving Together,
R. Rahn

These questions remain to this day. It is important that these be considered and possible answers given in timely fashion. These same questions were scheduled to be in a report to the LHF Board for their next meeting on October 4, 2014. These questions become even more significant in view of the news that Rob Lutz had brought back with him for presentation to Rev. Seter, chairman of the mission board. The ELCSS/S had once again submitted a request for fellowship.

We had just discussed with Bernie Lutz the idea of presenting an offer to you of assistance in a complete refurbishing of all buildings on the Yambio site by assembling a team of construction volunteers to come in 2014. It's another question that we will now defer action. We know that these are critical times for the ELCSS/S, as they are for the LHF mission. We have untold opportunities and open doors and we are not inclined to abandon our family, but we seek assurances of cooperation and commitment and communication.

SEPTEMBER 1

From: Edward Sunge, Secretary General - ELCSS/S
To: Robert Rahn
Subject: Answers to Old questions

Dear Rev. Dr. Rahn,
Greetings from Yambio!

We are doing well. We have started the last semester this week. I was in Kampala for almost the whole of August to train in management and project planning. On coming back, I got your message and I am writing to answer some concerns that you raised.

1. Application for pulpit fellowship with LCMS: Yes, we did send a preliminary letter for fellowship with the LCMS church body. This idea is not new because it dates back to 2007 when the late bishop wrote to LCMS on the same matter. This time was just a revival of the same. The letter was sent by Rob Lutz and we asked him to inform all our coworkers over there. Dr. Lutz who was the LHF envoy to ELCSS/S at the time was quite aware of this and he even helped us to write the statement of faith. In our last meeting with him he promised to report to you all what we discussed here. He even had a lengthy meeting with the bishop in the bishop's residence and I think they might have talked on the matter of fellowship. Having fellowship with other church bodies does not mean that we are not going to work with LHF. We have gone a long way with LHF for the last 20 years and we cannot just in a moment turn our back on LHF. There is no church body that has supported us like LHF does. So please rest assured that we are still part of LHF.

2. The other things that you asked for are all there: the generator, sawmill equipment, the medical vans are all there but are not functioning, some for technical reasons or has no spare parts. We are trying to make some work so they can generate income towards our budget of 2014.

3. The property in Baguga: the building has been collapsing and it is not safe to go around it. The Adventist [Construction] Company of Kenya did very bad work. We did assessment as to how to clear the fallen and the amount needed was \$16,000. I sent this to your end, and it was not possible to raise this money and since then there is nothing we can do. You asked about U.N. having equipment that can pull down. Yes they have, but the UN works mostly with government bodies. They can work on public roads and buildings. However, I will try to see if they can help and I will inform you accordingly. If they agree to clear it will need also that there is money ready for the work.

4. Volunteers to renovate buildings here: this idea was brought to us by Dr. Lutz and we welcomed it and asked him to work on it. We will be happy if [volunteers] come.

I hope I have answered some of the questions that you raised according to my limitation. I will be willing to do more clarification in the future.

I think these are coming up because of lack of communication on our side. I tried to phone you yesterday and it was not possible. I will phone you this evening our time. Is August wire being delayed because of no answer to your questions? We shall soon have problem of feeding the seminarians.

SEPTEMBER 3

Dear Rev,

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. First of all, allow me to apologize for taking time to reply you on this very important question of vicarage. The reasons are many, but I need not to dwell on them.

In all our faculty meetings since May this year, it has been agreed in union that both the pastoral class and the deaconesses will go out next year for their practical work in their sending deaneries or as the Office of the Bishop will deem it fit done. In the same meeting, it was also agreed that all the teaching will be visiting all the students for encouragement and follow ups in their duties and also get confidential reports about each of them. The pastors will be writing their research papers so our presence will be needed.

We also agreed that Rev. Nicholas will come up with a budget on this and send it to your offices. As per now we are well prepared to take care of the time that Rev. Kebede Yigezu will not be here. May I know about the following: Is Rev. May coming, because I wrote to him but up to now there is no response from him and what about the pastor from Finland who is supposed to come in November?

We are doing very well at the seminary and God bless you.

Rev. Dachi

CLIHM Principal

From: Robert Rahn

Subject: RE: VICARAGE 2014

Dear Brother Dachi,

Thank you for your message with information that the students will be on vicarage during 2014 as we had agreed during Bernie Lutz's time there. I'm glad you are working on the plans and budget for that. We do not intend to recruit any teaching staff for 2014 in that case. The local staff, the deans, and the bishop will cover the visiting of each student. We will concentrate on sending a volunteer team to do some remodeling and refurbishing of the Yambio campus.

Vicarage Commissioning will be on Nov. 28. May the Lord bless these remaining months of seminary education for the students.

R. Rahn

SEPTEMBER 6

(From the September 2013 "Word at Work" newsletter:)

Preparing pastors in Sudan: Seminarians learn to preach the Word

by Jennifer Bagnall

It's a pivotal moment in the life of every seminarian: the first sermon. For the

15 men studying at the Concordia Theological Institute for the Holy Ministry in South Sudan, that moment came in August when Rev. Robert Roberts, an LCMS pastor and college math instructor, arrived in Yambio to teach them homiletics (the art of preaching). In the beginning, it wasn't easy.

"The students' presentations at devotions were totally Law; there was no Gospel," Rev. Roberts remembers. "This is typical, because we all want a set of rules we can follow."

For the next week, Rev. Roberts spent time teaching the men how to find the Gospel in any Bible lesson, how to organize a sermon, and how to preach with minimal notes. They listened to and analyzed other pastors' sermons. Then it was time to sink or swim.

The seminarians spent their evenings crafting their own first sermons. "One of the women commented that they'd never seen such quiet nights, when they were all hard at work!" laughed Rev. Roberts. "Some of the men were terrified." At the end of the course, the men took turns preaching their very first sermons before the class and their teacher. "Every sermon included Law and Gospel," Rev. Roberts said. "Every one of the students preached an acceptable sermon, and some of them preached really, really excellent sermons. They worked very hard."

The timing of this LHF-sponsored homiletics class couldn't be better, as the seminarians have only three more months of study before receiving their year-long vicarage assignments. As they pack, the students will include the new e-readers given to them by Rev. Roberts and his wife, Eileen. The readers are loaded with various translations of the Bible, the Greek New Testament, the *Book of Concord*, and other pastoral helps.

SEPTEMBER 10

From: Robert Rahn

Subject: Debriefing

Dear Brothers,

Today Jeff, Jen and I held our debriefing with Rev. Robert and Eileen Roberts, and we were pleased with the report shared and the pictures presented. Robert was highly complementary of the students' ability to organize and preach a sermon by the end of the two-week session. Perhaps you had an opportunity to hear some of those sermons. I was quite pleased once again with another report on the caliber of students in the class. The fact that he tried to get them to deliver a sermon without notes was also a positive factor. I was also pleased that he provided each student with a tablet [iPad] that had some 400 books on it. This should be an invaluable tool for the students.

We peppered him with a lot of our questions and were especially quite shocked to hear his report on the number of churches and members in the Evangelical Lu-

theran Church of South Sudan/Sudan (ELCSS/S). He indicated there were 500 congregations and 25,000 members.

Rev. Roberts suggested we hold several continuing education conferences during the year students are on vicarage. It was something Bernie and I had talked about earlier in addition to a volunteer team to do refurbishing, rebuilding, regrading and building a kitchen.

Bob and Eileen's background with service in China and the Philippines helped them to make quick adjustments and adapt to the situation. We provided them with a certificate and plaque for their teaching commitment, as we have done with all faculty.

We hope you have the program continuing while waiting for the arrival of the next faculty member.

God's blessings.

R. Rahn

(From the September 2013 Word at Work newsletter)

Laying a sure foundation: LHF provides books for Ghana Lutheran school

by Jennifer Bagnall

For most American children, September means sharpened pencils, a fresh box of crayons and new books. Now, children in Ghana will have the same experience at Concordia Preparatory School in Bawku, including receiving a new textbook: *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories*, translated by LHF into their own language of Kusaal.

"The children will love to read this book," said Rev. Nicholas Salifu, a Lutheran pastor in Ghana and lead translator for the project. In addition to teaching the children the faith, *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* will be used as a reading textbook.

"I am convinced that when the students enter Primary 2 (second half of first grade), they will be able to read Kusaal by themselves," he said.

In 2007, when Rev. Salifu attended Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Mo., he saw how the Lutheran school system worked and was impressed.

"I saw this was something Ghana needed, urgently," he said. "The Scriptures are clear: 'Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it' (Proverbs 22: 6). All of northern Ghana has not even one Lutheran school, even though northern Ghana has the majority of Lutheran churches and members."

When he returned to Ghana in 2010, Rev. Salifu decided to donate a large piece of land he owned, fencing it in to make it safe for the children. Donations from supporters in the United States allowed him to purchase the materials for

building a school house, and church members provided the free labor.

Classes began for four classes on Sept. 12, 2012, with just a handful of children. But soon, word about this new school spread. “This year, we begin classes with 162 students in four grades,” reports Rev. Salifu. “The uniqueness of the school lies in what the children are learning, which is different from any other school in the region.”

What makes the difference? Unabashedly Lutheran teaching, Rev. Salifu says. By the end of their first year of school (preschool), 4-year-olds have memorized the Ten Commandments, the Lord’s Prayer and parts of the Apostles’ Creed from the Kusaal *Small Catechism* LHF published three years ago.

“Like Luther’s time, I think memorizing the catechism is a good thing,” said Rev. Salifu, who directs the curriculum for the school’s religion classes. “It must be part of our lives, and we want all the children—including the Muslim students—to memorize the catechism.”

Muslim children attend a Lutheran school? Most definitely, affirms Rev. Salifu. “The population of our students is almost 50-50, Christian and Muslim or traditional religion,” he explained. “Muslim parents don’t object to their children coming to a Christian school, because they know their children will receive a better education. So, they gladly send them. The policy of the school is that every student must learn and know the Christian religion, but no one is forced to become a Christian.”

As each year passes, additional classrooms are added on to the school to accommodate a new grade being added. The schoolhouse began with three rooms for preschool and kindergarten. With the construction that’s going on now, the school will have seven rooms in 2014. “Several of our church members have provided free labor for the construction,” said Rev. Salifu. “The church is happy about the school as the children are learning about Jesus and His love for all mankind.”

(From the September 2013 Word at Work newsletter)

LHF founder honored for autobiography

Rev. Robert Rahn, LHF founder and interim executive director, has been selected to receive a Concordia Historical Institute (CHI) Award of Commendation for his autobiography, *Jesus Never Fails*. “After careful consideration and deliberation, the awards committee has selected your work as an award-winning example of materials produced to further the understanding of American Lutheranism,” wrote Larry Lumpe, CHI’s executive director. Rev. Rahn will accept his award in November at CHI’s 39th Annual Awards Banquet at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis.

SEPTEMBER 22

From: Robert Rahn

Subject: Sunday Report from Kiev, Ukraine

Left for church at 9:30. Service held in one of the University buildings. Room holds about 125. Smaller than previous and where they had extra rooms [available] for Bible Class and Sunday school.

Started with Bible Class. There were two people present when started and several others [were] working on ironing paraments, putting up banners, stacking books, etc. as the lecture hall was transformed to a worship center. Quite a sight actually. By 10:15 there were maybe ten people and by 10:30 probably 20. Can imagine the difficulty people have getting to the service. Around 125 attended the service. Bishop Slavik Horphynchuk was assisted by the assigned vicar. His parents are atheists and Slavik says he has some strange ideas that have to be straightened out. Service done in usual reverent manner by Slavik. Daughter, Katherina, sat with me and interpreted the sermon.

After the service we had the book ceremony—*Luther's Works: On the Gospel of John Chapters One to Four*. If there is an opportunity for a special book presentation, we try to give an overview of what is in the book and how it can be used. In this case, I made a presentation on what is the most famous passage in the Bible, John 3:16, and then alluded to John 8:31, 32, and then talked about confluence of [the] book release, 1,025th anniversary of Christianity coming to Ukraine, and the Reformation. Also [alluded] to Col. 2:6, 7 where Paul urges readers to be rooted in the Word and steadfast and give thanks to God in all things. After the presentation I had a brief dedication of the books and then [the translators and I] sat at the table to do signing. Along with my signature, I quoted Col. 2:6, 7 **STAY ROOTED IN CHRIST**.

We got back to the house for lunch around 2 p.m. We then visited three or four sites. The first one was a new site, a memorial built to the ten million who died during the forced starvation of 1932-33 (in just one year). It is a very moving memorial that is described below. I told Slavik that all over the world we have depictions of man's inhumanity to man. In Cambodia we have the killing fields with the memorial of similar size and shape, only it was shelf upon shelf of human skulls, people killed by Pol Pot regime. In America we have the holocaust of abortion with millions having been killed by force of human hands. We tend to forget how serious our killing field is, or how devastating the starvation of bread is, as it is taken from an infant through abortion. A very sobering memorial to be certain.

Then I asked Slavik if we could go to the Latimer statue situated on one of the highest hills overlooking the Napier River, a statue of Vladimir who baptized early Christians in the Napier. He is shown holding a Bible and a cross. The memorials are not too far apart and are certainly creating quite a contrast that,

even though Christianity came, it was overcome by atheistic communism still seen today in the aftereffects—the Vicar’s parents as an example. Then we toured St. Andrew’s Cathedral as an old site and also the St. Sophia Monastery built around the year 1000.

We came back to the apartment just in time for the pizza party to be starting with eight guests. It certainly demonstrated that it is a small world because the pizza came from Domino’s. I explained to the group the connection to Ann Arbor, near Concordia. I took a picture of Slavik’s son serving one of the pizzas and then with the Domino’s box.

I spoke to the group about “Serving the Savior” and passed out a little booklet that talked about the joy of serving. I talked about changes in how we use print on demand instead of spending money on shipping. One of the men there was visiting from Knoxville. He was Ukrainian but moved to U.S. and works in the military. Hope to get his address as he claims he has a son-in-law going to our seminary to get a doctor’s degree in history.

After everyone left, Slavik and I talked until midnight. Topic was church construction. The congregation really needs a building and he claims in one year they will have it one way or another. They have a meeting, Tuesday, with the people from the bank who want to construct a bank. The last deal fell through when the economy went bad. This time things are in better shape and these people want to build a five-story bank and a three-story church next to it. 5,000 sq. ft for the bank and 1,000 sq. ft. for the church, a ten-million-dollar project because of the location near the downtown. The church would have to provide the fixtures etc.

There are 25 churches with about 1,000 members. Of the 25, only five have their own building. He wants to get a church building program going for some of the other congregations.

SEPTEMBER 23

From: Robert Rahn

Subject: Latvia Meeting

GREETINGS,

Juris Uldigs is our Latvia LHF Director. Members of the Board are Janis Smits, Alexanders Bite, Ilmars Rubenis, Guntis Kalme, and Atis Vaickovskis. They asked me to open the meeting with some comments and prayer as usual. Related same message as in Kiev and spoke of the memorial to the victims of the forced starvation and the Vladimir statue and man’s inhumanity to man, but not to be smug for we in America have our own holocaust with abortion.

Went around to each to find out latest. Janis Smits has a new position on the Latvia City Council as kind of special deputy liaison for Latvian churches. Bite still serves Latvian and Russian congregation at Mezzaparks. Ilmars is pastor at

Mezzaparks, took Feldmanis' place.

Guntis still at Resurrection but also teaches at Luther Academy (more on that later). They are building a parish house at the Resurrection property where Jeff inspected the roof we helped put on.

Atis is special linguist with translation team. They are just about finished with the Kleinig book, *Grace Upon Grace*. The translation of Luther's *Small Catechism* in Latvian done by the group has been adopted as the official catechism of the church and will be included in the new hymnal. They see that as a great coup.

A new problem in Latvia Lutheranism is meditation. One of the pastors who had served the largest congregation left the church and started a meditation house. Another pastor left and recently established a Lutheran monastery. Wondered if there was some book that could be published to address this growing problem.

The LHF Foundation of Latvia received a special citation from the Mayor of Riga for the long-standing work of translating and publishing books in order to perpetuate the heritage of the Lutheran Reformation.

They provided me with three books on the life and work of Roberts Feldmanis. There is now a Roberts Feldmanis Foundation and they did the books jointly. I was asked to provide my personal assessment of Feldmanis for future works to be published. Juris pointed out that my book had a good assessment included and they looked at it and wanted me to include that in my assessment I'm supposed to send to Juris.

Books coming out this year: as mentioned above Kleinig's, *The Spirituality of the Cross* by Veith. Not definite yet. Book demand is diminishing. Many thousands of people leaving Latvia to look for work, economy is very bad, mentioned by many and the money from book sales dramatically decreased. Can't remember if *Luther's Commentary on Isaiah* was done or ready to be printed but no funds.

Secondly, this summer Juris took books to a town of Aglona, a large Catholic area where they were celebrating the Assumption of the Virgin Mary. People came from Lithuania for this also, but thousands gathered for a week. Some walked 300 kilometers. He slept in his car to save money. Some saw name of Luther and said he was an apostate, but he did find people interested and buying. Discussed Luther Academy with Juris when Ilars Plume came in the afternoon at 3 p.m. Juris was among those who were fired from the faculty. He did ask Vanags for a Call later but never received one. Alexander was also among those fired. The only survivor was Guntis. It was good to see Ilars and they too have seen the effects of the economy with people leaving and his congregation diminishing. Gundars Bastiks is getting his doctorate and continues to be president of their church body.

MEETING WITH VANAGS

Went over to the Konsistory at 6 p.m. and waited for Vanags to come from

his meeting. Got there about 6:15 and we visited for a while. Gave him a copy of Fisk's book. He was in St. Louis and attended the installation of President Harrison. The Latvian Lutheran Church is not only affected by the meditation movement, but divorce among clergy is also problematic. Would appreciate any works that confront those issues. Mentioned Senkbeil's seminars for pastors and wives as a helpful tool and would like something like that for Luther's *Large Catechism*. He asked how the church in Sudan was doing and was impressed with the statistics I gave on the church and seminary. He mentioned that our seminary training is a strong point of the LCMS.

SEPTEMBER 30

Subject: Robert Rahn - Report from Finland

I am now at the church office getting ready to go to LEAF (The Lutheran Evangelical Association of Finland). Took the subway here.

Church service yesterday. Risto Siromies assisted for communion and I had the opportunity to speak after the service. Presentation included the dedication of prayer books and spoke on the subject of "Thank You for Serving the Savior." I referenced the memorials to the forced starvation in Kiev and the Killing Fields in Cambodia that I described above as part of a Kiev, Ukraine visit. It demonstrates the need for books outlining salvation in Christ and freedom from slavery to sin. Mentioned mission quotes by Herbert Brookes and Rev. Ted NaThalang - "Books preach when the author cannot, when the author may not, when the author dare not, or what is more when the author is not." "Missionaries come and go, but a book like the catechism remains for generations to come."

Risto said he goes to Turkey at least two or three times a year. Now have lost their translator so have to find another. He has been invited to Poland. He wanted to know if we have work there. I told him the leadership was cool towards our efforts, so we are waiting for new signals. He will ask around if there is need or interest.

Went to Juhana Pohjola's with Risto and his wife where we had coffee and more dessert. Juhana will take me to airport early tomorrow as he has to go to a pastoral conference. Better to get there early rather than late.

OCTOBER 1

In a meeting with the staff, Ted NaThalang summarized projects remaining for 2013 and referenced the *Bible Stories for Youth* (which later came to be called *God's Word for You*), and LHF will publish thanks to Diane Grebing and Dawn Mueller, both teachers by profession. The book will contain 70 Bible stories and both workbooks for students and guides for teachers will be available. Ideally, the English version will be printed in 2018 before it is then translated into multiple

languages under the LHF copyright.

OCTOBER 15

Rev. Kebede Yegezu wrote his concerns about Maor Theological College, the Lutheran Church of Ethiopia, and the Mekane Yesus Church.

Dear Rev. Robert Rahn,

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ! Please allow me to express my wish, prayer, and trust that you are doing fine with your life and with the ministry the Lord has put on your shoulders.

This is the Ethiopian Confessional Lutheran Minister, Dr. Kebede Getachew Yigezu, emailing from Yambio in South Sudan. After spending one night in Juba we drove from Juba and spend another night in Maridi. The next day noon, on October 4, 2013, we arrived Yambio. That was the same day I flew from Yambio back to Ethiopia last year.

Last Friday, the first course, Law & Gospel, was completed successfully and today the second course, Pastor as Educator, was begun and will be continued until Monday, Oct. 21, 2013. Then, on Tuesday, I will fly back to Juba with Kush Air & spend two nights there because the flight from Juba to Ethiopia will be on Thursday, Oct. 24, 2013, & because Kush Air flies only on Tuesdays & Fridays.

Here at CLIHM-Yambio, I have seen many improvements, especially the addition of the deaconess class and dormitories, and what visiting professors left as donation to the institution. Especially the generator, the solar panel, and battery donated by Rev. James May are working well. We have not faced any problems working on computers and reading books day and night. We give thanks to the Lord for CLIHM and the visiting professors for making our life better and easier.

Dear Rev. Rahn, as I have informed you earlier, because my strong Confessional Lutheran conviction which was conceived in 2007 when I joined CSL (Concordia Seminary St. Louis) for my MA in Systematics major & Practical minor under the supervision of our best Lutheran professors (Kolb, Charles Arand, Richard Warneck, Richard Mars, & Tonny Cook) and because of my vision to establish strong Lutheran institutions for theological and secular education, I peacefully departed from the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY) where I had been member and minister for 26 years. After I signed and received the certificate of registration and the licence from the federal government of Ethiopia on behalf of the purely Confessional Lutheran Church body in Ethiopia (LCE) on June 21, 2013, I peacefully took my resignation of membership and ministry in the EECMY on June 24, 2013 from my mother EECMY congregation. Since then, by God's grace we are seeing much progress in the effort to continue Confessional Lutheranism in Ethiopia afresh.

By God's grace and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, I remained a confessional

Lutheran minister even if my membership with the EECMY was not terminated until the official establishment of the LCE. It is my wish and I trust in the Lord that He will help me to continue with the way of the Apostle Paul which was followed by Dr. Martin Luther, and then by C. F. W. Walther who have proved their faithfulness to the Word of God and their being the servants of the Word by properly distinguishing between the Law and the Gospel.

In addition to mission outreach, The LCE is working on a full-packaged theological education (diploma through doctorate) through the LCE-Maor Theological College to train pastors, educators, leaders, and missionaries in the name of the LCE. We called the college “Maor” which is a Hebrew word for “light,” and a significant theme from Genesis through Revelation. And now for the 2013-2014 academic year, we have 355 students who have passed through entrance exam, interview, and general orientation. They are taking five prerequisite courses. Out of the 355 students, 120 are in the advanced studies programs (i.e., MA, M. Div., M. Th., D. Min. & Ph.D.). They are also taking five prerequisite courses: Advanced English & Academic Writing; Critical Thinking for Reading & Understanding Literary Text; History of Philosophy and Worldviews; Advanced Research Methodology; and Methods of Doing Theology from National, Continental and Global Perspectives.

Dear Rev. Rahn, since the LCE and her Maor Theological College are young, we need the prayers, encouragements and support of many purely Confessional Lutheran Churches and institutions including your LHF. For sure, we at The LCE believe that we have many ways to support one another as we play our part to advance the Kingdom of God in Africa and through Africa. We also greatly appreciate if you join the Consecration and Installation Ceremony on which the 2nd General Assembly of the LCE resolved to conduct according to the rites and tradition of Confessional Lutheran Church. It will be conducted by our Confessional Lutheran bishops (Bishop Koffi Finn, Bishop Obare, Bishop Ekong, & Bishop Noah). Most of them are already contacted and informed about the LCE and about the invitation to this very important ceremony in the history our purely Confessional Lutheran Church body in Ethiopia, the LCE. Hence, I humbly and kindly ask to let us know your gracious acceptance to be present on this ceremony or to send LHF representatives if your schedule allows, most probably for dates between the end of November and the 2nd week of December so that I will inform the Executive Board and the Management Committee of the LCE about your reply and to produce the official letter of invitation and send it to you. Your reply is very important! Look forward to hearing from you. May the Triune God bless and keep you all!!!

Humbly, your son in Christ and coworker in His Kingdom,

Kebede Getachew Yigezu (Dr.), Leading Founder/First President of the LCE

OCTOBER 17

I previously mentioned a visit to a new memorial in Kiev. I asked Bishop Horpynchuk to check the accuracy of facts and spellings.

From: Rev. Dr. Vyacheslav Horpynchuk

Dear Pastor Rahn,

Thank you for your letter and for your moving insightful article. Thank you very much! I have made only a few corrections in the beginning: regarding the spelling the Russians use in English for our Grand Prince—Vladimir and the Monastery is St. Michael's Monastery, located across the square of St. Sophia Cathedral. The article is below with mentioned changes. Have a blessed week in Christ!

In Him,

Slavik

MAN'S INHUMANITY TO MAN

A new monument has been built in Kiev, Ukraine as a memorial to those who died in the forced starvation of 1932/33. As I travel to areas where the LHF is at work, I like to visit sites as time allows. I have seen many of the sites in Kiev over the almost 20 years of travel to that city, including some exotic gold encrusted Orthodox churches, monks' caves, and government buildings.

Bishop Slavik Horpynchuk mentioned that there was a new monument I might be interested in. I was doubly interested when I found out it was near the statue of Vladimir, one of the early missionaries in Kiev, since Ukraine had just recently celebrated the 1025th anniversary of Christianity coming to that country. Earlier I was told that Vladimir had baptized many people in the Dnieper River on whose banks the statue stood.

All of this fit together when on a Sunday after the service we dedicated one of the latest books to be published in Ukrainian—*Luther's Works on the Gospel of John: Chapters 1-4*, the first in a series of four volumes covering the Gospel of John.

We walked over to the monument going past St. Michael's Monastery where at the entrance there was a painting of the forced starvation that was famous in itself. Now the new monument stood on the hill from which you could overlook the Dnieper River.

We entered the somber area where two angels were sculpted out of stone with heads bowed. The artist depicted them as "THE CRYING ANGELS!" Would they not weep when seeing the sin carried out at the hands of evil men? Walking a little further you come across another stone sculpture, this one of a

young girl. Here at this place you swallowed hard as you see a figure about the age of your own granddaughter but one who clearly looks famished—skin and bones.

Then in front of you is the monument some 60' high designed in the form of a burning candle. Beneath this monument are housed the historic tools, utensils and elements of this cruel act of an atheistic government. Scenes from the starvation are flashed on the circular wall in a continuous video display. Farming artifacts, old machinery, cooking stoves and utensils, wagons, shovels and brooms are prominently displayed. Around this circular space there are books placed on lecterns that can be opened and there you will see displayed name after name of those identified as victims of the forced starvation. The information stated that 4 million people were starved to death. Bishop Horpynchuk, a historian in his own right, says "that is the public relations numbering." The real death total was closer to 10 million. In the center of the circular display is a place where candles are burning as a memorial to the victims.

We depart with a heavy heart and stop to take more pictures of the girl. It is then that I notice something I hadn't seen when entering. The little girl is holding five heads of wheat in her small hand. I now see what I later read in the descriptive folder that this represents the "law of the five." This was the law that said anyone having more than five heads of wheat will be executed. Your heart begins to beat, and you don't quite know if it is hate over against those who perpetuated this evil deed or if it is a feeling of deep regret over what these people had to endure.

In later speaking events I used this as an illustration as to why we need to publish books and materials that demonstrate the love of Christ Jesus. I also use this as a reminder that we dare not become too smug in looking upon this evil as we in America have our own holocaust to encounter, the holocaust of abortion that has taken a similar number of lives in a gruesome and indescribable fashion.

I now remember an interview I conducted with Mrs. Martel in Bozeman, Montana some years ago, who was very reluctant to speak about the topic. You see, she is a survivor of the Ukrainian Forced Starvation. I remember parts of her story that fit into this monument explanation. She informed me that she recalled seeing the piles of wheat that were stacked everywhere, symbolic of the fact that there was wheat for bread. The only problem was that those piles of wheat were guarded by communist soldiers. These same soldiers had forcibly entered homes and destroyed any semblance of food that was found in the kitchen or pantries, thus contributing to the quick starvation of the millions.

Mrs. Martel sadly speaks of the death of one of her own young children. She said they didn't even have enough money to buy a little lumber to build a coffin and wondered what they were going to do. As she left her house the next morning there in the path lay enough money to buy the lumber so a decent burial could be conducted. She tells of her escape by night with the family, running and dodging

soldiers here, there and everywhere and finally with bleeding feet get to the place where they could be taken to shelter and safety. She told me the story from her kitchen table punctuated with her tears. She could remember.

This visit reminds me of another memorial and monument I visited in Cambodia, built depicting man's inhumanity to man. This was at the "Killing Fields" of Phnom Penh where thousands of people were killed by the infamous despot Pol Pot. The monument is very similar in shape and size. The only difference is that the Cambodian monument has shelf upon shelf, from top to bottom, of the skulls of people, men, women and children, who were shot and buried. The graves have been dug up and the skulls placed in the glass encased monument so that we remember.

These monuments help us vividly and starkly to remember man's inhumanity to man. The question we need to address to ourselves is if we will remember? Will we remember when the rule of Sharia law is the order of the day? Will we remember when one member of the family points out the believing member and an execution takes place? It has happened in Somalia, Sudan, Indonesia and will we remember when it happens here and future generations can only ask, "How could it have happened?"

Let us remember that these are monuments that give reason and purpose to the mission we are engaged in—to bring the Word of Truth to the world so that the love of Christ can penetrate the deep recesses of hearts now claimed by the devil. The books we print are meant to bring the Truth to the nations.

OCTOBER 19

From: Robert Rahn

Subject: donating my deceased father's pastoral vestments

Marion,

Good to hear from you. Emails are coming via a circular route. Yes, all of the items you mentioned will be a tremendous asset for our pastors in Sudan and the 15 students who are going out on vicarage will be able to use those items. The stoles can be given to pastors already in the field serving among the 150 congregations and 40,000 members.

I'm scheduled to be in Fort Wayne on October 30 and will contact you before leaving. May have to arrange coming to your place as I'll probably stop when returning late afternoon or evening. Unless I leave on Thursday, still to be determined.

Dear Marion Meilander,

Thank you once again for the robes, stoles and communion sets you provided that are now part of your dad's legacy. The use of these items in Sudan will be

desired by many of the “old or new clergy” members. When they actually get to Sudan is still a question since next year is a vicarage year for the 15 current students and we don’t have pastors and professors being sent over at various intervals to teach. It is possible that I might be going over in February. It is my hope that however they get over there that we would be able to get some pictures when the distribution takes place. I know this contribution was a little difficult for you to make because of memories that were attached. It is, however, in your father’s honor that his ministry is in a way perpetuated as we continue to use what he at one time used himself. Because someone is going to be able to make good use of these items, it will be a testimony to your father’s ministry being carried on. May the Lord bless you now and always.

Gratefully in Christ,
Rev. Robert L. Rahn

From: Marion Meilaender

To: Robert Rahn

Re: donation for use in the Sudan

Dear Pastor Rahn,

Thank you so much for this kind message. It was a pleasure to meet you and your wife last week, and I am grateful that you took the trouble to come through Marshall.

Although you are right that I felt emotional about relinquishing these things that were so much a part of Dad’s life, I am indeed very glad to know that my father’s vestments, pectoral cross, and communion sets will be used to carry on pastoral work in Sudan. God’s blessings on your travels and the work you do through LHF. I will keep you in my prayers.

In Christ,
Marion Meilaender

OCTOBER 28

A submitted report detailed various ways the LHF has helped the church of Sudan become more self-sufficient. A number of projects have been introduced and failed, but the bakery/restaurant project was one of the more successful ventures and the report was intended to show specifically what is entailed in such a venture, including financial statistics that we are not including here as they would be too cumbersome and boring for readers. They can be found in the history of the ELCSS/S. Kungbowia Pascal’s story is an interesting one. LHF sponsored his education and training in Uganda in the field of hotel management after the discovery of his talent for making bread and rolls that were in high demand. Post-graduation, he was put in charge of the bakery. The Lord works in myste-

rious ways. In 2018, he became part of the new class of seminarians who elected him as president of the class. He is reliable in his work and in the reporting of expenses.

OCTOBER 31

“Potpourri” is a regular internet mailing that features humor, politics, religion, and miscellaneous items. This was my reflection on a Reformation theme:

Let’s let the potpourri today rest from its too-often theme of politics and “reformat” it to reflect the day’s primary emphasis—Reformation. Now it’s true there are political efforts going on in the church, even Lutheran churches, to re-format, or to give the Truth a re- “formation” that is nothing more than a lie or a degrading of the Truth. Today is a good day to be reminded (if we weren’t during the last Sunday’s celebration of Reformation) to reflect on the passage from John 8:31, 32: “If you continue in MY Word, then are ye My disciples indeed, and you will know the Truth and the Truth will set you free.” V. 36—“And if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.”

Now aren’t those the two most popular words in the area of politics and religion—TRUTH and FREEDOM. We are so interested in freedom and have given carte blanche to the voice of freedom, so much so that we are in deep slavery and don’t even know it. Slaves to sin, all of us are. And many preachers today, especially popular ones on TV, would not so much as to mention the word “sin.” It gives open opportunity to live in the debauchery of homosexuality, the destruction of the family, same sex marriage, drugs and alcohol. We have so much freedom and most of it coming to us under the infamous, and highly touted new vocabulary term: TOLERANCE. You give up your Truth, thank you very much, and I will be able to keep myths and lies that I have built on my own interpretation of the Truth.

We don’t need a re-formatting or re-formation of the Truth. We need the blessed assurance—“If the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.” So, I encourage you to celebrate over the fact that we have the greatest gift when we realize that Truth and freedom are ours through faith in Christ. What a great blessing that is. May we never squander it, trample it under foot, or re-format it to fit our needs or itching ears.

God’s Word is our great heritage / And shall be ours forever;
To spread its light from age to age / Shall be our chief endeavor.
Through life it guides our way, / In death it is our stay.
Lord grant, while worlds endure, / We keep its teachings pure
Throughout all generations. 333 LW

Happy Reformation, and if you want to throw a little of Halloween into the mix, try this about the pumpkin! And make it a great Halloween also. From one pumpkin to another!!!!!!

A woman was asked by a coworker, “What is it like to be a Christian?”

The coworker replied, “It is like being a pumpkin. God picks you from the patch, brings you in, and washes all the dirt off of you. Then He cuts off the top and scoops out all the yucky stuff. He removes the seeds of doubt, hate, and greed. Then He carves you a new smiling face and puts His light inside of you to shine for all the world to see.” This was passed on to me by another pumpkin... Now it’s your turn to pass it to other pumpkins. I liked this enough to send it to all the pumpkins. And all the Reformation Truth holders!!!

NOVEMBER 1

Early in our history when we were working only in Russia and the Baltics, each press run was much bigger than they are today. Consequently, we built up quite a warehouse of books waiting to be distributed. The books were stored in various warehouses across Russia: places like Novosibirsk, Siberia, Moscow, and St. Petersburg, and every few months the price for storage would increase. We found the increasing cost discouraging and at one point facetiously stated that we could save a lot of money on storage by just burning the books if they were merely going to be warehoused.

When Rev. Camp read this, he came to us immediately and said he would see to it that the books were distributed, not destroyed. He soon put his plan into action. Rev. Camp had all the books shipped to a location outside St. Petersburg with free storage before he loaded some into his SUV and delivered them. When we wanted to provide a stipend for his service, he refused. He simply said that he highly prized these books and their benefits for Lutheran Christians in the Ingrian churches across Russia. Today, he continues to be the LHF “booking agent” for, not only Russia, but even the Baltics and Ukraine. Some of the titles have had to be reprinted because of his active role in spreading awareness of the books and how they can be utilized. To include his story here is a way of commending Rev. Leif Camp for his untiring efforts on behalf of LHF. The following report provides insight into his work, his family, and the Ingrian Lutheran Church:

From: Leif R. Camp

Greetings and peace from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Just finished celebrating the Reformation, wrote another article for the Ingrian Lutheran Journal, and ministry continues to move forward. For those of you I saw this summer, remember that I invited you all to think about putting together short-term mission teams. Well, we are gathering our list of projects from parishes—I talk about that

a bit in the attached prayer letter.

I am still having trouble with email, so pass this on to those you know would be interested. If you are not interested, let me know and I will take you off my mailing list. Of course, it could be a friend is forwarding this to you, and then I am not to blame!

Blessings,

Leif

2013, St. Petersburg, Russia. A Good Word from Camp

John 3:8 “The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

Well, October has come and gone. Here in St. Petersburg October is usually wet, windy, and chilly, and so it was this year. But amid rain storms, soaked through coats, umbrellas blown inside out and my new hat blown under a car and into a huge puddle—I had a few words of complaint to our Lord on that one—God continues to bless us and the ministry continues to grow.

As I write this, we have just received word that the Ingrian Lutheran Church in Russia has been granted the St. Anne’s Cathedral building. Also this month, our annual synodical gathering met, with the help of Lutheran Heritage Foundation we printed off 1,500 *A Child’s Garden of Bible Stories*, and the theophostic prayer training continues through our pro-life ministry.

Synod

“Now when they had come and gathered the church together, they reported all that God had done with them, and that He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.” Acts 14:27

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ingria in Russia holds its annual synodical gathering mid-October every year. The Bishop gives his annual accounting as do the various boards—the Mission board, the Deaconal Board, the Youth and Children’s Ministry board, etc. (I wouldn’t want you to be bored with the details). After the reports, the election and approval of officers for the synodical committee (which carries on the work of the synod and acts in the stead of the synod throughout the year approving calls and so forth), various proposals, actions and announcements are considered. This year several proposals were approved that will directly affect my ministry. First, the synod decided to set up a committee to review the relationship between the Ingrian Theological Institute and the main church, especially analyzing how well the institute is fulfilling the educational needs of the church and how clearly the teaching is remaining solidly confessional. The synod also approved a proposal made by the St. Petersburg area pastors to allow the St. Petersburg area to set up a Bible school for educating la-

ity and identifying future teachers, leaders, and pastors. The organization of this school was delegated to the Ingrian Missionary Office (for those that don't know, that means more or less me with the help of the volunteer Ingrian mission board, headed by Pastor Ivan Laptev). I took the opportunity to hand out a gift bag of a sampling of Lutheran Heritage books and *Good News Journals*. Inside each gift pack was a list of available LHF books and *Good News Journals*, where and how to obtain them, and guidelines for proper use of the available material. I also included in each pack an invitation to host a pro-life seminar, with information on our healing prayer training and a list of possible seminar topics.

A Call for Short Term Mission groups

“For even in Thessalonica you sent aid once and again for my necessities.” Philippians 4:16

The Ingrian Mission board at my prompting took the opportunity of the synodical gathering to announce the possibility of parishes hosting short term mission groups. Those of you whom I had the privilege of visiting this last summer may remember that I invited each congregation I visited to consider forming a group for a short term mission project in Russia. Although we have been talking to pastors as the occasion allows, we used the occasion of synod to announce a sort of competition: parishes are to come up with their needs in project form, then we will try to match those projects with possible groups. Summer English language evangelism camps are just one possibility (and for those of you who are interested in these, you may also work through the Eastern European Mission Network, an organization that has partnered with Ingria for several years), what we are hoping for is a list of work projects and so forth. If you are interested in any of these opportunities, or the possibility of other short-term or long-term volunteer work in Russia, contact me and I will see what I can do.

Other Ingrian Tidbits

For the last year, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ingria in Russia has been trying to procure the return of one of the historic Lutheran Church buildings in St. Petersburg—St. Anne's Kirche. On Reformation day this year I received word that we finally received the documents that say we now have the rights to use the building. The strings attached, of course, are that we have to repair it, have it pass all the building expenses and so forth. Also, just because Ingria now has it, my role in the use of the building is still not sure.

We, of course, have continued to distribute LHF books and the *Good News Journal* through our parishes throughout Russia. This month we also were able to partner up with Lutheran Hour Ministries working in Russia under the name “Fund Concordia” to release an audio version of Luther's *Small Catechism*.

Also, when unloading the books for synod, I asked my son and some other

youth who attend English language worship to help me unload the books. As a small reward, I gave each a cross made of horse nails. These crosses were given to me while I was in the States. They are made by retired pastor Dale Doerr who wants to see them distributed all over the world. So, now I have begun handing them out here in Russia.

Blessings,
The Camps

On this date we not only received the report from Russia, but we also received a report from our translation coordinator for Nigeria:

From: Nelson Unwene
Subject: Update on Efik Translation Project

Dear Friends and fellow servants of our Lord,
Greetings in His precious Name!

A: Translation of the *Apology* to the *Augsburg Confession*: The work on the translation of the *Apology* is in progress. You certainly have known by now that about this time last year when we made our plan and proposal for the work of this year, we did not realize how large the work on the *Apology* was going to be. The translation of the *Apology* from the text of *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions* begins at page 67-251. To date, I have been able to translate up to page 122. This seems not much has been accomplished! But I am definitely thankful to God for this seeming small accomplishment. The arguments in the *Apology* require greater understanding of the doctrines of the Scripture and the theology of our great and God-given reformers. I am personally amazed and moved by what I have gathered from what I am doing. Dr. Rahn is absolutely correct in his encouragement to me to work harder towards the publication of the Efik version of the *Apology* as this may, God willing, be God's instrument in bringing the people of our Lutheran Church of Nigeria from current declaration for episcopacy to a genuine and confessional Lutheran position.

B: We have been able to distribute most of all the books that we have published. But we have with us 463 copies of Eriyarare Mbuotidem (*Augsburg Confession*) which will be taken to some of the congregations we have not had the chances and good roads to reach them during these rainy months. It will all be given out in December and January. We have always placed on reserves five copies of each of the works we publish: Mbuk Enejerere-Njko (*A Biography of A Reformer: Luther*), Akpa Catechism Mi (*My First Catechism*), Akamba Catechism (*The Large Catechism*), and *Understanding Lutheranism*. Because we use *Understanding Lutheranism through the Augsburg Confession* as a core course text in the seminary, we have reserved 50 copies for the next few pastoral students who may

be in the seminary 2014-2015.

Occasionally, I go through some of the published texts to correct what we see to have been mistakes. We hope that when the entire translation would be completed and the publication of the *Book of Concord* would be contemplated, the revision of each of the published works should carefully be revised and updated. May the Lord continue to prosper and bless the labours and donations in support of His LHF missions!

NOVEMBER 2

From: Edward Sunge

To: Jeff Rahn

Dear Jeff,

Update on translation and publication. The following translation projects are now in progress:

Zande hymn book: Type setting is finished, and proof reading has started. We hope to complete this work in first quarter next year.

Luther's *Small Catechism* in Acholi: Translation and proofreading is finished. This work was done by pastors in central and eastern Equatoria deanery. We have not paid them for the work of translation, typesetting, and proofreading. The work is ready for layout design and printing. We aim to print 1,000 copies.

Acholi hymn book: This work was done by the same group of pastors who translated the Luther's *Small Catechism*. We also plan to print 1,000 copies.

Luther's *Small Catechism* in Anuak: This is a new project which is still at the translation phase.

NOVEMBER 5

From: Paul & Teresa Szobody

Subject: just a contact

Dear Pastor May:

This letter serves as a point of initial contact. I encountered a presentation of your mission at a church in Goshen, Indiana, presented by your associate Jonathan McCall.

My wife and I serve as missionaries in Chad, Africa, and for a number of years I labored in the theological education of Chadian pastors and worked in pastoral ministry in southern Chad. I was responsible mainly for instructing in Lutheran Dogmatics as well as other subjects at the Ecole de theologie Gounou Gaya, where men and their families from about a dozen tribes in Chad and the extreme north of Cameroon come for a four-year seminary program. They are given fields by the chief of the village and farm to make ends meet. They were wonderful years of our lives and it was a great place to raise children (we have 12; only three are

left home and one child and his own family now serve as missionaries to a vast unreached Chadian people, the Bagirmi).

Presently, having fulfilled our mandate in southern Chad, we are home in Indiana on furlough and preparing for a future ministry in more of a 'northern' Muslim context, with a different model of leadership training. Though we worked primarily in French in the past, we will work more in Arabic also in the future, Lord willing.

We serve with Lutheran Brethren International Mission out of Fergus Falls, Minnesota, the mission direction for the Lutheran Brethren Synod, a small, conservative synod of Norwegian pietist origins (I was formally a home mission pastor in Arizona). The LB sent the first Christian missionaries into Chad in modern history, finding the first Christian convert in 1920; Chad remains the most unreached nation of Africa.

Furthermore, I worked with Wilbert Kreiss and had him translate the *Augsburg Confession* into a simplified Africanized French, with footnotes, and I asked him to translate for our Mission the *Praying Luther's Small Catechism*. This last was quite popular in Chad (I had them printed in Cameroon). Dr. Kreiss then asked our Mission for permission to give the rights to the Heritage Foundation on these two documents, which we gladly did. So now I come to see who is behind this foundation! I have used so many of your materials in Chad—thank you!

Dr. Kreiss was also in our home in Strasbourg as I did research at the University of Strasbourg, and I preached in his synod's local parish in Strasbourg. He passed away while I was in Strasbourg and I feel deeply the loss as he helped us much in Chad. (By the way, Dr. Andre Birmele, the editor of the French edition of the *Book of Concord*, was my research director in Strasbourg and I carried several copies back with me to Chad).

Well, enough rambling. We have so much in common—I resonate deeply with your analysis of things in Africa—and who knows, maybe we will meet some day. Our mission (Mission fraternelle lutherienne au Tchad) runs a very large guesthouse and conference center in N'djamena.

May our Lord bless your ministry of holding forth his Word of Truth in Africa,
Paul Szobody

NOVEMBER 11

The following is a report from Ted NaThalang that shows the downside of traveling to mission destinations. Many have a glamorized view of travel and wish that they had such an opportunity. What Ted reports is a common thread for mission travel that is so uncertain, so unpredictable, so necessary to be ready to go with the flow and to be ready to alter schedules, notify schedulers etc. This is not fun. It's the toil and trouble of getting to your destination.

From: Pornprom Na Thalang
Sent: Monday, November 11, 2013 9:26 AM
To: Jeff Rahn; Jen Bagnall;
Subject: update on Asia trip

Dear Friends,

I am in Beijing now. Thank God.

Had a very productive meetings with Yvonne—WELS (Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod) China regional director yesterday night after arrived. And this morning from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. at the Glory Power publisher.

It is good to hear that our materials are much needed. Most of the Christian materials in China don't have the information and teaching like ours. Also, it is very good to hear the publisher tell me that we will not have any problem in getting permission from the government to publish Luther's *Small Catechism*, *Augsburg Confession*, *Teaching Law and Gospel*, and *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* in China. The one that will take longer time to get permission is the *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* because it has contents for children. Wow, that is great news to hear. And they will NOT change any content in our books.

By going through with our publisher book by book, we found that we will need to do a lot of editing and layout for the Luther's *Small Catechism* and *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories*. It is not up to the standard here. The ones that need less editing are *Teaching Law and Gospel*, and *Augsburg Confession*. These last two books are well written.

I will share with Jeff Rahn more on the details later. It may take four to six months to get permission for ISBN to print and distribute in China legally. Some books will take shorter and longer than others. So, it is looking good to finally have our books published in China.

It is really good to hear from this Christian publisher, Glory Power, that our books are much needed in China. They said this after going through our books to make sure that our contents are good. And these people are NOT Lutheran, yet.

But to recap some of the exciting (really not exciting) things on the trip to Nias Island.

We went to the airport about 8 a.m. Our flight (on small prop engines) from Medan to Nias was delayed at first. When we got on the plane and were ready to take off, the pilot announced that we cannot go to Nias because of heavy rains. It was a hot and sticky day, so the passengers were very unhappy. They took us to an okay hotel about 8 p.m. that had a lot of smoking (by the way, it seems like everywhere you go in Indonesia there always people smoking). They told us after checking that they will pick us up at 3 a.m. for a 5:30 a.m. flight which did not leave till 7 a.m. Thank God we finally got there safely.

The seminar was in a big hall of the BNKP seminary. About 250 people at-

tended. It went well but it was hot and humid.

We went to the airport the next day and found out that three flights from yesterday were cancelled for some reason. So, it is a very good chance that we will not make our connection to Bangkok in Medan at 1:45 p.m. because they only have two to three flights a day, depending on the weather and availability of planes. Dr. Mangisi Simorangkir tried to tell the company that we need to make the connection to Bangkok and China the next day, but to no avail. I knew I had to do something or we won't get on that plane, so I told Mangisi to talk to an influential person that can help us. So, to make this story short, we got on the plane to Medan and made the connection to Bangkok. I forgot to tell you that when we got to check in, they told us that the weight allowed for check-in bag is only ten kilos; that is hardly nothing. We argued with them that on the ticket it says 20 kgs, but they said they just changed that. So, either we paid for the extra weight or could not get on the plane. It costs us about \$35 each bag. What a day!

Finally, we got to Bangkok and thank God for this trip.

Thanks and blessings, TNT

Here is a report from a stateside traveler for LHF, Rev. Larry Rockemann. I wish we could share all his upbeat reports as he travels around the country. His service as the Dean of Students at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri provides him many contacts that lead to this kind of excellent Mission Sunday. LHF has more than 15 part-time representatives out in the field, most of whom send the same kind of reports from time to time. Unfortunately, we don't have the room to include them all in this volume. By the grace of God and through the talents of our representatives, the mission of LHF is always moving forward. The Lord be praised.

From: Larry Rockemann

To: Robert Rahn

Subject: LHF Mission Sunday @ St. Luke's Lutheran Church, Cheektowaga (Buffalo) New York

Just a quick note to you as I hang out at the Buffalo Airport awaiting my flight out. I took the opportunity on Thursday afternoon and all-day Friday to visit as many churches/pastors in the area as I could. I had some very good—and lengthy—visits with several pastors who were very interested in the work of LHF and desiring to host an LHF Mission Sunday at their church. I'd be especially interested in returning sometime later next year or so as First Trinity in Tonawanda celebrates their anniversary—and I'd like to connect that celebration to the formation of the LCMS and the focus of LHF. We might be able to appreciate some good publicity from their celebration (as they are one of the congregations that originally formed the Missouri Synod).

I met over a long brunch Saturday morning with Rev. Karl Haeussler. He's pastor of a large congregation (St. Paul's) in North Tonawanda, and also serves as vice president in the Eastern District. What a fine guy! He wants me to return to address the pastors in their general pastors' conference sometime next year—will give me a couple of dates (I think I recall him saying that there's both a Spring and a Fall general pastors' conference). He also said that he provides direction for the agenda and will request that I have 45 minutes or so to address the pastors and show the video. Karl is a good connection to have here, and I've no doubt he will speak well for LHF.

The LHF mission Sunday at St. Luke's went well... under the circumstances. Bob and Jeff... you may recall that I introduced you to the pastor of St. Luke's during the LCMS convention (Rev. Chris Agne). He's no longer the pastor at St. Luke's, having resigned in September!

In my message I was able to provide some healing words for the congregation in view of their pastor's resignation. The congregation seems to have good leadership, however. I was able to meet briefly with the congregational chairman, vice-chairman, and chair of the Elders. They agreed to provide direction for their church to put LHF into their mission's budget—that folks would have a positive (and timely) perspective of LHF.

God bless your day and your serving.

Rev. Larry W. Rockemann

NOVEMBER 14

From: Ted Na Thalang

Subject: Arrived in VN safely

Dear Jeff, Jen, Larry and Dr. Rahn,

Greeting from Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon). I had arrived here safely this morning and had three very good meetings today. I am ready to go back to Bangkok tomorrow morning. Since Truc (previous Lutheran Hour Ministries Director in Vietnam) died in 2011, I had not been back till today. Many things have changed, new buildings, streets, etc. but the people are very much in debt because of greed.

The first meeting with Director of LHM went very well. I showed him LHF books in Vietnamese, Luther's *Small Catechism*, *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories*, and the *Augsburg Confession*. He will check with the printer who also been getting permission from the government to print legally in Vietnam to see if LHF books can be printed legally in Vietnam. He thinks that the *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* should be able to print legally in Vietnam, but he will check with the printer for sure. So, things have changed! Before this, it would be difficult to print Luther's *Small Catechism* in Vietnam legally. And the cost is not too bad, little higher than in Bangkok. It will take 30 days to get permission, and about

two to three weeks to print them. The LHM is willing to edit them so that they are more closely with the language of today in Vietnam. The LHM is also willing to distribute for us.

The second meeting was with a pastor, who was a medical doctor turned pastor, and his son. He started his church through his family six years ago in a small town. He is currently studying to learn Lutheran doctrine with Lutheran Institute for Southeast Asia for a year now. His son is an IT person working for a company that is using internet to broadcast radio in Vietnam. He likes Lutheran teaching because it is from the Bible, and it is well organized. I also gave him the Luther's *Small Catechism*, *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* and *Augsburg Confession*. From LISA he knows that the Lutheran teaching is different than other denominations, especially Holy Communion and baptism.

The third meeting was with three pastors. One has his own church and the others from a Methodist church in Vietnam. They said that the Methodists have a lot of problems in their church right now in the area of teaching and internal conflict among themselves. They are interested in studying Lutheran teaching because it seems to be from the Bible and well organized also. The pastors don't make up their own rules and laws.

During dinner with Hai Au, LHM director, I continued to follow up on the printing of LHF books. He got word from the printer, and the printer thinks that he should be able to print LHF books in Vietnam legally, even Luther's *Small Catechism*. Wow, this is great news! Now the Christians in Vietnam can have Luther's *Small Catechism* and other LHF books to read and study legally without being afraid from the police.

God has opened the door to print LHF books in Communist countries like China and Vietnam. Praise the Lord! Thank God for His grace and mercy, and forgiveness through His Son Jesus Christ for all people. And also thank you for all your prayers. Lutherans are the only ones that truly teaching His Gospel and the Way of the Cross.

Blessings, TNT

NOVEMBER 16

These are highlights from my report covering a trip to Iowa and Minnesota:

Visited Mike Albrecht at St. James Lutheran, West St. Paul. He won't be going to India this year as in the past. Rev. Stadler, Dr. Dan Preus, and Rev. Harold Senkbeil will be the team going. Program will be a study of the *Augsburg Confession* and *Apology* with interest in readying these for the final *Book of Concord* edition to be published in 2015. I asked if more copies would be needed and he will be in touch with Dasari.

Met with Bernie Lutz, Perkins, France & 494 in Minneapolis. Prior to meet-

ing with Phil Fandrei, LaVerne, and Pat, we went through the Fandrei proposal before LaVerne and Pat arrived. Phil was impressed with the proposal and the amount didn't seem to faze him. Bernie gave his spiel about the bakery and Phil asked about priority, and I told him the priority is as we had the various projects listed starting with translation/publishing. Talked about what happens when he leaves the company at end of year. Told us we should cultivate the new owner, Mark H., and he thought Mark would continue to help. Have to make it a point to stop and see him. Phil was impressed to see the sign over the seminary building with the Sea Foam name. Phil talked about his approach to giving funds and that when he gives it is to "give God the glory." That's what is written over the Sea Foam Stadium at Concordia-St. Paul that he gave the money to build as a former football player. We shared some old stories from St. Paul that he, Bernie, and I remembered. I was able to tell him what song was played the most times at the Dunning Field Ice Rink across from our dorm: "Bye, Bye Blackbird." He was amazed as he thought he'd be the only one to remember. Phil gave us his home address so he would get the mail there after leaving the Sea Foam Company.

To: Robert Rahn

Subject: RE: update LHF books and Good News Journals

A couple of things: as far as sending a box of *Children's Garden of Bible Stories*, we are looking into it. DHL-ing it would cost about \$240 dollars for one package of books. We are looking at other options that will get the books there in time. Two major things this month have been accomplished. With the help of Ingrian Lutheran volunteers, we have managed to get the books and journals into one warehouse instead of two. First, because we have distributed enough to make some room, also by rearranging the one warehouse space. This means all the books and journals are out of the garage and in the "youth house." This has also allowed us to organize the journals and books so that they are more accessible. We also were able to do a better count of the books and journals. This is good as now we know more exactly what we have. The sad thing is that it does show that our initial count was inaccurate—for instance, I know that we have given away at least 15 boxes of the *History of Lutheran Liturgy* by Reed, but our count shows that we have more boxes than when we started! I have one more pallet of books to count (*Justification and Rome*), then the count will be complete. Then I will send you a copy.

We also plan to start the first session St. Petersburg District Bible school in February—this pending approval at the district meeting this Friday. We are planning eight sessions over a two-year program and I have matched up as many of LHF books and Good News Journals with each session that seem appropriate to

the subjects being covered (OK, I made sure that by the end of the eight sessions, every book and every journal we have in stock had been included).

Blessings, Leif Camp

NOVEMBER 22

From: Lassi Mattila

To: Robert Rahn

Subject: The Launching of the Kamba and Ekegusii Catechisms

Dear Rev. Rahn,

Rev. Dr. Anssi Simojoki asked me to write to you a brief report about the launching of the Kamba and Ekegusii *Small Catechism with Explanations*. I am a Finnish student of theology at the University of Helsinki, and I am currently enjoying a year off from my university studies and staying in Nairobi at LHF Africa headquarters. I arrived in September and I will leave probably in May. I am studying the Bible and the Lutheran Confessions in their original languages and also becoming familiar with the mission work that LHF is doing in Africa, and Kenya in particular. I had the opportunity to accompany Dr. Simojoki when he went to launch the Kamba catechism in Kitui November 16–22 and Ekegusii catechism in Kisii November 25–December 1. I was helping him with some practical things like selling books and taking pictures.

Kitui, November 16–22, 2013

We arrived on Saturday and Dr. Simojoki conducted a Divine Service with Lord's Supper on Sunday at Utawala Lutheran church for 170 people who had arrived from the six other Kitui Lutheran congregations. The seminar on the new catechism started on Monday and ended on Thursday. The average attendance was around 70 people: mostly men, women, and children from the Utawala congregation, and the evangelists and some others from the surrounding six congregations. LHF also sold to the Lutheran church in Kitui 24 Kamba Bibles with 50% discount and distributed freely 190 new Kamba catechisms. Also, all the attendants of the seminary received with teaching *Good News Journal* magazine issues "Baptism" and the "Word of God in Swahili." Also, LHF gave a copy of the *Book of Concord* in Swahili to all the evangelists of the Lutheran church in Kitui, besides arranging lottery for three copies among the participants of the seminar. When Dr. Simojoki taught, he was regularly referring to the *Book of Concord* and tried to make it familiar to them.

The Lutheran church in Kitui doesn't have any pastors of its own. Once in a while, some pastor comes and distributes the Lord's Supper. Currently they have six evangelists and one is just about to be graduated from the evangelist school in Atemo. Since 2009, the number of congregations has grown from four to seven. LHF has helped them to train their evangelists by arranging seminars like this

and also financially, so that they can send evangelists to Atemo. They don't receive any aid from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya, because they are in odds with archbishop Obare—mostly because of their connection with LHF. Because Obare doesn't recognize them, they have been pretty much left alone. Rev. May cannot go there because his bishop in LCMS doesn't want him to defy Obare's church politics. That is why Rev. May has asked Dr. Simojoki to go to teach there even after his retirement once in a year, or once in two years. Also, Kisii is among the areas Rev. May cannot visit to teach, because the bishop of the Southwest Diocese, Rev. Thomas Asiago, is calling Obare to repentance.

But the evangelists of Kitui have received good Lutheran training and have been able to continue working even without anyone helping them. Nevertheless, they are in need of further training. They hope that someday the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya (ELCK) church leaders will recognize them and help them to get good pastors. The people in Kitui are poor, and I think only one of the seven evangelists had a secondary education that is required for theological studies in the ELCK seminary in Matongo. Also, the Lutheran church in Kitui lacks hymnals. The hymnal in their mother language Kamba is under work, but faces some challenges, because it has been hard to find suitable persons with enough of musical and theological education. Their Divine Service is suffering, because they don't have a ready access to good Lutheran liturgy and hymns. But we hold out hope for the Lutheran church in Kitui. It has shown its vitality by suffering the hostility of ELCK leaders and growing under hardships. By persistent and patient training, they will come even more bold and faithful in their confession and service to others.

Kisii, November 25 - December 1, 2013

We arrived on Monday afternoon and the seminar started on Tuesday with the launching and selling of the Ekegusii *Small Catechism with Explanations*. On Tuesday there were present at the Itierio Cathedral Church of the Southwest Diocese around 200 persons: pastors, evangelists, and deaconesses from the Southwest Diocese. From Wednesday to Friday Dr. Simojoki was teaching an extended seminar for the pastors on the new catechism and on the *Book of Concord* in Swahili. The average attendance for the pastors' seminar was around 20 of the total 50 pastors of the diocese. There were more pastors present on Tuesday, but not all of them could stay for the extended seminar. On Sunday Dr. Simojoki preached at the Divine Service at Itierio cathedral. LHF also sold to the Lutheran church in Kisii with 50% discount 200 Ekegusii Bibles, 40 ESV Bibles, 40 Swahili Bibles, and around 700 new Ekegusii catechisms. Also, LHF distributed 49 free copies of the Swahili *Book of Concord* to the pastors of the diocese.

Because Obare wants all the money to pass through him, the Southwest Diocese has had financially hard times. Unfortunately, it is not only about finances,

but Archbishop Obare uses all sorts of ways to weaken those who oppose him. Just to mention few recent incidents, the congregation in Matongo has lost its legal right to its own church building and land because Archbishop has been able to hand it over legally to some other instance; we are waiting what will now happen to them. During this catechism seminar that LHF funded, Archbishop's supporters had their own shadow meeting in a nearby hotel just few kilometres away, but only few had attended that seminar. The Archbishop is also trying to weaken the Southwest Diocese by dividing the diocese. Archbishop has promised to those who support him a new diocese and leading positions in it. Some have joined the Archbishop in hopes of this new diocese, but he has not yet fulfilled his promise to them. Also, we heard that the Archbishop had paid some scums to go and attack Bishop Asiago. They attacked his home and threw stones at him. Luckily, he or anyone with him wasn't hurt, though the attackers managed to kill his dog.

But we are certain that the future of the Lutheran church in Kenya is with the likes of people in Kitui and Kisii. Those who stay faithful to Jesus' words under persecution will be saved and will bear much good fruit in Him. At the moment, LHF is a trusted help and companion in those circles and even more can be done. What is making the work of LHF difficult in assisting the faithful people in ELCK is that Rev. May cannot at the moment freely go and serve them. But luckily things seem now slowly to change as Archbishop Obare's works are coming into the daylight also in the west.

Yours in Christ Jesus, Lassi Mattila – Nairobi/Helsinki

DECEMBER 5

From: Albert Collver

To: Robert Rahn

Subject: ELCS-SS Working Agreement

Dear Bob,

Advent Greetings. The CTCR reviewed a letter from Bishop Noah Wilson requesting fellowship with the LCMS. I thought you might be better able to answer some of the questions that arose. 1. Bishop Wilson's letter mentions a working agreement from 2001. I do not have record of this. Do you? 2. As the chairman of Concordia Lutheran Institute for Holy Ministry, do you have a course listing of the classes taught? Syllabi? And any other information about the seminary? Number of students et al. Would appreciate any information you can provide.

Thanks, Rev. Albert B. Collver, Ph.D.

DECEMBER 13

On this date, the LHF Board met and interviewed the final two candidates for

the office of executive director. Rev. Ralph Patrick from Fort Collins, Colorado appeared in person before the Board and Rev. Matthew Heise was interviewed by Skype since he was in Germany at the time. After the search committee interviewed a total of 22 candidates, the Board chose Rev. Heise. The members of the Search Committee included: Rev. Walter Otten, Rev. Rick Nuffer, John Wittenmyer, and Chairman Mark Angott. Mark Angott owns a company that features searches for business candidates, and the search committee had use of modern technology that enabled each candidate to make a personal video as they answered the questions posed by the committee. The committee was highly praised for their thorough work and their use of the technology.

This message was sent to international co-workers:

From: Robert Rahn

Subject: LHF Calls Executive Director

Dear Co-workers,

It is my privilege to announce that the LHF Board in a meeting on Friday determined to issue a call to the Rev. Matthew Heise to serve as executive director. Rev. Heise is currently completing his service with the Office of International Missions of the LCMS and will be moving back to his home area of Detroit, Michigan.

Rev. Heise's extensive background makes him an ideal candidate for the LHF position. He attended the University of Michigan and obtained a teaching degree and began a career of teaching at the New Baltimore, Michigan high school. He discovered that the teaching field lacked potential and he enrolled at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri to study for the ministry. The call to the mission field gave him opportunity to become acquainted with missionary personnel and also gave him opportunity to use his teaching background by teaching part time at the Ingrian Lutheran Seminary, Kolteshay Russia. He also learned the art of friend-raising when he was required to generate his own financial support. He was enthusiastic about the work of LHF because he saw the important niche books filled, which were in short supply in the language of the people.

At this time, we ask that you remember the LHF and Rev. Heise in your prayers as the call is deliberated. Cordial greetings during this Advent season.

In the Name of our Advent King, Rev. Robert L. Rahn

DECEMBER 18

From: Robert Rahn

To: Lutz, Bernie

Subject: POBLO Meeting

Bernie,

Jeff and I just had lunch with Farrukh and Khurram Khan with some interesting discussion. We sent them away with five boxes of books, including Arabic catechism, Somali catechism, Chinese catechism, Chinese & Somali *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories*, and a lot of discussion about future collaboration.

One topic intrigued me and leads me to consult with you. In discussing outreach to Muslims, we talked about the difficulty the Muslims have in relating to Jesus being God. They ask, "Where does it say it in the Bible, can you show me where Jesus says He is God?" They suggest that there should be some definitive but simple tract written on the whole Incarnation that would demonstrate God being God. Have you done something like that or would you have an idea that could be written as a tract and presented to them and others for discussion and then printing? If we could come up with something like that it would be widely used.

It seems we have more and more books that are desirable by POBLO (People of the Book Lutheran Outreach). They brought with them an Urdu catechism that they had done and want us to do more copies when the supply is exhausted. Maybe this is the step needed to open up new avenues of cooperation. I think the growing population of immigrants throughout the country made them realize they will need more of our help. They were impressed that we had Somali and Chinese materials. I also gave them a copy of my book, *Jesus Never Fails*.

Had one missionary in Minneapolis on the take from both POBLO and a Presbyterian congregation. It came about in the airport in Minneapolis-St. Paul when by chance Khurram was talking to a stranger who turned out to be the pastor of the same Presbyterian Church and when they started talking about working among Somalis it was always—so do we—until they discovered they were talking of the same missionary. A very good meeting and we will see where we go from here. RR

DECEMBER 20

From: Ted Na Thalang

Subject: Meeting with Diane Grebbing and Dawn Mueller

Dear Dr. Rahn and fellow workers,

Advent greetings. I had a good meeting with Diane and Dawn on Dec. 17.

A) Diane is working on LHF's book, *God's Word for You*. It has 70 Bible stories for students ages 9-11. This project has three parts: 1) the 70 Bible stories, 2) the workbook for students, 3) teachers' guide. The total cost for this project is \$4,000. The estimated times are: 1) 70 Bible stories—Dec. 2013; 2) the workbook—July 31, 2014; 3) teacher guide—Sept. 2014. The Old Testament is done, and the New Testament will be done by the end of December. The language of this book is written for older children than *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories*. During the

meeting on Dec. 17, we had decided to add three additional parts to each story:

1) Gospel Connection to the Old Testament stories, to help the students see Christ/Gospel in the Old Testament. The reason is that many pastors and Christians in Asia and other parts of the world think that Old Testament is Law and New Testament is Gospel.

2) Promise Fulfilled, added to the New Testament stories to help students see how the New Testament connects to the Old Testament and God's promises.

3) Word of Hope, added to each story to help students see that it doesn't matter how bad things are; there is always hope for God's people. So that after reading each story, the students may receive blessings from God's Word in their lives. That this is not just a story in the Bible long time ago, but the Word of God also is relevant and applicable to their lives today. I think with additional parts, this book will be a real blessing for those who read it.

We will need to find someone to do the artwork for each story or maybe use existing artwork from those who willing to give us the permission to do so.

B) Dawn is working on [a] new way of presenting Luther's *Small Catechism* to non-Christians or new Christians, especially for teenagers. It will be in a completely different format than the traditional Luther's *Small Catechism*. The reason for this new way of presenting the good Lutheran teaching from Luther so that it will be more interesting and more relevant to the lives of the people who read it. It will deal with issues of today. The artwork will be done in a Manga style. The work has not progressed much because Dawn has been occupied with many things recently, especially the tornado that destroyed part of their church and people around them. I think that Dawn and Diane need to get away to a quiet place to really work hard together for two to three days without distractions. I believe these books will be great blessings to teenagers and those who see the traditional Luther's *Small Catechism* boring or not so interesting. Dawn has been giving Diane good advice and has proofread and edited Diane's work.

Thank God for these people and their vision and willingness to reach people around the world with the Gospel of Christ through the work of LHF.

Blessings, TNT

JANUARY 4

From: Robert Mrosko
To: Robert Rahn
Subject: Work in northern India

Dear Pastor Rahn,

My name is Robert Mrosko and I am one of the pastors at Brookfield Lutheran Church. Recently I was on a mission trip to northern India, Punjab state. While the LCMS has had a presence in southern India for 150 years, there has been little Lutheran presence in Punjab. That began to change a few years ago when Pastor Gary Rohwer from POBLO in Michigan made contact with an Indian Christian pastor, Rev. Daniel Masih. Over the last few years Pastor Rohwer has strengthened the connection with Christians in northern India and it looks like even more opportunity exists to support the small but growing Christian church in Punjab.

One of the greatest needs in northern India is good material for teaching the pastors and providing them orthodox resources to use in their congregations. Brookfield Lutheran Church would like to help provide these resources and training if possible. I am writing to see if LHF could be an additional partner in this effort? Do you publish materials in Punjabi, the main dialect in Punjab state? Do you have any presence in northern India already?

Please let me know if you are interested in pursuing this.

In His service, Robert Mrosko

JANUARY 7

The next articles report on disturbances between several tribes living in Sudan. There is a history of tension between the tribes that often produces violence of one kind or another. The usual results are that residences and other structures with typical straw thatched roofs are set on fire and people are injured or killed if they do not flee for safety into the jungle or seek shelter in a compound of the United Nations. Much of this violence is centered around Juba, the capitol of South Sudan.

Board Update:

There have been questions on the situation in Sudan. Today I heard from our Evangelical Lutheran Church of South Sudan/Sudan (ELCSS/S) General Secretary giving details on some of our members and pastors serving there. It sounds

like a rather severe situation and it will take government intervention to quell the disturbance. The question is if the government will take further action than already done. There is a UN compound right in the village of Yambio where we are centered but probably a bigger unit in Juba where a lot of the disturbance is taking place. From the sounds of things, not even cash sent over would help as the supplies are scant. And if you did try to ship something it would be stolen by the rebels.

It's a call for prayer for sure.

RR

From: Edward Sunge

To: Michael Rodewald

Subject: South Sudan Report

Dear Dr. Mike and others,

Greetings from Yambio. The situation in our country South Sudan is not stable. Our church has been badly affected by the events in the country. In Juba all our church members who are from the Nuer ethnic group are in the UN compound because they cannot move free in Juba. Rev. Peter Chol is with the group in the UN compound. In telephone conversation with him this afternoon, he said they have very little food to eat for the whole week.

Yesterday night in Juba, Rev. Emmanuel Bafuka was robbed at gunpoint in his house. They took a laptop, camera, mobiles and other valuables. In Malakal, the house of Rev. Simon Gatluak was attacked and up to now we have no contact with him. The Deputy Bishop, Rev. John Jock, has left Malakal and is outside the city in hiding.

In Western Equatoria in Yambio there is no much problem, but there is no fuel and even mobile airtime so we shall soon be cut off from the rest of the world. I ask all to pray for us.

In Christ, Rev. Edward Nzeme – General Secretary, ELCS/SS

JANUARY 9

Rev. Matt Heise announced at the LHF staff devotions that he accepted the call to become LHF Executive Director. His service would start on April 1, giving him time to recuperate from an upcoming minor surgery.

Acceptance Letter to the Board of the Lutheran Heritage Foundation

It is with great joy that I would like to express my sincere thanks to the Lutheran Heritage Foundation for the kindness and consideration shown to me in extending this call to serve as executive director. I am honored by your prayerful confidence and am writing to you to say that I will accept the call to be the next

executive director of LHF. Pursuant to our discussions during the call process, I anticipate being able to begin my service on or about April 1, 2014. May the Lord guide our steps as we move forward in spreading His Word to the nations through the profound, Spirit-given wisdom conveyed to our Lutheran forefathers. God's blessings to you all!

Rev. Matthew Heise

JANUARY 15

From: Robert Mrosko

To: Robert Rahn

Subject: RE: Work in northern India

Dear Pastor Rahn,

Thank you for your response to my inquiry about work in northern India. While there in November, we met with many Christian pastors who have a generally orthodox theology but, as far as I could determine, no connection to any one denomination. Gary Rowher from POBLO in Michigan and a few others presented some distinctly Lutheran teachings to these pastors and they were eager for more. One of the Indian pastors in the group is a third generation Christian and attended a Lutheran theology school outside of Delhi. He agreed to work on translating Koehler's *Summary of Christian Doctrine* into Punjabi. I can get you the name and contact information for this pastor; however, I am not aware of Lutheran pastors in northern India who could help with proofing any translations. The catechism would be another excellent resource to get into the hands of the pastors and laity.

During the time there, we met between 70-90 pastors serving congregations all across northern India from Amritsar to Chandigarh. Most of the congregations are small (10-40 people) but some are larger (200-300). The potential number of people to be reached is in the hundreds of thousands.

We have some funds left from our recent trip to assist with this work. Our hope is to make this a larger emphasis going forward because of the immigrants from northern and southern India in our area. I would be happy to talk with you more about this when you visit in February.

In His service, Rob Mrosko

JANUARY 23

This is an example of how a translation project begins:

Greetings and thanks for the response. Jeff and I think Rev. Sampson Bilafamin should work what he has already translated of the *Small Catechism* (the pages before 47). Is it keyboarded? Because that is a huge job. If it is not, then somebody

has to keyboard it. I will return early March and we shall move from there.

Blessings and peace,
Pastor Nicholas Salifu

Dear Rev. Salifu,

This is truly good news and we are rejoicing in the Lord for what He has done! As you are aware, Rev. Samson Bilafanim does not have easy access to email. Fortunately, I have a trip planned to Gbintiri tomorrow so I will be able to see him. I will discuss the budget details with him at that time, and I can try to get you the information by Monday.

I do want to be clear and also receive clarification on a few points. First, the *Small Catechism* translation is completed, but it still needs to be consultant checked. Also, Rev. Bilafanim is working diligently on the questions and answers at the end of the book. It will still take him a number of months to complete that work. The whole thing will need to be checked by a team of reviewers.

In order to help us determine a reasonable and workable budget, please give us some parameters to work with. Will LHF give a stipend to Rev. Bilafanim to enable to him to work full time on completing the questions and answers section? Will LHF provide a token for the reviewers to look through and comment on the entire manuscript? Will LHF provide finances for travel for consultant checking (either the consultant going to Rev. Bilafanim or Rev. Bilafanim going to the consultant)? Who is responsible for printing the *Small Catechism* and clearing the *Small Catechism* through port? Answers to these questions will really help in determining a realistic budget.

Also, I feel that it is important to keep President Fynn in the loop. He was the one that inquired about the possibility of getting LHF support for the Komba *Small Catechism*. Although I am very interested in the *Small Catechism* being done, I am really only acting as a liaison in this matter. Thank you for your understanding.

In Christ, David Federwitz – Regional Director, Lutheran Bible Translators

From: Nicholas Salifu
To: Dave Federwitz
Subject: Komba Catechism

Brother David, thanks for the prompt response to the email I sent yesterday.

Yes, we all rejoice about the wonderful work the Lord is using LHF to do for the world. LHF was established about 20 years ago. Not too long! But they have truly worked as faithful servants of Jesus. Oh, we bless Rev. Dr. Robert Rahn for founding this organization. LHF has printed and published nearly 700 publications. Yes, God is great!

Let me address some of your questions:

1. LHF does not support a full-time worker. In their office, several of the staff are volunteers. In Ghana, I have been the coordinator and so I receive a monthly stipend. The translators and reviewers in the Kusasi area receive tokens for work done.

2. I am quite sure that LHF will print the book, ship it, and provide funds for clearing at the port. They have done that for the Kusaal work. You are right, we should not leave Pres. Fynn out.

3. I need clarification: You said the translation of the catechism is finished (with the Explanation), but Sampson is to work on the questions and answers. This both Mr. Jeff Rahn and myself don't understand. Please explain further because I know that the entire catechism has questions and answers. Or do you mean the part that Martin Luther wrote? That is the first 30 or so pages?

4. LHF may also provide funds for stationery.

5. With regard to tokens, we may use the same as for the Kusasi area. What do you think? Based on the work done, the translator receives GHC 100-120 a month. He has to work at least one day in a week for at least four hours. Or, he is assigned a certain number of pages to work on for the month. A team of reviewers after completing reviewing what has been translated receive GHS 150 for five people.

6. I had no consultant in Ghana. Dr. Kolb of Concordia Seminary was my adviser. Since the *Small Catechism* is pretty simple, you, Pastor Esala and myself could help Sampson where he has problems. Do you have any consultant in mind? I believe if there is cost, LHF may consider paying.

All in all, LHF is willing to assist not only Komba and Kusaal, but Bimoba and Akan as well.

Blessings and peace, Pastor Nicholas Salifu

Dear Rev. Salifu,

I have copied this to President Fynn to make sure he is in the loop. We do thank God for what He is doing through LHF. 700 publications in 20 years is certainly a lot. Praise be to God!

In order to clarify, so far Rev. Bilafanim has translated only the parts that Martin Luther wrote. He is still working tirelessly to translate the questions and answers (p. 47-242 in the 1986 Concordia Publishing House edition).

In regard to the financial side of things, I think whatever arrangement you have for the Kusasi work can be done for the Komba. In the Bible translation world these days, things are moving to a system where remuneration is based on the number of pages translated. This allows the translator to work at their own pace, which is especially good for pastors who do not know what activities they

may be called to at a moment's notice.

Forgive me if I am over emphasizing the consultant. My background is in the realm of Bible translation. With Scripture translation, the manuscript is checked and rechecked several times by competent consultants. I had envisioned a similar process with the *Small Catechism*. I would love to be of assistance, but I am already overcommitted. I think you would be an excellent consultant to check through the *Small Catechism*. Rev. Nathan Esala may also be able to assist in the checking. It would be very exciting if the BiMobas and Akans could have the *Small Catechism* and other Lutheran materials translated.

May God bless all of us to accomplish His work, David Federwitz

From: Nicholas Salifu

To: David Federwitz;

Subject: Komba Catechism

Greetings! I have returned to St. Louis and classes have started. It is terribly cold here but I am kept warm. My meeting with LHF was successful. They have assured me that they are going to support the Komba translation. I was asked to contact you (both of you) to get a reasonable budget ASAP. Since you have indicated that the translation is already done, then list what you need and the amount. This should be immediate because they are meeting now to discuss their 2014 budget. I hope to hear from you ASAP.

Blessings,

Pastor Nicholas Salifu

JANUARY 24

An example as to necessary hoops to get all facts stated relative to seminary education for Mohammad Gurhan... Every seminarian's experience is different. Mohammad Gurhan's situation was unique in that he immigrated to Holland from Nairobi, Kenya to escape religious persecution because of his converting from Islam to Lutheranism. He then discovered that in establishing his citizenship in Holland that there was a requirement he not leave the country for two years. The plan for his enrollment at the Fort Wayne Seminary had to be cancelled and he began a process of enrolling at the Westfield House in Cambridge, England, a extension program established by the Fort Wayne Seminary.

The funding of his educational program had to be secured through scholarships and tuition help. Who will do what? This is always a question. It becomes more complicated when the potential student suddenly finds his government aid is suddenly cut because he will be enrolling in a university. This is true months before he can depart for his studies.

The Westfield House is concerned that Brother Gurhan achieves his ministry

goals and that resources for tuition, room, board and books is covered. The memo of understanding attempts to cover all the bases:

Course of Instruction: The Westfield House Diploma consists of three components: Bachelor of Divinity (BD); Westfield House Certificate; curacy or internship. At this stage you wish to pursue the Westfield House Certificate, beginning in August 2014. This will be one academic year of full-time study, finishing in May 2015. It will be possible to apply for the BD at a later stage, should you decide to ultimately pursue that as well.

Application: In order to proceed with your application and to apply for a bursary, we require a letter from your church body stating that they are in agreement with you undertaking studies at Westfield House. As we discussed, a letter from the president of the Evangelisch-Lutherse Kerk in België (ELKB), Rev. Gijssbertus van Hattem, would cover this as you are now a member of their Antwerp congregation.

Funding: You stated that you will need financial assistance in order to study at Westfield House, and that you anticipate this coming from two sources: the Lutheran Heritage Foundation and the Friends of Westfield House. We will need to know how the costs might be divided between these two organisations. Once we have received the letter from Rev. van Hattem, we will submit an application to the Friends of Westfield House to cover some of the costs. Please let us know if there is anything we need to do to support your application to the Lutheran Heritage Foundation.

After much discussion via emails, letters and phone calls, Gurhan's course for seminary training are set.

JANUARY 28

This LHF newsletter article was written by Rev. Rahn, interim executive director, announcing the new director:

“The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, Galilee of the Gentiles...The people who walk in darkness will see a great light. Those who live in a dark land, the light will shine on them.” Isaiah 9:1, 2

“Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising.” Isaiah 60:3

This is the season for missions. We are in the middle of the Epiphany season when we concern ourselves with Jesus, the Light of the World. Those passages from Isaiah and many others suggest to me that the Light of the World will shine in the hearts of Muslim nations and they will come. “Then you will see and be radiant, and your heart will thrill and rejoice.” 60:5

Yes, the wisemen came. Others will come because they had the Word preached to them and printed for them. Epiphany gives meaning to the work of LHF. The books that we publish carry the message of Him Who is the Light of the World. Entire nations will come because of the power of the Word. The more books we publish, the more the Light will shine.

With the announcement of the Rev. Matthew Heise accepting the LHF Call to serve as our next executive director, we have reason to believe that he brings another beacon of light to lead and direct our global work. I believe Rev. Heise will be the face of LHF for many years to come and I couldn't be happier that the Lord led him to this place at such a time as this. LHF has been in good hands and will continue to be in those same good hands as we work together to bring light through the books and materials published.

Rev. Heise's experience on the mission field stands him in good stead to serve in this LHF leadership role.

This is our time, board, staff, and LHF friends, to embrace his leadership and renew our commitments so that God may be glorified and His Kingdom enlarged.

FEBRUARY 4

From: Robert Rahn

To: LHF

Subject: Report from the Field: January 25-February 3

Dear Board Members,

I won't be making it a practice to send these types of reports to you, but it will be from such reports that we glean information as to activity of our staff and a way to encourage all of you to be aware of possible ways you can draw support for our mission. I thought it might also be helpful to see how we [plan] for a trip. It isn't just the end result that is significant, but you can see from my schedule that the time spent in Milwaukee is very intense and centered on personal visits, including the district president and the district mission executive. I try to select donors who haven't contributed in the last 13 months so they can be motivated by our matching gift. I had Jen [Bagnall, our public relations coordinator] make a special piece outlining the match that you find on our website. Brookfield Lutheran is the congregation that was served by one of my relatives and they have been supportive of our mission for the past six or seven years. I hope you can picture just what amount of time went into making the arrangements for this trip in the stewardship of time and expense.

So receive this as an example as to how we approach our work and how it is carried out. This is also a weekend when Wallace Schulz will be making a major thrust for LHF in a multi-event effort in Everett, Washington.

You can help the overall effort in various ways. It was good to hear that Board

Member, Rev. Hoke, has scheduled a meeting that will be promoting the LHF mission. Your help might come in thinking about someone who could be contacted as a possible special donor. There are many such among our acquaintances. This morning I had breakfast with a man I got to know at the rec center where I exercise. He was a Roman Catholic and his wife Lutheran. He has become a Lutheran and has a major interest in the LHF and we stay in touch. His gift will come again in April. His mother was recruited by my wife to be a staffer and was at our mailing last week. We all have those kinds of connections that can help in a team effort. It's exciting to be part of this team with you.

Serving together,
RR

(Taken from January 2014 Word at Work newsletter)

“The muscle of the Lord” delivered worldwide

by Jennifer Bagnall

The Spanish *Bibles with Small Catechism* have arrived! More than 24,000 copies are being delivered to countries through South and Central America, as well as to Spain, Switzerland and the United States.

The *Bible with Small Catechism* is the LHF's 3rd edition of the Spanish Bible, combined in one volume with Luther's *Small Catechism*. What makes this edition different is that the Bible and all the catechism's Scripture references use the RVC Bible translation, which is easier for many Spanish-speaking people to understand.

Nearly 5,000 copies (hardcover and paperback) are available for use in the United States. Donations of \$10 per book help cover the costs of shipping and allow the LHF mission to continue.

FROM PERU:

I want to share with you the great joy and excitement that the Lord brought to us today in Lima, Peru. 29 cases of soft-cover Bibles and one case of hard-cover Bibles (for a total of 716 Bibles) were brought to the front door of our national office!! This is a huge blessing, and we are so thankful to the Lord Jesus Christ for the love and faithfulness that He has shown to us through LHF, your associates, and through all of the donors who LHF organized to sponsor this latest printing in the Reina-Valera Contemporanea (RVC).

The work of Christ's mission is always a blessing, but it is tough. When equipped with the Word of God in a solid and useful translation, you really have all that you need in order to change the world.

Today the “muscle” of the Lord arrived in the form of Bibles from the Lutheran Heritage Foundation, and our entire team is celebrating this encouraging boost.

Schools begin classes for the fall semester in the first week of March, which is just 3 weeks away. With two churches, a mercy house, and now a school of 120 students that wants to teach Lutheran theology in their religion classes, we rejoice for the equipping we needed in order to equip others for service & growth in our Savior.

Your Brother in Christ,
Mark Eisold
LCMS Missionary Pastor

FROM SWITZERLAND:

On Feb. 24, the Confessional Lutheran Church in Switzerland celebrated its first anniversary. Their pastor, Rev. Walter Ralli, writes: “We have approximately 40 Spanish-speaking members that come from various countries like Guatemala, Spain, Chile, and the Dominican Republic. Two weeks ago, we received the Bibles from LHF and use them in Bible studies and Divine Service... Sometimes I see many Latin Americans wandering in matters of faith, like sheep without a shepherd. This is why I think this material is very helpful even in Europe, so that many can find stability in their lives of faith with this clear and orderly doctrine.”

From PARAGUAY:

Paraguay is 89% Catholic, but many worship first the Virgin Mary and little to Jesus. This is mixed with many superstitions and myths that have origins in the Indians’ beliefs. But the Lutheran faith has the consolation of God’s Word that Jesus Christ, the only mediator, suffered and died for all our sins. As in the days of Luther, there is much ignorance of the Word of God, but this *Small Catechism* will guide us deeper into God’s teachings.

Victor Verruck, director
Lutheran Hour Ministries, Paraguay

From: Larry Rockemann

To: Robert Rahn

Subject: Report from the Field: January 25-February 3

I traveled to St. Louis, Missouri on January 25 to prepare for a number of events during the week. On Sunday, January 26, I conducted an LHF Mission Sunday at Village Lutheran Church in Ladue (St. Louis). This included preaching both services and conducting the Bible Class in-between the services. There were about 70 people in the Bible Class! Very well-received—and excellent preparation/intro from the pastor, Rev. Kevin Golden. Took Kevin and his wife, Joy, out for brunch after the services. Gave me time to talk about putting LHF into their mission budget—well-received. I think that it is a definite possibility that we will

become a permanent mission recipient in their annual mission's budget. David Berger (our LHF Board member) was present at worship and Bible Class. Many good comments from folks. Pastor Golden included my written "thank you" in the following Sunday's bulletin.

Monday-Tuesday, Jan. 27-28, I had our exhibit at the Multi-Ethnic Symposium and Hispanic/Latino Lecture on Theology and Missions at Concordia Seminary. Surprising number in attendance (80 registrants from "outside" the seminary community and about 100 students/faculty). Good response. We had begun a discussion this past summer about doing a more "permanent and public" display of all the LHF materials that we've sent them through the years. Prof. Benjamin Haupt agreed to feature our work and I agreed that we would work with him to provide suitable graphics/pictures etc. so that our work/info can be appropriately displayed in the library. I actually looked at a couple of possible places in the library where he was thinking about doing this.

One of the main presenters at the Monday sessions was the Rev. Aaron Putnam, pastor at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Hayward, California. He and I had spoken when I was out there in the Spring about the need he has in his congregation (high Eritrean/Ethiopian immigrant population) of materials translated into Tigrinya. He mentioned that he had well-educated, professional folks in his congregation there that might be willing to assist us in translation/editing work were we to look at the possibility of adding books in the Tigrinya language. He and I spoke at length at the Symposium. He is very interested in our work and asked that I again notify him whenever I'm going to be out in the California/Nevada/Hawaii District again for an LHF Sunday at Good Shepherd.

I attended the Hispanic/Latino Lecture on Tuesday afternoon there at the Seminary.

Visited Blessed Savior, O'Fallon, Illinois (met for over an hour with Pr. Vern Lintvedt—let him know when I'm back in the area and I can plan on an LHF Mission Sunday there—very, very mission-minded folks/pastor—he was very positive about the work of LHF.

On Thursday and Friday (Jan. 30-31) I attended and exhibited at the ALMA (Association of Lutheran Mission Agencies) Conference at the Crowne Plaza Airport/St. Louis. Apparently from what I could gather, this was one of the best-attended ALMA conferences in recent history. Good networking and lots of communication with folks about what we're doing. Overall, the conference (sessions, etc.) was well worth attending/exhibiting. Interestingly, the same concerns we have at LHF about improving communication between us and the national offices of the LCMS are shared by many other mission agencies/RSOs.

Once again, the pastor of Concordia, the Rev. Rodney Benkendorf, had thoroughly prepared the congregation for LHF/my coming. And... although the

weather was horrendous—sleet/freezing rain the night before—the church was full... and about 40 in Bible Class with lots of positive response! There's lots of history in this area as you know. Pastor Benkendorf hoped that all of the churches in Perry County would have the opportunity for an LHF Sunday.

I had hoped to do LHF Sundays at other churches in March (Orlando, et.al.) but these have schools with plans for "Lutheran Schools Week" etc., so those plans fell apart. I still have a possibility of being in the Atlanta area for the last Sunday in February and should know for certain by the end of this week.

MARCH 3

From: Rev. James May
Subject: Crown of Life

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

This evening we read from John 11 in our devotions according to the hymnal lectionary. These are some of those verses: Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" She said to him, "Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world." (John 11:23-27)

Before our evening devotions we were informed that our brother in Christ and co-worker, Samwel Atunga, received his crown of eternal life at approximately 2 p.m. local time. I have yet to get a hold of his wife as her phone is switched off. Most likely they are mourning at this time and we will try again tomorrow. We ask your prayers of comfort and consolation for the family.

Rev. Atunga was a faithful worker and assisted LHF with translation and distribution. He was especially helpful in making contact with pastors and churches throughout Kenya and Tanzania. He arranged for many seminars that were helpful in highlighting the contents of the books published and how they could be used in the parish.

Yours in Christ,
Rev. James E May, Jr.

From: Robert Rahn
Subject: RE: Crown of Life

Dear James,

We are sorry to hear the news of Atunga's death. Please convey our condolences to the family. We stand ready to help with funeral expenses. Perhaps you can convey as to what those might be. "Blessed are the dead 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.” Rev. 14:13

From: Anssi Simojoki

Subject: Re: Crown of Life

It was in 1990 after we had moved from Matongo to Nairobi that we came across Samwel Atunga. Marja employed him to help us to clean our new house. The next project was to clean the dirty Uhuru Highway Lutheran Church. We realised that Samwel was working diligently and hard. From that modest beginning, we followed his path forward and supported him also in various ways. He became evangelist and later pastor. His latest achievement was his MA degree at Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology University, Nairobi. There were times of severe dissent followed by sincere reconciliation. We built up together his wedding with Gladys. One summer we could even receive him as our guest in Finland. He was tirelessly hardworking and ready to anywhere it was needed. The merry side of his character attracted admiration and cannot be forgotten. Our entire family in Finland and in the UK is grieving. Thanks to God that during my latest visit to Kenya in November-December 2013, we could work out the final reconciliation with him. I see with the eyes of memory how Samwel, full of smiles, departed after we had come to the conclusion. The weather was wonderfully bright. There was something that followed me from that day. I now understand why.

We keep on praying for Gladys and the children. Samwel has already left this temporal infirmity and has entered the kingdom of glory. May the same be also our blessed lot.

MARCH 3

Ted NaThalang’s summary of trip to Southeast Asia:

Reviewed project goals and objectives. Worked on the Sunday School teacher’s guide to go with *A Child’s Garden of Bible Stories*.

In Indonesia, we’re making adjustments after the death of a key leader, Rev. Mangisi. LHM (Lutheran Hour Ministries) in Jakarta wants our books and materials for their new bookstore. Checked with three print shops in Jakarta and selected one as most reliable.

In Medan checked on a house that is available as an office and warehouse for only \$1,600 annual rent.

Planning to release Luther’s Work, Volume 31, *Freedom of A Christian*, as a tribute to the late Rev. Mangisi. Expecting 500 to attend and good time to distribute book and introduce work of LHF.

Would like to do *A Child’s Garden of Bible Stories* in Batak.

Talked with Bishop of [the Indonesian Lutheran Church] (GKLI), Aladin, working to become partner with LCMS.

To Tokyo, Japan to meet with Brad Wordel, WELS Asia Director. By train from Tokyo to Kobe, Japan, to meet with Dr. Makito Masaki, president of West Japan Lutheran Seminary and president of West Japan Lutheran Church. Hope to finish Luther's *Small Catechism* (enchiridion) soon, hoping to have it ready for a pastor's conference to be held in May, needing 100 copies. Want to have entire catechism done for convention in November. They would like TNT to come to conduct a translation workshop.

Flew to Beijing via Shanghai. Met with publisher Glory Power. The process of printing in China includes the publisher editing our books for appropriateness in Chinese. Will give us their comments and TNT will check with our Chinese pastors to see if suggestions are appropriate and acceptable. When editing is completed, we will give the publisher permission to represent us to obtain an ISBN and permission from the government to print. No changes are allowed after approval. When books are published, they will deliver them according to our direction. The plan is to distribute them through our LCMS missionaries and contacts in China, with help also from WELS. Books cannot be sold for profit, but the publisher suggests that we make *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* available in a Chinese/English edition. A suggested donation could be promoted.

Ted received an email from the Lutheran Church of Malaysia asking for 1,000 copies of Luther's *Small Catechism* in simplified Chinese. They were willing to pay for them; more would have to be printed.

MARCH 11

From: Robert Rahn

To: Japheth Rev. Dachi

Subject: Condolences to Atunga Family

Dear Brothers & Sisters in Christ, Members of the Atunga Family,

“Blessed are the dead 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.”

Rev. 14:13

As I look at my office bulletin board that has a montage of pictures, I note among them pictures of departed brothers—Rev. Andrew Mbugo Elisa, Dr. Wilbert Kreiss, and a picture of the Atunga family taken on December 25, 2012 in front of a Christmas tree in a shopping mall. Who would have believed that a healthy and robust husband, father, friend, evangelist, pastor, would in a year's time have been so quickly called by God to a higher and more noble calling.

Luther wrote to a former student at the death of his wife in childbirth: “re-joice that while a physical gift was withdrawn by God, a spiritual gift was given.”

Luther identifies the spiritual gift as a Christian death died in faith while she was fulfilling her vocation as wife and mother: on the other hand, you must also reflect on the fact that this very death of your wife ought to make you exceeding happy before God inasmuch as she died in childbirth, that is, in the performance of her God-given duty and in the exercise of her proper calling.

The same could be said about our departed brother. While fulfilling his vocation he was called home by the Lord. You, too, can reflect on the fact that this very death of your husband and father can make you exceeding happy before God as he died doing his work, that is, in the performance of his God-given duty as pastor and preacher. You have not lost him but sent him on ahead of you to be kept in everlasting blessedness.

JESUS NEVER FAILS. He did not fail in providing for our deepest need—the forgiveness of sins. He did this by enduring great suffering and shame, even death on a cross. He did not fail us. If He was able to deal with our deepest need, can He not also deal with our lesser needs as well?

Let us give thanks today that Samuel Atunga has embraced the evangelical doctrine and has been delivered from the darkness of error, as Luther wrote about his own father. Your husband's, your father's faith is confirmed by the slander, mockery, and scorn he has borne for Christ's sake. And today the Scriptures are confirmed: "Be thou faithful unto death, I will give thee the crown of eternal life." The strife is over, the victory won. Thanks be to God Who gives us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord." Samuel, rest in peace as we wait the blessed reunion that is to come. May the Lord console you and comfort you in knowing that your loved one is with the Lord.

On behalf of the Lutheran Heritage Foundation.

Dr. Robert L. Rahn

Founder/Interim Executive Director

MARCH 12

Bob,

I'm glad you were able to sit down and talk with Hameed Altai. It sounds like you were able to assess his ability to provide some level of support and help for us at LHF. As far as issues with POBLO are concerned, I am ignorant and leave that to those in-the-know. What I appreciated about Hameed in my conversations with him were his words of strong support for what we're about at LHF, especially as it relates to our Arabic *Small Catechism*. I'm hopeful of also having more interaction with Faith/Troy.

I spent the entire day yesterday in Nashville and Crossville visiting pastors/churches. Left early in the a.m. Once again, I had exceptionally good visits, most of which I had previously scheduled (to make certain that I had a captive au-

dience). Along the way, I had a couple of interesting surprises. At Concordia Lutheran (Gerry Meyer), I met and visited at length with Rev. Jim Guill, an Episcopal priest. Seems that Concordia is renting out their church facility to St. Andrew's Episcopal Church as they acquire new church property. St. Andrew's left the Episcopal Church over women's ordination and the whole homosexual mess. Guill was extraordinarily candid—at one point he sounded so Lutheran I had to ask him why he just didn't lead his congregation "all the way" home to the Augsburg side of things. To which he replied that Pr. Meyer had left him his marked-up copy of the *Book of Concord* containing the Lutheran Confessions and he was slowly and carefully making his way through them, finding much that was helpful to him.

The larger church in Nashville, Our Savior, is in the process of getting their new pastor (Lane Reuter coming from Immanuel/Memphis). During their vacancy they are served by Al Bachert. Dave Ficken is their associate pastor but wasn't around. However, I met at length (for almost an hour) with former Mid-South District President Dave Callies (he and his wife are members there). Rev. Callies "retired" some years ago, but it's evident that he's still neck-deep into pastoral ministry there at Our Savior. I also met with their principal (Wendy Morris)—they have a large, rather well-known, highly-respected Lutheran School ("academy") there. She's interested in having the children do a LHF mission project, though thought it might be best to do over an academic year rather than jump in now—inquired whether I'd return and do a chapel for them as a "kickoff."

Pastor Phil Young was called to the hospital by the time I arrived at Redeemer, but I was able to meet at length with their DCE/Parish Director. (I had brought along a copy of the Arabic *Small Catechism* and ended up giving it to him as he is working with a 16 year-old Arabic-speaking young Muslim, friends with his son, and now becoming a more frequent guest at their youth group Bible Studies at Redeemer—asking lots of questions.) I will be doing an LHF Mission Sunday at Redeemer August 3 and at that time will publicly thank them for their exceptional generosity and ongoing support for LHF—they could well be a model congregation for mission support. One needs only to look at the narthex bulletin board to know of their commitment to LHF. I should have taken a picture. Apparently, one couple in the congregation in particular has provided strong, consistent leadership for maintaining the congregation's support for LHF.

I ended the day at Shepherd of the Hills in Crossville. Although Pastor David Lampman and I were scheduled to meet, he was over-extended in some kind of emergency meeting with their building contractors—they are doing a sizeable addition to the church and educational wing. I left materials, though, and we've talked via the phone since then.

Beside doing an LHF Mission Sunday at Redeemer, it is my hope to also get

into both Our Savior and Concordia. I had also hoped to stop by (no notice) at Faith/Oak Ridge and visit with my friend, Bill Wagner, but it grew too late (I arrived home a little after 7:30).

Larry Rockemann

From: Herb Schumm

To: Robert Rahn

Subject: LHF Contacts

Hi, Bob:

Today I attended the Ft. Wayne North Winkel of which I'm a member. Had a chance to give all attending pastors my LHF card and request a chance to present/preach/teach re: LHF. No takers from them yet, but at least they can put a face with the name.

Peace in Christ,

Herb

From: Robert Rahn

To: Robert Mrosko, Brookfield Lutheran Church

Dear Brother Mrosko,

Cordial greetings from the winter wonderland of Macomb, Michigan where we are receiving another measurable snowfall, approaching the all-time record for a winter. Before this storm we needed only nine inches to break all records. We could get within three inches of that today and maybe wait until May to finish it off!!!

It's been three or four storms ago that I visited with you at Brookfield Lutheran Church. We never got a chance to visit after the services, but I wanted to follow up with you on the Koehler *Summary of Christian Doctrine*. I left for you a copy of *The Promise*, a publication of WELS in Punjabi. Has there been progress on the Koehler translation work? What can we do to help the project along? Maybe you could give me the name and contact information of the pastor working on it and we could collaborate on getting it completed and do some other work in Punjabi. I'd bring our India LHF coordinator into the picture also. He works out of Chennai.

I was scheduled to be at the new POBLO headquarters today but postponed my visit until next week. If Gary Rowher is around, I can also consult with him and get his input. He'd have the access to a printer once the product gets far enough along. We'd also want to get the copyright permission to publish.

I didn't want this to fall in the cracks as it is an important area of work and could be something to help you in your future visits. One of our basic rules is that all books published need to be introduced in special gatherings, conferences,

or seminars. You could be the one to fulfill that aspect along with our worker in Chennai.

Blessings to you as you journey with Him during this Lenten season.

RRahn

LHF Founder, Interim Director until April 1

In the twenty-first volume of its newsletter, the LHF reported on its new executive director.

(From the January 2014 "Word at Work" newsletter:)

Rev. Matthew Heise accepts call as LHF executive director

by Jennifer Bagnall

Rev. Matthew Heise has accepted the call to be executive director of the Lutheran Heritage Foundation, headquartered in Macomb, Michigan. Rev. Heise will begin overseeing LHF's worldwide translating and publishing efforts beginning Apr. 1.

"I'm honored to have been called to serve the Lutheran Heritage Foundation," said Rev. Heise. "I know from experience how important LHF's books are to spreading the Gospel message to every corner of the globe, and I look forward to taking part in that mission."

Prior to joining LHF, Rev. Heise was a missionary for the LCMS for twelve years, serving as a theological educator in countries such as Russia, Ukraine, and Mongolia. During that time, he also helped coordinate the production of Luther's *Small Catechism* in the Kyrgyz language for the country of Kyrgyzstan (formerly part of the Soviet Union).

"In many ways, my service at LHF will be a natural continuation of that work," said Rev. Heise. "Previously, I taught; now, I'll be assisting with producing the Lutheran literature that teaches. I hope to use the contacts I've made over the years to get LHF's books into the hands of people who want to know more about the one true God."

"The LHF Board of Directors is very pleased that Pastor Matthew Heise has accepted the call as executive director," said Rev. Walter Otten, chairman of the Board. "As an experienced missionary, he is well acquainted with the Lutheran Heritage Foundation and shares its commitment to our confessional Lutheran heritage. He is well prepared to lead LHF into the future, uncovering our Lutheran treasures that have been buried for many people around the world because the books weren't available in their languages."

Rev. Heise received his seminary education at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri, graduating in 2003. In the months before he is installed at LHF,

Rev. Heise will be completing his doctoral dissertation, which traces the persecution of Russian Christians during the Soviet Communist era and reveals how the faithful Church survived.

FEBRUARY 1

(From the January 2014 “Word at Work” newsletter:)

Holding Up the Prophets’ Hands: In life and in death, Illinois woman proclaims the Gospel

by Jennifer Bagnall

The seeds of faith that were planted early in June Kolzow’s life grew deep roots – so deep that even in her death, new shoots are springing forth.

As June Kolzow Carls lay dying, she didn’t know what year it was. Her vascular dementia worsening, she often didn’t know where she was, and she didn’t always remember who her children were. But one thing June never forgot was her Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Deep Roots

The seeds of the Gospel were planted early by parents who ensured their daughter received a Lutheran education. During confirmation at St. Luke Lutheran Church in Itasca, Ill., in 1937, June filled the margins of her German catechism with notes and Bible verses she wanted to remember. Every Saturday night, her mother would lead family prayers of preparation for Communion.

The Lord provided generously to June’s family, but those blessings became a challenge for June when her beloved father died when she was only 17, placing 2/3 of the family business on her shoulders. Having watched her father, June knew to follow God’s priorities as she managed her family finances.

Throughout her life, June also carried the burden of a close family member who struggled with alcoholism, and she experienced her own health issues as well.

As the years passed and June prepared to enter a nursing home, her Bible, prayer book and catechism showed the wear of countless hours spent in God’s Word. In all her correspondence, June signed her name followed by 1 Peter 5:7 (above), her comfort and refuge.

Sowing the Seed

Once in the nursing home, June spent time at the bedside of residents who looked forward to sharing in June’s devotions.

“Her catechism included so many wonderful notes of faith and witness,” said Rev. Larry Rockemann, LHF development coordinator who was chaplain at June’s nursing home at the time. “What always amazed and humbled me was that even with end-stage dementia, the German Bible verses, prayers and hymns of the

faith learned in childhood were still there for June.”

Looking forward to her life in heaven, June took care to provide for the Lutheran missions that were so important to her. Wayne Kolzow, her youngest son, remembers helping her to set up a charitable trust with the LCMS Foundation.

“For anyone blessed with financial wealth who has a heart for missions, a charitable trust is a great thing to consider,” Wayne said. “The trust pays you income while you’re living, and upon your death, it’s distributed to the places important to you.”

New Shoots of Faith

One of the missions important to June was the Lutheran Heritage Foundation. When June passed away on April 16, her estate planning included funds from the trust to help print the Arabic *Small Catechism*, which LHF recently published in partnership with Lutheran Hour Ministries.

“In my mother’s later years, I would read the Lord’s Prayer or some favorite hymns to her, and we’d go through her German catechism together,” Wayne said. “She learned her faith in German, and those seeds that were planted so early took root. The Holy Spirit created faith in her, in that language. Then later in her life, her faith was expressed more in English and now in her death, that faith has been extended into Arabic! It was a big thing for her to put the catechism in another language.”

“I am grateful to God for the privilege of ministering to June,” says Rev. Rockemann. “Her story is a beautiful testament to what lasts, what really and always matters.”

Pray for LHF’s work around the world

Vietnam:

Rev. Ted NaThalang, LHF’s coordinator for projects in Southeast Asia, recently visited Vietnam.

“Many things have changed in Vietnam since I was last here in 2011,” he says. “Just a few years ago, it was illegal for LHF to print our books in this country. Now, it seems that this may have changed. This is great news! Now the Christians in Vietnam can have Luther’s *Small Catechism* and other LHF books to read and study – legally, without being afraid from the police!” Please pray that this important work can continue for people in Vietnam who are seeking to know more about our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

South Sudan:

Since Dec. 15, it’s estimated that 1,000 people have been killed and some 200,000 displaced by fighting that’s broken out between the Nuer and Dinka tribes in South Sudan.

Rev. Edawrd Nzeme, general secretary of the ELCSS/S, writes:

“In Juba, all our church members who are from the Nuer ethnic group are in the United Nations compound because they cannot move freely in Juba. Rev. Peter Chol is with the group in the UN compound. In a telephone conversation with him this afternoon, he said they have very little food to eat for the whole week.

“Yesterday night in Juba, Rev. Emmanuel Bafuka was robbed at gunpoint in his house. They took a laptop, camera, mobiles and other valuables.

“In Malakal, the house of Rev. Simon Gatluak was attacked and up to now we have had no further contact with him. The Deputy Bishop, Rev. John Jock, has left Malakal and is outside the city in hiding.

“In Western Ekuatoria in Yambio, there are not many problems, but there is no fuel and even mobile airtime, so we shall soon be cut off from the rest of the world.

“I ask all of you to pray for us.”

United States:

Rejoice with us over this story from Rev. Max Mons, pastor at St. Paul’s Lutheran Chapel in Iowa City: “Our chapel offers an English conversation program through which we help international students practice their English skills. Each meeting begins with a brief Bible reading and comments.

“About three years ago, a couple from Iran began participating in this program. Our volunteer invited them to church and they attended.

“This past summer I had lunch with them and they said, ‘We think we want to be Christians.’ I said, ‘Okay. Let’s set up a weekly meeting to study the catechism and the Bible.’ This we have done for about twelve weeks. We used a Farsi catechism from LHF and the Bible.

“Now they will be baptized on Sunday. Soli Deo Gloria!”

APRIL 6

The installation service for Rev. Matthew Heise took place on this date at Guardian Lutheran Church, Dearborn, Michigan, Rev. Heise’s home congregation. Rev. Heise has been called to serve as Executive Director of the LHF. Preacher for the occasion was the Rev. Don Neuendorf, second vice president of the Michigan District. Rev. John Duerr, fourth vice president of the Michigan District was the officiant. Rev. Darryl Andrzejewski, pastor of Guardian, served as liturgist and I served as lector. Other participating clergy of the LHF included Rev. Larry Rockemann, Rev. Ted NaThalang, Dr. Richard Nuffer, Dr. James Hoke, Rev. Thomas Hoyt, Rev. Herb Schumm, Rev. Robert Marshall, Rev. Terry Hoese, and Rev. Al Luehman.

Rev. Heise served as a theological educator to Russia and other former Soviet

republics from 2001-2014. Matthew taught at the seminary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ingria. He also conducted theological seminars throughout Russia, identifying future students for the ministry. In Georgia, he supported the work of Georgian evangelists as they reached out with the Gospel to others around them, led Bible studies and worked towards planting churches. He has long had a fascination with Russia, being the grandson of Russian-German immigrants. Before studying for the pastoral ministry, Matthew served as a missionary in Moscow from 1994 to 1996, where he taught English as a Second Language (ESL) classes and was the ESL coordinator.

Born in Dearborn, Michigan, he is a lifelong member of Guardian Lutheran Church in Dearborn. Matthew holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor; a master's degree from Wayne State University in Detroit; and a master's degree in Divinity from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri. He is currently completing his doctoral dissertation on the persecution of the Lutheran Church in the USSR— 1921-1938.

Following the service, a special installation dinner was served with a program featuring members of the LHF board and staff. The new director received words of welcome from the USA and around the world: Ukraine, Hong Kong, Nigeria, South Africa, Somalia.

APRIL 7-8

Following the installation of the Rev. Matthew Heise, special meetings of the LHF staff and the IRPRs (independent regional promotion representatives) took place. The agenda included a review of LHF's global work and reports on various translation projects.

APRIL 15

From: Lithuanian Evangelical Lutheran Church Konsistorija

To: Juris Ulģis; Robert Rahn

Subject: Re: Lutheran Heritage Foundation

Dear Juris Ulgris,

Thank you for your letter with described situation in regards to our work in Lithuania and the lack of communication. As Bishop Sabutis' schedule is very busy lately, and now in Easter time even more, I do assume he still didn't respond because of his busyness. I will have a talk with bishop regarding LHF issue, and I hope there will be better communication, or you can always write to me. I happened to know your predecessor Andris Smilgdriivs, and it is very good that LHF work in Latvia was not canceled as it happened in Lithuania.

Previously Rev. Juozaitis was the one who cared for the publishing Lutheran confessional literature; he is not now so actively involved. Rev. Mindaugas Dik-

siatis (pastor in Taurage area) was too involved in publishing work. His email address is different than what Rev. Rahn has... A blessed Holy Week!

Sincerely,

Milita Poškienė

Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia (ELCL) Consistory financier

From: Juris Ulģis

Subject: Lutheran Heritage Foundation

Dear Bishop Mindaugas,

My name is Juris Ulģis and I am director of Lutheran Heritage Foundation in Riga. Recently I received a message from former president Rev. Robert Rahn in USA. Quote: "Now I'm asking for your help in 'waking up' Lithuania. I have written to the Bishop several times with no response. When I tried to write Diksaitis that message was returned for a wrong address. I have also written to Evan-son with no response. Could you provide an address for Mindaugas Diksaitis? Or an address of anyone else in the leadership in Lithuania, maybe a call to the Bishop's office to inquire of any need they have for books to be translated. We have received an estate that says it is to be used for Lithuania and we would like to honor it by doing some work for them once again. Can you investigate for us and see if you can stir up anything?"

Thus, I am asking for help. Please, provide me with person (-s) and contacts who would be interested and skilled to organize book translation work in your Church. And I will give this information further to Rev. Rahn. I am resending this message to other emails, because I have not received any response. In fact, Rev. Robert Rahn wants that I would be some kind of contact person between Church of Lithuania and office in USA.

The main idea is following: There is some money for book publishing in Lithuania. Is Lutheran Church of Lithuania interested in publishing good Lutheran literature? If, yes, please, provide some information regarding people (translator, editor etc.) who could be able to do this kind of work. Maybe I could travel to Lithuania and meet with people who are responsible for such kind of decision.

APRIL 16

From: Stephen Oliver

To: Matthew Heise

Subject: Re: Catechism & Kolb Translation - China

Many Many Congratulations, Matt!! We are proud of you and rejoice in His work through you!! It's great to hear from you, and I've been following you though I haven't written much directly to you recently. Anyway, in these last four months, a lot of changes have happened and missionaries continue to exit (you

may have heard that after only two years, Greg Williamson is leaving his CMO post). We are attempting to interpret and digest all these things out here.

Anyway, on to the positive: we at China Lutheran Seminary have been a long-time partner with LHF, so I think this is good enough reason for the director to make a visit out here when all the dust settles from taking the helm. What do you think? I just checked out the Chinese publications on your website, and some of them are standard books we use here and get out to the churches. We are pushing forward with translation and publication here and so value everything that LHF does and can do. A key goal is to get much good Lutheran stuff into Chinese hands. Of course, Prof. Robert Kolb is one of the ones we value most and is becoming a mainstay here! Jukka is here and is one of the happiest about the translation since he was having his systematics students plod through the English version, but starting this week, they'll be able to read Kolb in their heart language. Let's keep pushing forward in translation and publication (both of primary and secondary stuff—I'm editing our current translations of Luther's *Romans* and *Galatians*—so little of Luther is in the largest language of our world—Mandarin).

By the way (and I'm also copying Kolb so he knows), we generally rework the titles in Chinese to reach a larger audience since there is much flow among the Chinese Christians from denomination to denomination. We try to avoid "Lutheran" in the titles since those from other denominations might immediately resist, feeling that this book does not belong to them except for an interest in understanding what another denomination believes. However, Luther himself is very welcomed, being hailed as the founder of the "New Teaching" (the "Old Teaching" being the Chinese word for Roman Catholic) of the founder of "Christianity" ("Heavenly Lord Religion" being another name for Roman Catholics in Chinese—interestingly, "Christianity" is the word for our term "Protestant"). As such, Luther and justification through faith are of interest to all Chinese Christians. So, Kolb's *The Christian Faith: A Lutheran Exposition* became *A Summary of Christian Belief: Luther's Exposition*, and Daniel Preus' *Why I Am Lutheran: Jesus at the Center* became in our translation, *Christ at the Center: The Life of Justification by Faith*.

Press forward, brother! We are privileged to be called by Him!

Matthew Heise replied:

Hi Steve,

Thanks for this great work, translating Kolb's *The Christian Faith*. Now that I am at the helm of LHF, please feel free to communicate with me about potential translating needs. At our webpage, you can see what we have already done in Mandarin (Traditional) and Simplified Chinese. As you are the expert for what works in Taiwan, you will know better what dialect is more frequently used

there. Just hit our “Publications” link and you can see what we have. How are you and the family doing? Is Juha (Tapio Karjalainen’s son-in-law) teaching in Taipei?

Stephen Oliver wrote:

China Lutheran Seminary faculty members have written articles about Luther’s *Small Catechism*. In addition, CLS just published the Chinese version of Robert Kolb’s *The Christian Faith: A Lutheran Exposition*. We rejoice greatly in this valuable book (you can get your own copy for \$600 [New Taiwan Dollar, that is])! Pray for the influence of Kolb’s *The Christian Faith* to spread far and wide in the Chinese world!

APRIL 20

In this issue of “The Word at Work,” we share with you a few of the many letters and emails LHF receives from people around the world, asking for good Lutheran books in their own languages. It is only through the faithful support of thousands of people like you that LHF is able to answer these requests. And so these letters represent not only the Word at work, but also your mission gifts at work. Thank you.

(From the March 2014 “Word at Work” newsletter:)

Asked and Answered: Light of Christ shines in Haiti’s “Voodoo Village”

Dear LHF:

I just wanted to share with you what a blessing it was for us to have the wonderful resource of providing Luther’s *Small Catechism* in the native language (Haitian Creole) to the children we work with, who are growing in faith in Haiti. We have an on-going orphanage/community mission that continues to grow and develop. Over the years, we have seen a wonderful change in the community, from identifying itself as a “voodoo village” to now seeing the wonderful work of Christ in the lives of the people more and more, with every trip we take. As we move ever closer to setting up a full-time congregation and have gradually led these people along in sharing with them the Word of God, it was finally time to begin building a foundation that they may know the basics of the Christian faith, as wonderfully contained in Luther’s *Small Catechism*.

We led Vacation Bible School for over 200 children in the village surrounding our mission every day for a week. As part of our VBS, we began teaching them the catechism, so naturally the first day we handed out all of the catechisms that we had ordered through LHF. What a wonderful blessing that we had more children turn out than ever before... so needless to say we did not order enough catechisms, so we will certainly be ordering more for our next trip in October. As we led VBS through the week and walked through the village, we would see parents and children sitting out together in the evening, reading through Scripture (handed out

on previous trips) and their catechisms, and coming to VBS the next day with wonderful questions, wanting to know and grow ever deeper in the knowledge of faith and God's Word. Thank you for providing this wonderful resource that helps aid us in teaching the faith!

Rev. Sean Smith
The Lutheran Church of Our Redeemer
Evansville, Indiana

JAPAN • UNITED STATES

I am a Japanese national and I have many Japanese friends and acquaintances in the Kansas City area (primarily through my children's Japanese school and Japanese book clubs). Most of them know very little about Christianity. After a few discussions with some of them about Lutheranism, many of my friends now feel comfortable asking me about the faith. The Japanese catechism has been very helpful to them (most of them do not read English efficiently); they're always very grateful to receive it and interested in its teachings.

Of note, many of the Japanese people I meet are only here temporarily (2-4 years) on business. The short time that they're here is likely the only opportunity that they and their children will have to learn about Christianity (there are very few churches—and almost no confessional Lutheran churches—in Japan). Having these materials available to learn from here, and take back to Japan with them, is invaluable.

...It's been very hard to find materials in Japanese. This is unfortunate, because my friends here, as well as my family back in Japan, seem very open to learning about Lutheranism.

I would appreciate whatever pocket-size catechisms you can provide, and I'll check back with you later regarding the *Small Catechism with Explanation*. I am very excited to hear that it will be available again.

Thanks,
Mayumi Derendinger
Kansas City, Missouri

GHANA, AFRICA

Greetings in Jesus' name! We have almost distributed all the books we received from you (*A Child's Garden of Bible Stories*; *Service Book* and the *Augsburg Confession*). A reprint is required but it is proper they are revised. We have begun revising the *Service Book* as well as the *Small Catechism*, which is already being revised.

The impact of these books, especially the *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* book, is great. Schools have asked for copies and I believe the District Education office may decide to use that book as one of the books for all students learning

Kusaal to read.

Meanwhile, people from all denominations are reading the books. Yes, reading the *Augsburg Confession*, the readers will know the truth about God's Word! Thank you very much for what LHF is doing for us.

Blessings and peace,
Nicholas Salifu Pastor,
The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ghana

AFGHANISTAN • THE NETHERLANDS

I still have one box of [Dari-language] prayer books and I am distributing them to the Afghan believers that I met every day. I always have one or two copies with me, and when I meet Afghan Christians (the number is really growing here in the Netherlands), then I give them a copy of this book and they appreciate it very much. Several of them said that this book is exactly what they needed next to the Bible, as for many of them is it not possible to attend a church meeting due to the language problem. With this book they are able to meet in small groups and pray with each other. I should have written this earlier to you, but thanks again for making this amazing little booklet possible.

God bless you.
Wahid Yari, The Netherlands

LITHUANIA

Over Palm Sunday weekend, Ivan Laptev and I were invited to Lithuania to give a short presentation on Ingrian (Russian) mission work at a Lithuanian pastors' conference and to then lead a lay seminar on parish outreach. We also were requested to bring as much Russian-language Lutheran literature as we could. So, we loaded up Ivan's van with Lutheran Heritage books, managed to get all that through customs, and drove 15 hours through Latvia to our destination—dodging sleepy truck drivers and a few moose along the way.

The conferences went well, but for me the most interesting moment was meeting an old village pastor who had been serving his parish since 1970 and hearing his story of how hard it was to get permission to study to become a pastor during Communist times. Such stories remind me that the freedom to worship our Lord, study His Word, and fellowship in His Name are a great blessing not to be taken for granted.

Leif Camp, missionary
The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ingria in Russia

RUSSIA

A couple of months ago, a group of Finnish Christians approached Ingrian

Bishop Arri Kugappi and asked if Ingria would like some Russian *Large Catechisms*. That was an offer he did not refuse. Only one small catch: the Finns didn't have the text in Russian. Well, LHF does have the text in Russian, so we introduced LHF to our Finnish brothers, and Ingria now has 2,000 – correct that, 1,800 (as we have already distributed 200) – *Large Catechisms* in our efforts to teach and spread the faith.

– Leif Camp

APRIL 25

“God’s Word burns within our hearts”

by Rev. Matthew Heise

They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. (Acts 2:3)

Pentecost always confronts us with powerful images: gusts of wind, a cacophony of voices, and yes, tongues of fire. The “tongues of fire” that rested upon the believers on Pentecost present us with an array of similar passages from the Scriptures, not the least of which comes from the book of Jeremiah. For Jeremiah, God’s Word was like a fire, “a fire shut up in my bones” (Jer. 20:9). As such, he couldn’t simply keep the Word inside; he had to speak it! There are likewise newly convinced believers around the world who cannot keep that Word inside, they simply have to share It! At the Lutheran Heritage Foundation, God has called us to seek out languages in which His Word has not been proclaimed, and He always provides us with those who have been found by Him.

Kenjebek Botabaev (of the central Asian nation of Kyrgyzstan) was one of those distraught individuals who found no solace in life, and instead sought comfort in a bottle. Depressed and seeing no point in life, he tried to commit suicide. Twice. But each time he failed. The Lord would simply not let him go! LCMS missionary Rev. Tim Nickel would read the Scriptures with his wife, and gradually, albeit initially in a drunken stupor, Kenjebek would bring his chair from the other room to hear this life-affirming Word. Well, to paraphrase Paul Harvey, you might guess “the rest of the story.” Kenjebek heard the Word and believed! Now he serves as a bishop of the Lutheran Church of Kyrgyzstan, the Word burning a fire within him that he cannot keep to himself.

As we remember the tongues of fire on Pentecost, we rejoice in the recently translated Kyrgyz version of Martin Luther’s *Small Catechism*. We know that, by the Holy Spirit working through this *Small Catechism*, hundreds (if not thousands!) of new Kyrgyz believers will come to faith in Jesus Christ. May the Lord continue to bless new believers as His Word burns within their hearts!

APRIL 26

Rev. Japhet Dachi, dean of CLIHM, discussed with Rev. Edward Nzeme, principal, the opening of the seminary and faculty for the 2015 school year. In his remarks he raised the question of research papers that the students were to write and who would assist the students in the process. It was pointed out that Rev. Anibati had spent a great deal of class time teaching and advising the students in this discipline.

Rev. Dachi pointed out that his current activity included preaching and teaching throughout several Kenya diocese using Luther's *Small Catechism* as his teaching tool.

MAY 9

The following was Rev. Matthew Heise's first report to the LHF board:

Good day, gentlemen.

Having now completed the first month in my new calling at LHF, I thought it appropriate to give you an idea on my activities. While I am continuing to "get my feet wet" under the able guidance of Bob and Jeff Rahn, I am also becoming acquainted with local pastors in Michigan and staff at LHF. Many of you are no doubt aware that after the installation service on April 6, we had meetings in the office with the IRPRs and other personnel. I was given a good overview of the work of Ted Nathalang in Asia, as well as Dr. Schulz's work with the *Good News Journal*. The IRPRs and I have been maintaining regular correspondence so that we know what the other is doing in regard to church visits. Jeff has been instructing me on the many areas of the world in which we work, as well as to the identities of our various LHF representatives.

We had a nice conversation with Rev. James May as to his work in introducing LHF materials in Africa. Furthermore, I have had the pleasure of reaching out to OIM regional directors, including Rev. Ted Krey in Latin America. I will continue to explore how we can serve the mission arm of our church.

I have also had the pleasure of making the acquaintance, and in some cases, re-acquaintance of pastors in the Michigan District. To those who supported my missionary service in the past, I asked them to consider continuing support in my new mission calling. To those who did not know me, I asked them to consider an LHF Sunday where I could introduce the work of our mission. I believe my overtures were received favorably, and it was a joy to have been so cordially received by District President David Maier.

From: Rev. Matthew Heise
To: Juris Uļģis; Robert Rahn
Subject: Lithuanian translations

Hello, Juris,

Bob Rahn has asked me to continue the discussion with you about Lithuanian translations. I think it might be best to ask the Lithuanians for a list of books that they believe are most essential for translation. Then perhaps they can give us the publishing costs for two or three of the books that they think should be translated first. We can proceed from the first publications and see if we might be able to do more in the future. I hope this will help you in your discussions with them.

Thank you very much for helping us with these contacts, Juris! I look forward to meeting you, hopefully this October. Perhaps we can make a visit to Bishop Sabutis in Lithuania after a Latvian visit? I have not seen Riga since 1996, so it will be good to be on your fabled streets again! God's blessings!

MAY 9

The LHF is proud to announce a special Doctor of Letters degree was granted to one of its workers, Rev. Dr. Bernie Lutz of Grand Rapids, Minnesota, by Concordia University, St. Paul, at its Spring commencement today. Pastor Bernie and his wife Roberta have served the LCMS in seven countries and three continents beginning in 1956. His ministry is unique in a number of ways since it includes athletics, teaching, pastoral ministry and overseas missionary activity. Rev. Bernie and Roberta Lutz are members of the First Lutheran Church of Grand Rapids, Minnesota, where the Rev. Greg DeMuth is the pastor.

The Doctor of Letters (LittD) is awarded to active pastors, educators, artists and writers, and who have been effective and exemplary in their ministry.

Bernie's service took him to many mission fields, including:

- Concordia College, Edmonton, Alberta as a football and hockey coach
- Papua New Guinea 1967-1971
- Parishes in Fulda, Minnesota, Bozeman, Montana and Moorhead, Minnesota
- Served on the LCMS Board for World Missions
- Missionary in Nigeria, West Africa 1991, including 48 Evangelism Crusades
- Served congregations in the Park Rapids, Minnesota, area.
- Mission work in Beirut, Lebanon among the Muslim population for four years.
- In Lebanon led Hisham Chehab, a Muslim, to faith in Christ and into the ministry.
- Served a senior group each winter in Mission, Texas.

- Served with LHF with involvement in the CLIHM Seminary in Sudan, curriculum development and teaching.
- Has written four books on a variety of topics.

In 1988 Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana presented the Servis Ecclesiae Christi award to Rev. Lutz. The same seminary conferred the Doctor of Divinity (D.D) in 2007 on Dr. Lutz.

MAY 23

From: Matthew Heise

To: Jeff Rahn; Robert Rahn

Subject: Skype Conversation with Mohamed Gurhan

Hello, Gentlemen,

Just so I can keep my thoughts straight about our conversation with Mohamed Gurhan yesterday, I put together my notes from the conversation. Mohamed's coming report will clarify what we couldn't hear due to the sound quality of the video Skype call. Mohamed's view is that he is basically accepted and will begin studying in Cambridge in August 2014. My letter from Cyndy Lumley, Westfield House Registrar, more or less confirms his understanding. She writes that he has been given "conditional acceptance," although she says that she needs to gather the funds for his and other Africans' study at Westfield House. She should know in June how that has gone as she is currently in the States fundraising (friend-raising, hopefully?). She also says that his costs for the school year would be \$21, 520 at the current exchange rate. Included in the costs are (1) tuition, (2) 30 weeks lodging, (3) a weekly allowance for food and personal items for the 30 weeks, (4) travel (two return trips to the UK from the Netherlands), (5) lecture fees and (6) a small allowance for books.

Mohamed said that he was uncertain whether books and personal items would be covered, but I have always found Cyndy to be very meticulous and thorough, so my guess is that he should be well taken care of at Westfield House under her care. (Cyndy managed matters for those of us doing the Eurasian Ph.D. when we spent a few weeks for course work in Cambridge during the summer of 2008. I have great confidence in Dr. Lumley's attention to detail!). Cyndy did say, however, that there was no financial support for Mohamed's time home in the Netherlands during the Christmas break—approximately two weeks. Concerning his family in the Netherlands, that would include three daughters and one son. Guled (the son) is in a rehabilitation center funded by the government. He also mentioned his martyred sister and her husband, who were murdered on their door step for converting to the Lutheran faith while in Nairobi where they attended Lutheran services conducted by the late Dr. Anssi Simojoki and received catechetical training. Their infant child died from malnutrition and the other three children were

doing well in Ethiopia.

Concerning books, he said that *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* is 100% fine and needs no corrections for a second printing. The Luther's *Small Catechism* in Somali has some small errors, so before a second printing some minor corrections would need to be made. He is currently out of books as he took the remainder to Ethiopia and other books were distributed at European Christian conferences. Mohamed was also working on a Lutheran hymn book.

With regards to the Somali diaspora, Mohamed said that they are scattered throughout Europe, so that presents a difficulty for work in Europe. (He called them "nomads.") Great Britain and especially London, I believe he said, may have 80,000 Somalis, making it the largest diaspora center for Somalis in Europe. Sweden was second in number of Somalis and the Netherlands would be third with about 30,000. Given their scattering throughout Europe, Mohamed sees his future work along the border of Ethiopia-Somalia.

Mohamed plans to live in the Ogaden region, bordering Somalia and located in Ethiopia. There are large numbers of Somali refugees in that region. He sees the center of his work located in the regional capital of Jijiga, a city of 200,000. Jijiga is near a region known as Somaliland and the separate country of Djibouti, a one-party state that has a small Christian minority. Mohamed has spoken with a government official who has said that he would offer land to Christians as well as Muslims to build churches or mosques. The man said that freedom of religion was accepted in Ogaden. So, Mohamed believes that there is a positive perspective on working here in the future among his own Somali people, where he would like to form a Somali Lutheran congregation.

MAY 30

From: Sorin H. Trifa

Subject: Lutheran Church in Bucharest, Romania

My name is Sorin-Horia Trifa, and I'm member of the only one Romanian Lutheran Evangelical Church in the world. This Church belongs to Lutheran-Evangelical Church of Romania, a Hungarian Lutheran denomination. In this denomination there is a Romanians ethnic Church. It is the only Lutheran Church in the world that uses the Romanian language. It is located in the city of Bucharest, the largest city in Romania.

In Bucharest, main city of Romania, the interest for Lutheranism is very low. Romania is a country where most of the population is Orthodox, more than 85%. The vast majority are formal Christians. There is also an honest Orthodox minority. Most of the non-Orthodox Christians attend Baptist, Pentecostal, and Adventist Churches. Lutherans are about 20,000 people. A very high percentage are formal Lutherans, the number of those who attend church are much smaller.

Most of them do not have a correct knowledge of the Word of God; for most of them the Lutheranism is just a family tradition, but not a personal belief. Nevertheless, our little church is faithful. 70 Romanian believers worship God in the Lutheran tradition. They are the only Romanians in the world who do this. Of the approximately 17 million Romanians ethnic, just 70 are Lutherans. Of these, more than half come for every service. It is small but lovely and faithful church. Therefore, I shall endeavor to turn it into a confessional church. I do not have help from anyone. I try to do it myself with the resources I have by the grace of God. I try to serve Christ, to remain confessional, to preach Christ according with the Lutheran confessions of faith. But I do not know how much longer I will be allowed to do this. It's hard to fight for confessionalism into a liberal denomination. Our tolerant pastor could be changed anytime with an intolerant pastor.

In the grace of Christ, I was contacted by Mr. Vogt, a staff member of the Wisconsin Ev. Lutheran Synod. Mr. Vogt is a blessed man. He already helps me with materials and tips. I'm trying to translate all these materials in Romanian language. I want to use them in my church. Now, because I have to prepare my graduation exam, I delayed this project. But after the final exam, this translation project will be a priority for me.

In the grace of God, I do everything possible to translate into Romanian a lot of lectures from internet or books. It is not a word-for-word translation, but is more a paraphrase. I put your YouTube videos on the church website and Facebook page, but I must make a paraphrase translation because most believers do not understand English. I hope this will not disturb you, but for my church, these messages are extremely important.

Mr. Vogt suggested to me that you could help me with the translation of basic materials of Lutheranism, like *Book of Concord*. In Romanian language, official, the *Small Catechism* is the only book translated. My dream is to see translated the whole *Book of Concord*. Is most important for my church and my ministry in Romania. If you can help me, in the Christ name, please, do not hesitate to do it.

My dream is to become the first ethnic Romanian Lutheran priest. In the mid of June, I will graduate the Theology College at the University of Bucharest. My intention for the future is to do some postgraduate studies (in Romanian its "master studies") in Lutheran theology. In Romania there is no such program. So, I have three alternatives: (1) to do postgraduate studies in Baptist theology on the University of Bucharest; (2) to do postgraduate studies in reformed theology on the University of Cluj (the main city of Transylvania); (3) to make the new university study in Lutheran theology on the University of Sibiu. Problem is that in Cluj the study are in Hungarian language, and in Sibiu is studying in German language. Unfortunately, these colleges are both liberal. In my secular life, I have a satisfying professional career. I have extensive experience in management. This ex-

perience is recognized and rewarded by one of the largest companies in the world. However, the situation of Lutheran churches in Romania will not let me to live peacefully. I fear for the spiritual future of my children and grandchildren. I want my followers to worship God in a Confessional Lutheran church. To do something in Romania, my effort is needed but also your effort and understanding is needed. I believe that the Church must share the Word of God around the world, also in Romania. To everyone, not only to German and Hungarian ethnics, as the Lutheran churches in Romania do. I tried to transmit them to switch to the Romanians ethnics, but with no results. They are not interested, for Romanians though many churches are empty and closed. Unless we do something together, in maximum ten years, the Lutheran Church in Romania will no longer exist except in books and papers.

God bless you all!

[Note: As a result of contacts in Romania, LHF has translated three books into the Romanian language and continues to work with translators. Another interesting side note is the fact that Dr. Richard Wurmbrand, a persecuted Lutheran, was from this country and wrote a book of his persecution. I had him speak at a student forum while I served as interim campus pastor at Concordia University, River Forest, Illinois.]

JUNE 10

Ghana Report: Monthly Kusaal Lutheran Mission News and Prayer Needs

“As long as it is day, we must work the works of Him who sent me, night is coming when no one can work.” John 9:4

Greetings from your brothers and sisters in Ghana. The rains have started coming and few people have planted their crops. A majority are still waiting for rain to plant crops and bulls to plow their fields. The temperature is good, 85 degrees.

Leadership training class: There was an intensive three-day leadership training class to get the leaders prepared since I would be away in June and July studying at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.

Baptism: 27 baptisms were made in five churches. These were people who had been due for baptism at the Easter convention but were unable to attend the convention.

Evangelism: Mr. John Ndedugri, Madam Margaret Akparibo, Madam Salome Abarike, and Mr. James Awini, who constitute the core of the Ziako church evangelism team, visited 200 people in the month of May to share the Gospel. Mr. Ndebugri, the leader, plans to set up similar teams in the other churches.

Translation: Work on Kusaal Luther’s *Large Catechism*, revision of the *Small Catechism* and revision of the *Lutheran Service Book* are almost completed. Translation of the Komba Luther’s *Small Catechism* is also progressing. We hope

to have all these books ready before September.

Adult Literacy Class: Mr. John Ndebugri is planning to open another adult literacy class in the Ziako church. These literacy classes are crucial for the church because most of the adults cannot read or write.

JUNE 12

From: Rev. Matthew Heise

To: All District Presidents, Mission Executives

Subject: Greetings from LHF's new executive director!

Greetings from the new LHF Executive Director.

For everything there is a season and time for every matter under heaven. Ecclesiastes 3:1

After serving for almost 13 years on the mission field, it is a joy to continue my missionary service from this side of the Atlantic Ocean. Some of you reading this may know me from my work in Russia and the former Soviet Union, while others of you have been supporters of LHF. I was excited to receive and accept the call to serve as the executive director of LHF because I have long seen its work and influence abroad. No matter where I traveled, I noticed that Lutheran churches were always seeking good Christian literature in their native languages. Without these books to teach the children, members of the congregations, and students at the seminary, Christians were reduced to reading English language materials. Of course, one had to know English, which always encompassed a slim minority of members within the congregations.

But through the work of LHF, Martin Luther's *Small Catechism* is available to teach the basics of the Christian faith in one's own language. Through the ministry of LHF, *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* is available to teach children the essential stories of how God has interacted with man to provide salvation from sin through His Son, Jesus Christ. By the grace of God, we are now operating in over 90 languages in 80 countries. I am happy to share with you the stories of how the Holy Spirit is actively working through God's Word, as we translate, publish, distribute and introduce Christian literature that is Bible-based, Christ-centered and Reformation-driven. Please join with us in this Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ, to make His name known to the nations!

JUNE 13

From: Peter Anibati

To: Jeff Rahn; Robert Rahn; Matthew Heise

Subject: Printing of Zande Catechism and Hymnal

Dear Jeff,

Greetings from Yambio in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I have been asking around for the printing of the above books and I have found out that they can actually be printed in Juba, South Sudan. There is a printing press in Juba called “Universal Printers Company Limited” which prints books, brochures, magazines etc. When I consulted them, they said they could print 8½ x 6, which is the size of the catechism and hymnal, a full-color book 70 GSM paper and RKS binding for 78 SSP, which is about \$2. They are willing to negotiate the price if want to print with them, depending on the number of copies we want.

If we print these books here, it will save the cost of transporting them from another country to South Sudan. It will also be easier for us to monitor and see that the final format sent to the printers is correct, and in case of any errors, they could be easily rectified since one of us would be present to verify the books before they are sent to the printers. The other reason is that we badly need these books as soon as possible... many of our congregations hold Divine Services without the Lutheran liturgy simply because they do not have the service book. May I please know what you think about this?

Thank you very much and the entire organization of LHF which makes possible for us to have access to these books and materials. We really appreciate the way you have supported our church for all these years, and we look forward to working even better in the years to come!

JUNE 20

Jeff Rahn wrote:

Peter,

Thanks for the information concerning the possibility of printing the Zande books in Juba. Has anyone personally visited the printer and witnessed the equipment and other jobs in progress along with finished samples? Initially I can say that the pricing you mentioned is considerably higher than what we would expect to pay. A *Small Catechism with Explanation* with hard cover, printed on good paper, with good binding, can typically be printed for \$4-\$6. Even when taking into account transportation related costs we would still be considerably lower in price, thereby allowing for more copies (or titles) to be printed.

What kind of quantities are needed for the catechism and hymnal—1,000/2,000/3,000 copies? You could ask the printer for his lowest possible price and see what he says. We are also interested in getting these volumes printed as soon as possible but it may be necessary to wait a few more months in order to obtain a very good quality at a reasonable price. We were planning to print these two titles along with three other titles at the same time in order to lower printing costs and economize on the shipping costs. Let us continue to dialogue on this topic.

From: Peter Anibati

To: Jeff Rahn; Robert Rahn; Matthew Heise

Subject: Re: Printing of Zande Catechism and Hymnal

Jeff,

Thanks for your response concerning the Zande books. I have visited the printer myself when I went to Juba and have seen the type of work they do. They do quality job... no doubt, I think the only problem could be their price. We need 2,500-3,000 copies for each title. When I talked to the printer this morning about printing 2,000 copies of each book, he said he could do that for 27 SSP per book which is about 6.75 USD. It seems the many books we print, the lesser the price becomes. Please find attached the copy of the invoice the printer sent me. Ignore the title "Bible." When the catechism was taken to him today by our vicar Celestino, he saw it like a small Bible. Let me know what you say about this! Stay well and God bless+

JUNE 27

This report comes from Scott Heise, following his visit to China. (no relation to the executive director, Matt Heise).

From: Scott Heise

To: Robert Rahn

Subject: Visit to Secret House Church

Dear Robert,

Greetings in the name of our risen Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We are back and thank the good Lord for a safe, fruitful, and enjoyable 23 days in China. I'll spare you all the details of the trip and go straight to the time I spent with Rev. C. (abbreviated for protection) and the gathering. C. and his family are doing fine. I met his wife, but his daughter is attending college at another school. They have to move their store's location due to the building being torn down. This means a big loss of income for C. and his wife. I gave them \$250 of the \$500 you sent me to help pay for his daughter's tuition. The other \$250 we gave to a relative who is receiving cancer treatments.

I had a chance to spend some quality time with C. He wants to continue leading the gathering. The Chinese government will not recognize a Lutheran Church in China. It would have to go under the umbrella of all the other Christian churches in China or stay an underground (unregistered) church. I wanted to see the priest that married my wife and I. C. and I went to the Catholic church and how things have changed. There are four priests and they all have cars. The Catholic church has two hotels from which they receive the proceeds. They plan on building a seminary next to the church. I asked how they could do this, and

the priest replied that they have a good relationship with the city government (you scratch my back and I will scratch yours). When I was in Wuhan, I found the Lutheran seminary (it is now used as a kindergarten) that was built about 1920-1940. We do have proof of a Lutheran presence before China became a Communist state, but the Chinese government will not permit another branch of religion.

On Pentecost, we worshipped in our house. I let C. lead the worship service and I gave the message. I preached on John 14:6 (Christ is the only Way, only Truth, and only Life). We partook of the Lord's Supper. There were many visitors and C. made them feel comfortable and told them to just listen and if they had any questions they could be addressed after the service. C. has a good relationship with the gathering and cares for them as a good shepherd should.

After the service I had a long talk with C. and encouraged him to continue bring God's Word and the Sacraments to the people. I did correct him about [genueflecting] to the sacrament, and also not to encourage those of the gathering to do this. I specifically taught him before he became leader of the gathering that we do not adore or worship the Sacrament. Christ says to "take, eat," and "take, drink." We are to eat and drink the Sacrament for the strengthening of faith in the true presence of Christ and the forgiveness of sins and eternal life. We are not to worship the Sacrament as the Catholic church teaches. Christ does not teach this. I also covered this with some of those at the gathering.

I also encouraged C. to teach the gathering about good stewardship and giving to the Lord financially. Since the Lutheran Church is a teaching church, I encouraged C. and the gathering to cover a portion of Luther's *Small Catechism* or the *Good News Journal* during the service or after the service in a separate Bible class. I also taught the gathering to have daily private devotion using the Bible and Luther's *Small Catechism*, especially if C. is not available, they can still gather together and be in the Word, growing in the faith. I also gave C. some devotions I translated from the "Portals of Prayer" that Andrew Simcak had written. Focus on baptism and the Lord's Supper.

At the end of the service I distributed the materials that we lugged to China: Chinese-language Bibles, LHF's children's Bible storybook, LHF's Chinese-language Luther's *Small Catechism*, Chinese-language CPH flyers on Baptism, Lord's Supper, Introduction to Jesus, Who is the true God?, etc., Crosses, coins with John 3:16 on one side and "Where can I get eternal life?" on the other side, bracelets with Christian symbols. As I was distributing the Christians literature, crosses, bracelets, etc., I was brought to tears. How they hungered for a Word of hope. I was caught up in a frenzy! They were pulling the books and other things from me like sharks tearing and feeding on a fresh kill, but they were feeding on the Word of life. God's life-giving, life-saving Word was being devoured

by hungry starving souls. They really liked *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* book.

At a later date I will send you photographs. Thank you so much for the LHF Chinese-language Christian literature. My only regret was that I did not bring more children's Bibles, catechisms, and *Good News Journals*. C. and his wife expressed their desire to read the Chinese language *Good News Journals*. That's all for now. Take care and the Lord be with you.

MY TRIP TO ETHIOPIA

Michael Gurhan, Amsterdam, Holland, files a report covering his trip to Ethiopia and his efforts to maintain connections with Christians throughout the area and Somalia. He writes:

"I left Amsterdam on Thursday, April 10, reaching Addis Ababa next day early in the morning. In addition to my personal luggage, I travelled with two boxes of Lutheran literature. As the main objective of my trip was to find a solution to the difficult situation my late sisters' children were encountering. On Friday afternoon, I went to Ethiopian airlines' ticket office and booked for my trip to the Somali Regional State of Ethiopia (SRSE) the following Sunday afternoon, April 13, the earliest available flight to Jigjiga.

"I would herewith like to report on all the activities I carried out with help from members of my family and the family of growing believers, but such a specific report would compromise the safety of those named. As you read, you will find other references to my Somali translation work as head of the LHF Somali translation team."

JULY 1

From: Matthew Heise

To: Robert Rahn

Subject: From my best recollection—our phone call this morning with Dr. Collver

Dr. Collver will be traveling to Ethiopia from approximately July 15/16—July 22/23 (after which he will then fly on to Germany). He was invited to attend the General Assembly of the Lutheran Church of Mekane Yesus, which holds its assembly every three years. Over 1,000 church leaders will be present at this gathering.

We were informed that there are currently 92 career missionaries on the field and 140 total missionaries (including GEOs). Dr. Collver figures to double these numbers by the next synod convention in 2016 and to have that figure again doubled by 2019.

Back to Ethiopia. Dr. Collver will be traveling there to help them craft/rewrite a church constitution. He also mentioned the pressing need for the enchiridion

and Augustana, hopefully in simultaneous Amharic/English translation. Al will check on costs for these projects. He also has 1,000 *Lutheran Study Bibles* (English). Students apparently study English through high school, so bilingual translations are very useful, especially given that regional languages exist. Therefore, not everyone is conversant in Amharic. It is also best to print books in Ethiopia because each imported book comes with a \$7 import tax.

In order to fund projects like the enchiridion/Augustana, Al informed us of an educational fund for Synod. He has \$1.2 million at his disposal every year to pay for education-related costs. For example, each of the seminaries receives a block sum of \$200,000. Al said that Fort Wayne had exhausted this fund for the coming year, although he was unsure whether St. Louis had done so. Nonetheless, he can use additional funds for paying professors/teachers to conduct classes around the world.

Naturally, we talked to him about the *Book of Concord* as this was a book that he requested be printed last year. Since Mekane Yesus has only 3,000 pastors, it seems unnecessary to print 10,000 copies as we had planned. It is true that there are an additional 3,000 deacons/evangelists, but Al says that they are generally educated at a lower level, most times receiving theological education for only 12 weeks total. Thus, a simpler book (*Small Catechism*) works better for them, especially as their training may be done on a local language (Oromo, for instance). Given this information, we concurred that printing 5,000 copies would be a more efficient use of our funds (costing approximately \$30,000).

How we proceed further—Al will return from Europe around July 23, so we can follow-up and see what plan the Ethiopians have for distribution of the *Book of Concord*. There will always be regional conferences, but perhaps it is best to print the enchiridion/Augustana first, with the *Book of Concord* following in 2015. We did not state what we have in funds but expressed an interest in helping with the printing.

JULY 2

From: Peter Anibati

To: Jeff Rahn; Robert Rahn; Matthew Heise

Subject: Re: Printing of Zande Catechism and Hymnal

Jeff,

Thanks for accepting that we print the catechism here [in South Sudan]. Would you like us to print the catechism first and then the hymnal? I am asking because initially we had talked of printing both but now you have mentioned only the catechism.

From: Jeff Rahn

To: peter anibati; Robert Rahn; Matthew Heise

Subject: RE: Printing of Zande Catechism and Hymnal

Peter,

Thanks for your detailed reply. We will print the catechism and if the quality is satisfactory then they can print the hymnal next. Please have them prepare a quote for the hymnal so we have an idea of the cost. If you are able to you can send the whole translation with the copyright/sponsor page. Please also begin to plan for a distribution/introduction event such as the one you described below. Perhaps this can be done in connection with the vicar seminars that Rev. May will be leading in a few months. As soon as I receive the file to review the copyright/sponsor page I will send the funds for printing.

In Christ,

Jeff Rahn

From: Peter Anibati

To: Jeff Rahn; Robert Rahn; Matthew Heise

Subject: Re: Printing of Zande Catechism and Hymnal

The printer cannot go below the quotation you were sent, they said, that was the lowest they could offer for 2,000 copies. However, I do think that if we do this first project with them, we could win their confidence and perhaps it could make it easier for price negotiation in the future. Yes, the printer has assured us that they will deliver the finished copies in ten working days and I am confident that Rob will be able to carry some copies to you in the U.S. However, the printer will not deliver the copies to Yambio, but they are willing to transport them to any location in Juba free of charge. This means, they will deliver them to Juba congregation and then we will have to hire a vehicle to transport them to Yambio. The cost for transport will depend on how many cartoons of books we will have. Give me time to find out about this.

We have a big container at the Lutheran Guest House in Yambio where the books will be kept, although only for a short time because we need the books for use and not for storage. As soon as the books are in Yambio, we will organize for launching them on a day where representatives (pastors/evangelists or vicars) from all the different congregations will have to come and attend. When these representatives will be returning to their respective areas, they will return with the copies for their congregations. I think it would be good to have a representative from LHF too, or if not, Rob Lutz could take the pictures of the distribution for LHF, perhaps? If you have suggestions on how the books should be distributed, please let us also know.

JULY 8

Black Ministry Conference and Report by Rev. Matthew Heise

Overnight in St. Louis with Prof. Will Schumacher after driving from Detroit. Will is not averse to teaching in South Sudan (2015), although he is no longer employed part-time by the OIM. He affirmed that Dr. Carl Rockrohr had left Ethiopia and acknowledged the difficulty of serving as Director of the Seminary while being a foreigner. The burdens placed on him were apparently too great. Will sympathized. His impression after teaching the Ethiopians at Mekane Yesus a few months ago is that they were not novices in theology but quite substantial. Naturally, he also admitted that they might be “all over the place” theologically, but they were hardly lacking in understanding of Lutheranism. Yohannes Mengsteab would confirm this point of view when I met him at the Black Ministry Conference.

I bought Nicholas Salifu a coffee at Kaldi’s and we sat down in the park and talked to and prayed for each other. I gave him 15 of the “Bible Books for Children in Ghana” brochures and he was most appreciative. He is beginning the writing phase of his dissertation. I sympathized as I am at the same stage. I talked of a visit to Africa with Dr. John Loum, the director of the EIIT (Ethnic Immigrant Institute of Theology). Dr. Loum actually ran into us on campus. (More on John Loum later, as I saw him at the Black Ministry Conference [hereafter, BMC]).

I also met Jeff Thormodson, a former missionary to Russia who works in the Vicarage Office at Concordia Seminary. Dr. Dan Mattson now works there, and he reiterated to me that there are 4,824 copies of the *Small Catechism with Explanation* in Amharic, now located in climate-controlled conditions at CPH, along with 1,720 copies of the *Small Catechism* in Tigrinya, the language of Eritrea. Dan believes that they are still there (since 2012) due to the import tax in Ethiopia, but also suspects there is some ethnic bias since the translator was Eritrean (although perfectly bilingual).

Black Ministry Conference (July 9-12)—I don’t think I have enjoyed a conference as much as this one. The participants and organizers were very friendly and happy to see LHF at the conference. Thank you, Larry, for putting this on our radar screen. I encountered many Detroiters, and since my parents were from Detroit Lutheran congregations, we knew of each other’s congregations (e.g., St. Philip, Berea, St. John’s, Bethany).

Roosevelt Gray, who is now director for Black Ministry in the U.S., has relocated from Southfield, Missouri to St. Louis. He mentioned the need to work among ethnic Africans in America too. Since he was so busy with the details of the conference, I was only able to greet him. It might pay to talk to him on a follow-up visit to St. Louis, but he does have a lot on his plate.

The brochures for the “Bible Books for Children in Ghana” project went very

quickly, and I was able to get many African Americans interested in having their congregation or Sunday school contribute to the project. It pays to have my collection of hats in the display, too, as it attracts attention. (My old Russian “shapka,” a fur hat of nine years wear-and-tear elicited great interest!) I noticed that many participants visited our display, and I would be exhausted by the end of the day from conversations. (Plus, I stayed at Rev. Dr. John Mehl’s home in Concordia, Missouri, saving us the cost of the \$120 a night hotel room). John was there in his capacity at Concordia-Seward, hoping to attract future students. The only other Concordia represented was Concordia-Selma. In fact, there weren’t that many tables at the conference, so I had a lot of foot traffic.

Various people met and greeted:

Dr. John Loum, Director of EIIT—John has worked with me in Russia and is my good contact to all things African. A native of the Gambia, where he was a Muslim convert to Christianity (and was promptly thrown out of his parent’s house!), he is now directing EIIT at Concordia Seminary and training pastors for immigrant congregations. One of his students from the Congo was there, and I told him of our work on the French version of *A Child’s Garden of Bible Stories*.

Mary Wise—Great niece of Rosa Young, a founder of Black Lutheranism in the South. I learned that Booker T. Washington suggested that she go to the LCMS!! Mary was promoting the Rosa Young Museum in Alabama and there is now a film planned on her life, too. Once I bought her book [Rosa’s autobiography], which she herself autographed, I told her that she had to visit my display. She was very impressed and promised to take back the Bible Books for Ghana project to her congregation in Alabama.

On the whole, most participants were unaware of LHF, so I think it was highly beneficial to attend. One of the organizers, Pastor Michael Wise (formerly of LINC in Baltimore), told me that the next conference would probably take place in 2017 in conjunction with the 500th anniversary of the Reformation and 140 years of Black Ministry in the LCMS! The planners would like to have more frequent conferences, but the costs of this one (\$120 per hotel room) in Kansas City were fairly high. But it is also a city where there is the American Jazz Museum and the Negro Baseball Museum (which I took in after holding church services on Sunday in Leavenworth, Kansas).

One last anecdote—John Mehl had a conversation with one African American lady who said, “It is so nice to see people who look like me and know all the words to the Nunc Dimittis.”

July 12-13—I preached at Trinity Lutheran in Leavenworth, Kansas, the parish of my former classmate, Rev. Damien Snyder. There was one service on Saturday and three on Sunday. I did an LHF presentation to about 14 during the Bible class hour.

July 14—Met with Ben Haupt, the librarian at Concordia Seminary. Ben wants more foot traffic in the library, and so is very much agreed that they should have a permanent LHF display. We noticed one of the pictures that Jen attached that would provide for the greatest number of books. It comes to approximately \$610, but Ben said that he had the resources and agreed to fund half of it. We also tentatively agreed to have student convocation for LHF in the library sometime during the school year. Thanks again for the contact, Larry, and for compiling the choices for displays, Jen!

JULY 10

(From the July 2014 "Word at Work" newsletter)

"Mighty Mites" Spread the Gospel Worldwide

by Jennifer Bagnall

Quarters, dimes and nickels dropped into the mite boxes of Lutheran Women's Missionary League members across the United States are funding thousands of LHF publications for Christians around the globe. Over the past several months, several district LWMLs have chosen to fund LHF projects for Lutheran books in countries like Turkey, Haiti, Latvia, and Ethiopia, to name just a few.

In addition, women at the 2013 national LWML convention voted to send \$72,000 to LHF for the translation and publication of children's Bible storybooks and *Small Catechisms* for Southeast Asia.

Kay Kreklau, president of the national LWML, believes the books will "impact the children, possibly for life. When LHF sends the books into the mission field, they might be the only thing a child sees about Jesus."

JULY 12

LHF's public relations department – Jen Bagnall – sends out monthly eblasts to donors and supporters. This is one of those eblasts.

Detention center pastors share Spanish Bibles

No matter one's political opinion on the tens of thousands of illegal immigrants pouring over the U.S.-Mexico border, one thing Christians can agree on is the need for the immigrants to hear the Word of God.

Pastors Karl and Stephen Heimer (father and son) and a team from Ysleta Lutheran Mission Human Care minister to detainees at the El Paso Processing Center in Texas, where they've found LHF's Spanish *Bible with Small Catechism* to be an essential tool.

The Heimers spend time at the detention center twice each week, Thursdays with the women and Saturdays with the men. "The detainees are held for two or three months, sometimes up to a year, and are from all over – mostly Latin Amer-

ica, but also England, Belize, Egypt, and so on,” Rev. Karl Heimer explained. “Some are illegal immigrants, or they’re they’re in our country legally but have committed a crime and need to be deported. Some are seeking political asylum. There are all kinds of categories,” he said. “It’s easy to stereotype, but we try to deal with them as human beings rather than as a group of people.

The Heimers have given away hundreds of Bibles the people take with them when they leave. LHF’s *Bible with Small Catechism* has proven to be helpful in a variety of ways.

“Luther’s *Small Catechism* gives the people substance,” said Rev. Stephen Heimer. “The detainees have a lot of time on their hands. There was a man, early on when we began our ministry at the El Paso center, who seemed to be a bit of a leader among the other men there. He told me about their routine.

“They look forward to Saturdays with the time of worship, where they can all be together. During the week, they’re separated from one another in their barracks. But they have their daily Bible studies and devotions, and they use the catechism to learn and teach each other. They do that on their own when we can’t be there,” he explained. “For many of them, this may be the first time in their lives that they can just sit and learn.” At times, Rev. Karl said, the center has even exceeded capacity. About ten percent of the population attends the Heimers’ worship service. There are about 300 women in the center, and 60-70 of them typically attend worship.

The LHF Bibles are in high demand. “We realize that supplies of the Spanish *Bible with Small Catechism* are limited, but we could easily give away as many as LHF could ever send us,” said Rev. Karl.

JULY 23

From: “Collver, Albert”

To: Matthew Heise

Cc: Robert Rahn, Jeff Rahn, Shauen Trump

Subject: Ethiopia: Amharic Augustana and Catechism Project

Dear Matt and Bob:

Greetings in the Name of Jesus from Ethiopia! I wanted to follow up with you on the booklet containing the Augustana and *Small Catechism* in Amharic for the EECMY. We discussed printing something like 30,000 copies. I wanted to check on how quickly this could progress? I also wanted to connect you with Yonas, the EECMY mission director, and Tsehahun, the EECMY youth director. It was with them that the idea to do this project to enhance Lutheran identity was formed. Please coordinate with them, but also please keep both me and Shauen in the loop.

JULY 24

MONTHLY KUSAAL LUTHERAN MISSION NEWS

July 2014 No. 47

“As long as it is day, we must work the works of Him who sent me, night is coming when no one can work” John 9:4.

Greetings from Ghana: Greetings from your brothers and sisters in Ghana. July and August are the months we receive a lot of rain, but this July was very unusual. There has been very little rain and until now, some farmers have not planted all their crops. But the good news is there is good rainfall in southern Ghana.

Leadership training class: The leadership class that was suspended due to my travel to the USA will be held August 7-9. Topics to be treated include: series of stewardship lessons beginning with our body; reviewing the translated materials (Luther's *Large Catechism*, *Lutheran Service Book*); sermon outlining; and evangelism.

Baptism: More than 50 people are being prepared for baptism. So far 14 of them are ready and would be baptized when I visit their churches.

Evangelism: The evangelism teams continue to share the Gospel with unbelievers. Mr. John Ndedugri, the leader of the group, reported that in June they visited more than 145 people, and in July they visited only 120 people because people are occupied with farming activities. Several Muslim women want to become Christians, but they are afraid of their husbands. Culturally, the woman has to belong to her husband's religion. We are finding ways of organizing “underground” churches for these women.

Translation: The Lord is indeed blessing the translation exercise. Work on Kusaal Luther's *Large Catechism*, revision of the *Small Catechism*, and the *Lutheran Service Book* is almost completed. We are in a process of reviewing them and sending them to Thailand for formatting.

Adult Literacy Class: The two adult literacy classes are doing well. By the end of August Primer One learners will be tested to bridge into Primer Two. We hope to open new classes when logistics are available. The literacy class is very important in that people who have learned to read and write Kusaal would be able to read the books being translated.

Goat Project: Previously it was reported that Madam Diana sold one of her seven goats to pay for her son's school fees. Madam Christie Abariga also reported that her one goat has multiplied and now she has five. She sold one to buy fertilizer to fertilize her crops so as to get a better crop harvest. Madam Rebecca Atiewin gave out one of her goats to another widow. The goat project in all respects is a success. We thank congregations and individuals who have provided us goats for the needy.

JULY 30

From: Derje Tilahun

To: Matthew Heise

Subject: Re: Meeting with Dr. Collver in Ethiopia

Dear Matthew ,

Greetings from Addis Ababa.

I have asked all Lutheran Churches about their demand of the Book of Concord. Here is their response.

• Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY)	10,000
• Ethiopian Lutheran Church	1,000
• Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ethiopia	500
• Finote Yesus Lutheran Church	400
• Bethe Eyesus Lutheran Church	100
Total	12,000

Since the demand of EECMY is big, you can contact them directly and they can follow the printing and distribution process using their structure. You can also send the fund which would be allocated for the cost of 10,000 copies printing and distribution directly to them. Our small store could not hold that many copies.

AUGUST 7

From: Larry Rockemann

Left August 7 (Thursday)—flight into Newark, New Jersey to set up for exhibit at the New Jersey District LWML Convention to be held at the Sheraton in Parsippany, New Jersey. Met Pr. Dan Fenco. With a significant LWML District grant 2012-2014, he set up a rather impressive “house church” ministry in the Bernardsville, Basking Ridge, New Jersey areas. Dan was born in Peru—these are outreach mission stations into the rather sizeable Hispanic communities in that portion of New Jersey. He and I really connected and had a long talk that extended through dinner at a nearby restaurant.

LHF had a mission grant proposal. This was not adopted. Once again, what I encountered was a lack of knowledge about LHF. No LWML attendee visiting the exhibit and with whom I spoke was aware of LHF. I was invited to speak for 15 minutes on Saturday afternoon (it ended up being around 3:15 p.m.). My speaking, however, came after the balloting for grant proposals. Following that session, a number of ladies confirmed to me that if I had been able to speak prior to the balloting, LHF would have made it—they simply didn’t know enough about what we do. I took every minute they gave me in the “Greetings” time to connect the Sunday Gospel with the work of LHF—very fun to do! Afterward, I

ended up with several requests for returning to do LWML Zone rallies, etc. New Jersey District LWML President, Ginger Starrett, communicated that she was going to be bringing the work of LHF to her Zone as well as to her church pastor. The newly elected LWML president for New Jersey, Arlene Price, made it a point to meet with me later Saturday afternoon to talk about how we might have LHF become more visible/known in the district. She was very supportive and asked if I'd ever consider returning for a future district LWML event—of course. New Jersey District President, Anthony Steinbronn, also expressed support for LHF, but it was apparent that he, too, lacked knowledge about what we do.

Tuesday began at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Terryville, Connecticut. This was a requested visit by Pastor Joel Kotila, whom I met at a Higher Things Youth Gathering in the summer of 2013 and again at Higher Things in Gainesville, Florida this past July. He had originally wanted me to do an LHF Mission Sunday at Holy Trinity when I was out on this trip, but calendars/schedules didn't line up. He did, however, want to visit with me again—hence my stop in Terryville, Connecticut on my way north. This man and his church are very supportive of LHF—they want to know more and do more. He and I are working out a schedule for my preaching there in 2015, and he is actually talking about doing a circuit-wide mission festival (most all of these circuit pastors I would know well).

I then headed for Bethany Lutheran Church in West Hartford, a large and active congregation with a very fine pastor, Rev. Tim Krieger. Pastor Krieger and I talked at length about LHF, and he told me of efforts his congregation has been making over the years with immigrant populations in/around the West Hartford area. He then asked that I speak with a ladies' group currently in meeting at the church. He led me downstairs and I did a presentation to their Bethany Women in Mission group—about 18 ladies. I had some leftover LHF bags (from the New Jersey LWML Convention) so each lady got one (along with some leftover chocolates!). The ladies were especially interested in our efforts to supply books in Kusaal for Ghana and apparently are going to consider a project with LHF. I spent two hours at Bethany—a remarkably good visit!

I then headed for a scheduled stop at the New England District (NED) office located in Springfield, Massachusetts (on the campus of Trinity Lutheran Church). I not only visited the NED folks in the office but also had a good visit with Pastor Ralph Lanphar. Increasingly, the NED is struggling. In my day of service there (Immanuel/Bristol, Connecticut), we had 76 congregations. Now that number is 71.

I then drove to Westfield, Massachusetts to visit with Pastor Chris Hazzard at St. John's with one of his members. I believe they will become supporters of LHF—much interest! I left Westfield and headed to Holyoke to a congregation I

knew well, though the pastor was new to me (I knew the former long-term pastor there, Tim Knapp). What a pleasure to visit with Pastor Randy Bessette and to hear his story—second-career guy (former over-the-road truck driver become pastor). He has a terrific vision for ministry at First Lutheran and is a real leader in Lutheran School education. We had a long conversation—he expressed much interest in LHF and right then and there wanted us to look at calendars to plan an LHF Mission Sunday. I agreed that he would be my first phone call when I return to the NED.

I spent Wednesday in New Hampshire, beginning with a long morning visit (and coffee) with my friend and good brother, Pastor Mick (Michael) Meyer at Grace in Nashua. This is a strong, healthy congregation, bold in reaching out to people around them—they have an active Hispanic ministry also on their campus. Mick Meyer is a model pastor—he is so solid, so faithful, with compassionate love for his people there as well as the people in the Nashua community and a passion for the Gospel. He did not know about LHF but was very interested to learn.

Saturday afternoon (3 o'clock) I arrived to set up/prepare at Immanuel Lutheran Church, Danbury, Connecticut. Pastor Walt Harper, a second-career man, was a student during my tenure at Concordia Seminary. He had everything well-prepared at the church. I also met the associate pastor, Joel Cundiff. Two very fine pastors who obviously work very well together for such a large and active congregation and Lutheran school.

AUGUST 23—SEPTEMBER 7

Asia Trip Report—Rev. Matthew Heise

Seoul, South Korea—We had a nice visit with the new President of the LCK (Lutheran Church in Korea), Chul-Hwan Kim. He said that their church consisted of 51 congregations and 5,000 members. However, they are a wealthy church as they accumulated property in downtown Seoul during the early years of their church. So, for example, one building the church owns brings in \$5 million rent annually! This helps fund ventures like Luther University (400-500 students). A seminary exists within the grounds of the university, which also has renowned programs in speech therapy and counseling for undergraduates.

At the seminary, Drs. Um and Kim informed us that the first half of the *Book of Concord* would be completed by July 2015. They hope to schedule a Reformation kickoff. The entire book is planned to be completed by 2017. The current translation is a revision from the older translation made many years ago by Dr. Won Yon Ji. Currently, they are attempting to work with CPH and translate and publish *Luther's Works*. Bruce Kintz was scheduled to visit them one week after we left Seoul.

Hong Kong, China—Kelvin Li has been doing the work on editing the *Book of Concord* in traditional Mandarin, (this is the McCain Reader’s Version), but has been reduced to two hours a day for work due to health issues. With the new opportunity to print Christian materials through Glory Press in Beijing, we may have a way to circumvent the difficulty of bringing books into mainland China. One thing to keep in mind, however, is that Chinese often gladly receive a book only to place it on a shelf. We need to utilize Chinese Lutheran pastors from the USA to introduce the books on the mainland.

Joel Scheiwe is now serving as head pastor at Hong Kong International Lutheran Church, having recently left service as an LCMS missionary. Joel would like to reprint Dr. Robert Kolb’s *Luther as Pastor*. The book is currently out of print and would take quite a bit of money to get the permission to reprint from CPH (I saw an estimate of \$7,000!). Plus, HKILC wants to sell the book, albeit at a minimal price.

Bangkok, Thailand—This section is short as we only saw the LHF and Lutheran Hour Ministries offices. They were preparing for an English language seminar for Lutheran pastors in SE Asia, who would only arrive after we left.

Indonesia—When we arrived, we worshiped at a very small Lutheran church of the GKLI (Indonesian Lutheran Church) with Rev. Charles Ferry, an LCMS missionary. Charles told us that the LCMS would most likely be offering fellowship to this Lutheran church body in May 2015 (approximately 20,000 members). Charles was thrilled that I could connect with him as he recently attended a youth conference in the Sumatran island city of Medan. There, 300 youth were asking for the catechism in Bahasa, the dominant language in Indonesia. He said that handing out the enchiridion would be like handing out “candy” here. He also said that there would be a Fall and Winter seminar in Medan for the church (November 2014 and February 2015). I gave Charles a copy of Koehler’s *Lutheran Catechism with Explanation* and Herb Keistman’s book *Way of the Cross* in Bahasa.

In Jakarta, we met with Frieda, also a Christian, who is the publisher of Speedy Printers. The workbooks on the catechism in Bahasa are just about finished, and Frieda will be able to print 1,000 copies by the end of September 2014. We also ordered 3,000 copies of *A Child’s Garden of Bible Stories* from her. The paper will be 85 cm and the binding looks to be far better than the book we published previously in Medan. Frieda said that it would be printed in two weeks’ time (by mid-September 2014). Furthermore, we ordered Luther’s *Small Catechism* (3,000 copies) and that should be completed by the first of October. They will scan the book and make a PDF file that Rev. Bonar can edit. The price seems very reasonable given our previous experience with a publisher in Medan.

Rev. Bonar has worked with Ted in Indonesia. He is the head of ALI (Academy

of Lutherans in Indonesia). Indonesia has a general Protestant Church, but the theology seems to veer towards Calvinism rather than Lutheranism. Rev. Bonar is committed to Lutheran understandings, and for that reason formed ALI. ALI distributes our books within Indonesia, so we want to put that information on our copyright page, all the more in that it helps our relationship with the government (because it frowns on foreigners working alone in the country).

ALI rents a warehouse in Siantar (Sumatra) and we pay the rent, which is the equivalent of \$100 a month. Books in stock within Indonesia—*Christian Doctrine* (700); *Augsburg Confession* (488); Luther's *Small Catechism* (181); *Way of the Cross* (95). We need to sign a new two-year agreement to lock into this good price.

Rev. Bonar is working on the *Book of Concord* in Bahasa (reader's edition). He is hoping to have it ready for printing in January or February 2015. The HKBP Protestant Church (Batak Christian Protestant Church) has published a thicker children's Bible storybook in Batak, but not *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories*. We are thinking that it would be good to have *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* published in both the Batak and Nias languages.

The final trip was to Nias Island where we introduced Luther's *Small Catechism* in Nias. It was the first time that the people had this book in their own language! There were about 300 people filing into the church that day as we took a good period of the time explaining the catechism for the people. In Nias there are also several separate Protestant churches, and it was important that four of them showed up for the distribution and teaching. Interesting questions were asked ("Do we have to say 'in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit?'" or "Do we have to make the sign of the cross?"). Although they had just received their catechisms, they were already asking questions!

Concluding thoughts: The opportunities for work in Indonesia are great, as it is the most populous Muslim country in the world and yet has Protestant churches sympathetic to Lutheranism that number in the millions. Hence the work through Rev. Bonar of the HKBP is essential as it numbers 3.5 million parishioners! China, for its part, will prove to be complicated as the government's allowances for religious bodies is sporadic, depending upon where one lives. In some areas, there is more freedom, in others, much less. Ted's contacts with Glory Press in Beijing show that one can print Christian literature within China, though. So, a door is opening for potential distribution on Mainland China, but experienced missionaries and Chinese ex-pats will have to be consulted, as it is still a communist nation.

AUGUST 30—SEPTEMBER 14

Thailand Journal — *by Carla Niemier*

Aug. 30—First day in Thailand! We met Pastor Ted and Pastor Heise for breakfast, then met with Dennis Denow for a couple of hours of planning for next week's English seminar. Boom Denow gave us little wreaths of roses and jasmine to welcome us. We met some of the staff: Joe, Ar, and Robin. (Almost everyone in Thailand has a nickname.)

In the afternoon we took a van to the Grand Palace and the Royal Monastery of the Emerald Buddha. The buildings are incredible—especially the temple buildings—and [are] covered with tiny glazed, mirrored, and gilded mosaic tiles. People bring offerings of incense and lotus blossoms. Pastor Ted took us for a delicious Thai dinner, with dessert of coconut, lotus seed, and pomegranate.

Aug. 31—Church was at the Journey into Light Lutheran Church on the second floor of the Thailand Concordia Lutheran Church (TCLC) and LHF offices. We could read the lessons in English while they were being read in Thai, and could sing some of the songs in English, but the sermon was a mystery. Receiving the Lord's Supper with brothers and sisters who are usually half a world away was a joyful experience!

Sept. 1—Today we flew to Chiang Mai in the north of Thailand and were met by Pastor Niran and Esther, his wife. They took us to lunch at an outdoor restaurant, with beautiful plants growing in and around it. Then we went to the Doi Suthep, which is a Buddhist temple on the mountain. Pastor Niran grew up in that community but became a Christian when he was 17. We spent the evening with Pastor Niran and Esther and their sons, Jabez and Phum-jai. Of course, we had to visit the famous Chiang Mai night market. It goes on for miles! Then we planned with Pastor Niran for our work on the next several days and crashed.

Sept. 2—Today we visited a place for children who have no one to care for them. It's sponsored by Concordia Welfare and Education Foundation. The children were away at school, but we saw their gardens, rice paddy, and fish farm. They are learning to be self-sufficient. Dang is the director of LCMS Human Care in Thailand and is responsible for this shelter. She is a dynamo who speaks English fluently, but she'll be at the seminar next week to improve her skills. This afternoon we [worked] with Pastor Niran on his writing, and Esther worked on vocabulary. Esther is an LHF worker in northern Thailand.

Sept. 3—We visited a new preaching station with Pastor Niran and Esther. It's an old house that's being restored by the people of Promise Lutheran Church. They are developing a small fish farm in a concrete tank, with the run-off from the tank to supply nutrients for hydroponic vegetables. This is to help the church be more self-sufficient since most of the members have very little and can't support

the church very well with offerings. They also want to build a small outdoor pavilion for community activities and classes. After lunch, it was back to the books! In the evening we went to a place to experience Thai culture, dancing, and food.

Sept. 5—We're back in Bangkok. Most of today was spent in planning for next week with Dennis Denow. Of course, we had to take a lunch break—duck fried rice for me! After the planning meetings, we shopped at the Big C market. It's between our hotel and the TCLC offices, so we walk past it twice a day. It was fun wandering around trying to find things by the pictures on the packages. I had to buy some dragon fruit; it is so beautiful.

Sept. 7—We walked over the pedestrian bridge across the very busy street that separates our hotel and the TCLC offices. Every time we walk up those 42 steps it gets a little easier. It was time for church at Journey into Light. Even though I can't understand a lot of the service, the sermon was in English. Dennis Denow was the preacher, and David interpreted in Thai. After church there was a potluck lunch. It was just like the Lutherans in the US, except for the menu. And just like every potluck, it was delicious! In the evening, we took a walk down the road to the Tesco. It's just like a Target stacked on top of a Walmart, except that everything's in Thai. Tomorrow the seminar starts—scary, but exciting.

Sept. 8—Finally, the seminar is started! There were 17 participants today, but that may change during the week. They are from Vietnam, Cambodia, Myanmar, and Thailand. They are all church workers in many capacities. There are four people in my class: Pastor Suchat, Aun, La, and Teng. We are all exhausted from the work of understanding each other, and I learned that I need lots more material for tomorrow because discussion is very hard for them. The people in my class are from all over Thailand. Pastor Suchat has two churches in the south which are about 40 miles apart, and he travels by motorcycle between them and to visit his people. Teng is from the north and now lives in Chiang Mai. He has translated some hymns and songs into Thai. Aun lives in Bangkok and runs the LHF office here. She is a sweet, gentle soul who loves to serve others. La works for LCMS Human Care and also lives in Bangkok.

Sept. 9—It's another busy day! The students say they're not tired, but I am. I haven't worked this hard for a long time!

Sept. 10—This was a day that was a lot of fun. Instead of spending most of the day in our classes, we spent most of it in group activities. We played a game in which the students had to guess English words to which their teammates gave clues. It was a heated contest with a very close score. In the afternoon, the participants were divided into groups of three, and each team created a skit using randomly collected objects. They did a great job, and Pastor Niran turned out to be a real ham in his role as the Prodigal Son. Both these activities gave participants a chance to communicate in English, which they are seldom able to do in their daily work.

Sept. 12—Today was the last day of the seminar. Everyone was tired (they've been working from about 8:30 to 4:30 each day) but happy. Many asked for another seminar next year, or sooner. All these workers are dedicated and enthusiastic about their various areas of ministry. They seem so young, and most were Buddhist not so many years ago, but now God has called them to be pastors, evangelists, translators, and church leaders throughout Southeast Asia. Staff from LHF and Lutheran Hour Ministries helped with music and meals all week and took pictures with everyone's cell phones and cameras. They were a joy to have with us. It was a wonderful and exhausting week, and I wouldn't have missed it!

SEPTEMBER 10

(From the September 2014 "Word at Work" newsletter)

Finland: LHF Translator Defrocked for Scriptural Faithfulness

by Jennifer Bagnall

Christian persecution can take many forms. For Rev. Juhana Pohjola, LHF translator and project coordinator in Finland, it's that he's been formally defrocked (deemed "unfit to be a pastor") by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, or ELCF. What was Rev. Pohjola's offense? Simply teaching according to Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions.

"In the past few decades, the ELCF has theologically melted," explained Rev. Pohjola. "Over 73 percent of the Finnish population belongs to the ELCF, but the membership is rapidly declining.

"It is a mirror of our liberal society in Finland," he continued. "Many pastors openly deny the basic facts of the Apostolic Creed. There is a clash over the Bible on such issues as...the pastoral office, the rights of unborn infants, the decree on marriage between a man and a woman, and many others."

Due to women's ordination and liberal preaching, conservative church leaders formed the Evangelical Lutheran Mission Diocese of Finland in 2013 and elected Rev. Pohjola as the dean. It was this involvement with the Mission Diocese that led to Rev. Pohjola's defrocking.

Rev. Dr. Risto Soramies, bishop of the Mission Diocese, staunchly defends Rev. Pohjola as a faithful pastor. "To those Christians who know the Rev. Pohjola as a preacher and a spiritual counsellor, as well as the hardworking dean of our Mission Diocese, the judgment pronounced by the [ELCF], 'being clearly unfit for pastoral office,' is so grotesque that it does not really require any comment," he said.

Rev. Pohjola will continue in his work for LHF and as dean of the Mission Society. "We have a long history of Lutheran teaching in our country," he said. "However, it is extensively forgotten. We continue to work with LHF in order that future generations would know what treasure we have in Lutheran teaching,

in which Jesus Christ is the beginning and the end, and a disturbed conscience can find a true peace.”

Following the defrocking of Rev. Pohjola, Rev. Rahn wrote the following message on behalf of the LHF:

Dear Juhana,

Cordial greetings from the U.S. We are pleased to send our congratulations to you for attaining this noteworthy achievement, certainly not unexpected with the past series of actions against the Scriptures and Confessions. To be cast out of a pig's sty is not a dishonor but a distinct honor when the Truth is upheld and promoted. We continue to stand with you in all of your efforts. May the Lord be with you and strengthen you as you defend your dissertation.

God bless.

RR

From: Rev. Robert Rahn

Re: Church of Finland Defrocks Dean Juhana Pohjola.

Loyalty to the Scriptures and the confessions can be dangerous. The more important matter is to be loyal to church rules, constitutions, and its hierarchy, and everything is alright. The sad part is that huge cathedrals throughout Finland have beautifully groomed grounds, magnificent gothic structures with ornate stained-glass windows and beautiful artwork maintained by the state... that stand empty every Sunday. Brightly attired high and holy bishops and other church leaders are state-paid. One wouldn't want to lose that perk. Meanwhile the Mission Province clergy receive none of that state church money, go it alone, have the Truth, and hold to it. God save the Mission Province Church and may the LCF be rescued by the Province Church. So it goes where the Great Deceiver functions within the Church.

To a certain degree we are responsible for this. After supporting Juhana's studies at Fort Wayne he went back to Finland and was told he could not be ordained because he objected to women's ordination. My advice to him was start a branch of the LHF and see if he could start a confessional Lutheran congregation. The results speak for themselves. From that one congregation the church has grown. Risto Siromies, who did translation work for us when he was stationed in Turkey, is now bishop of the Mission Province.

In Finland we also have an English-speaking congregation that Rev. Richard Otiso pastors. We have stood with him, provided books and materials and some support to conduct those services while associated with the Mission Province group. And that's the rest of the story on that particular Lutheran front.

“Teach us the catechism!”

Rev. Matthew Heise

If you asked what is the largest Muslim country in the world, most people might look to nations in Africa or a Middle Eastern country like Saudi Arabia. But the surprising answer is Indonesia, a nation comprised of a conglomeration of islands where 90 percent of the people claim to be followers of Islam.

As you move to the northern island of Sumatra, however, the number of churches begins to increase. Then, if you take a short flight off the west coast and traveled to the island of Nias, the percentage of Christians reaches 90 percent!

Although most of Nias’s residents consider themselves Protestant, until a few weeks ago the believers had never read Luther’s *Small Catechism* in their own language. Rev. Ted NaThalang and I were surprised to hear this news, but when they asked us to celebrate the printing of the catechism, I assumed we would make short speeches as events like these often dictate. But no, they had no desire for traditional perfunctory speeches. “Teach us the catechism!” they cried.

As the rain poured down (as it is wont to do in Indonesia), we joyfully shared Luther’s teaching with them. As a result, we were asked to return, as our time was too short and the Nias Indonesians expressed a desire for children’s Bible story books as well as catechism workbooks. Upon leaving, we were regaled with a Gospel song that will ring in my ears for a long time.

Indonesian Christians want to know more about their Christian faith, and now, thanks to LHF supporters, they have Luther’s teaching tool in their hand so they can teach their parishioners and families.

(From the September 2014 “Word at Work” newsletter)

Two countries, one need: Good Lutheran teachings

by Jennifer Bagnall

World-class surfing. Magnificent undersea diving. Ancient cultures and amazing architecture. All these things draw tourists to Nias, a small Indonesian island located just north of the equator in the Indian Ocean.

Rev. Matthew Heise, LHF executive director, recently traveled to Nias for a very different reason: to bring Luther’s *Small Catechism* to the people in their Nias language. “Indonesia is very much a Muslim country,” said Rev. Heise. “And yet, there are certain pockets that are strongly Protestant, and Nias Island is one of those places where roughly 90 percent of the people call themselves Christian.”

Lutheran missionaries first came to Nias in the late 1800s. But because so few Christian teaching materials are available in the Nias language, threats to the faith have emerged.

“A year or two ago, LHF held a seminar at a Nias seminary. There, one of the bishops shared with me that their church members need good basic teachings of

the Christian faith, based on the Bible, because the people are confused by the teachings of the charismatics and some cults on the island,” said Rev. Ted NaThalang, LHF project coordinator for Southeast Asia.

To help, LHF agreed to translate and publish 5,000 copies of Luther’s *Small Catechism*. At its release on Sept. 5, bishops from four different Indonesian Protestant synods attended the LHF event, where they received their own copies of the Nias catechism.

“The people were very excited by what they read in the catechism,” said Rev. NaThalang. “Most of them had never seen anything like it before. One of the bishops remarked that he wants each family in his synod to have their own catechism, too.”

Rev. Heise said that he was surprised by the reaction of the Nias people.

“I expected that we would simply come to this event and pass out the catechisms, and that would be it,” Rev. Heise said. “Instead, the people immediately sat down, opened their catechisms, and started asking questions about what they were reading: ‘Do you have to make the sign of the cross?’ they asked. ‘Is communion truly God’s body and blood?’ And so, it turned into a real teaching opportunity as well. The Holy Spirit was at work!”

Book of Concord underway in South Korea

by Jennifer Bagnall

Though the 500th anniversary of the Reformation is still two years away, the Lutheran Church in Korea (LCK), in partnership with LHF, is already planning to celebrate in a most fitting way: by translating and publishing a new edition of the Korean *Book of Concord*.

The LCK has 48 congregations and about 70 pastors. The *Book of Concord* explains what Lutherans believe and teach on the basis of Holy Scripture and includes, among other writings, the *Small* and *Large Catechisms* and the *Augsburg Confession*.

LHF expects to complete the first half of the Korean *Book of Concord* by summer 2015 and the second half by Reformation 2017.

To mark the Reformation’s 500th anniversary, LHF is at work on 9 different language editions of the *Book of Concord* for Southeast Asia.

New hymnal for Zande people of South Sudan

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sudan–South Sudan (ELCSS/S) now has a hymnal for their Zande-speaking congregations, thanks in part to a grant from the LWML North Wisconsin District. “Hymns preach, teach, lead us in prayer and praise our Creator,” said Rev. Matthew Heise, LHF executive director. “The importance of a hymnal in the life of a church cannot be overstated.”

SEPTEMBER 11

South America Trip Report—*Rev. Matthew Heise*

On this date, the Spanish *Bible with Small Catechism* was distributed in connection with a meeting of the International Lutheran Council. Around 3,000 copies were distributed for the churches in Central and South American countries.

The church in Chile is expecting GLO (Global Lutheran Outreach) missionaries Rev. James Tino and his wife Lisa to arrive in October 2014. The Tinos are longtime missionaries who served in Venezuela. Rev. Rautenberg said that Rev. Tino will come to serve them, but he also mentioned that OIM plans on adding two missionaries by 2016.

Rev. Mendoza gave an emotional presentation, as he was requested by the Norwegian state Lutheran church mission NOT to come to the ILC gathering. He is trying to keep his church together in a confessional outlook but says that the Norwegians, in league with influential parishioners, are trying to undermine Lutheran confessionalism. There are 24 pastors, ten congregations with approximately 870 parishioners. (There are also six unorganized congregations where it is difficult to get a head count of parishioners). The Bolivians have schools where the state provides the teachers and they administer the schools. They also have a radio station in the city of Sucre.

The Lutheran Church in Nicaragua is working with the Lutheran Church-Canada. They have seminary operating in the country.

The church in Brazil is clearly the dominant church in South America. They have 1,495 congregations, 618 pastors with approximately 242,900 parishioners. They also have 582 mission sites. The participants in the smaller churches give their views great respect, and the Brazilians are very humble and respectful towards them.

The church in Venezuela is laboring in a politically volatile environment. In fact, the pastors seem to be split between those who support the Hugo Chavez revolution of society and those who do not. Those who support his movement, like the president of the church, point out that free education has been useful for their pastors. Those who opposed the Chavez movement (mostly the younger pastors) are very concerned about the cult-like atmosphere that is forming around his person. (Chavez died of cancer in 2013, but his visage is everywhere, on murals and billboards around Caracas. The government is even building a memorial park where citizens are taught to cry on cue, much like what you would see in North Korea. Rev. Rautenberg traveled to the park just before the ILC Conference and mentioned this phenomenon.)

Concluding thoughts: The participants were all very grateful to LHF for assistance rendered in publishing the Spanish language Bible/catechism. I preached

the sermon at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Caracas, which was founded in 1951. (In fact, there was a spritely 93-year-old woman who was an original member of the congregation!) Bars surround the church building, as it is located in a high crime area. (They have been robbed twice during Sunday services!!). Apparently, there are three such congregations in Caracas with small numbers (10-20 parishioners each). They each have a building and instead of working together, remain in their small congregations where only a retired pastor can serve all three. The larger congregations are located in other cities scattered throughout Venezuela.

After learning that this church provided offices for nine doctors, I brainstormed with the deaconesses and Lutheran Hour Ministries worker, Alexander Perez. Why couldn't we use this church as a mission site where the Bible/catechisms could be distributed? Since there was no regular pastor on site, they hadn't thought of doing this. But I mentioned that they had a great opportunity to reach out to people hurting physically and psychologically who appeared in their church every day. There is a trained deaconess on site, and the church has the potential for outreach, so much so that a pastor could be called if they met with success in their evangelistic endeavors.

OCTOBER 31

From: Rev. Robert Rahn

Subject: Reformation 2014 - LHF work in Russia comes full circle

Dear LHF Partner in Mission,

Two significant dates are rapidly approaching that are infamous for Lutherans: October 31 (the Reformation) and November 10 (Luther's birthday). Allow me to add a third significant date tied closely to those dates: the birthday of LHF.

Around a dining room table in my home on November 10, 1992, eight members of a board determined that the name of this organization would be Lutheran Heritage Foundation. Its mission would be to perpetuate Reformation truths in printed material that was Christ-centered, Bible-based and Reformation-driven. God has blessed this mission beyond anything we ever envisioned when LHF was brought into existence.

During that first year, our major goal was to go to Russia and help restore Lutheranism, which had been beaten down for 70 years by an atheist, communist form of government that attempted to choke off all Christian beliefs. The wall came down, and LHF went in with a side-by-side (English-Russian) New Testament to test the concept of freedom of religion. We sauntered down to Red Square on a day that Reformation actually fell on a Sunday. There on the Square, a truck delivered our copies, along with several Russian tracts and booklets. Several hours were spent distributing the materials, including the boxes in which the

materials came. Two policemen came by and Konstantin Komarov, our Russian translator, took them to a corner and explained the Biblical concept of freedom with which they should become familiar. They were seen walking off with the Bible and the literature. Not so the case with the two Russian Orthodox priests, who were seen tearing up the tracts handed to them.

After everything had been distributed, I personally walked around Red Square and checked every garbage can. Not one book or piece of literature was found anywhere. I don't believe this would be possible today on Red Square, to say nothing about an American square in this day where the cry for tolerance seems to be the venue, especially for Christians. We can, however, be thankful as our LHF executive director, Rev. Matthew Heise points out, we now have many other open avenues today to get LHF books distributed

Rev. Heise's teaching is yet one more example of why the Lutheran Heritage Foundation name is so significant and relevant for the present age. While calls are sometimes received asking for funds because LHF is a "foundation," we explain that it is our Lutheran faith that is our heritage, built on the foundation of Truth. Our mission is not to distribute monetary funds, but the books that open up the Word of God, translated so that all the nations may read and understand. For 22 years, the LHF has sought to preserve this great heritage, and with your support, good Lutheran books have been printed in 86 of the world's languages.

What a birthday gift that has its roots in the basement of my home, first in Avon Lake, Ohio and then Sterling Heights, Michigan, but now in the beautiful, debt-free World Mission Center in Macomb, Michigan! Happy birthday to the Lutheran Church of the Reformation, to Martin Luther of "Here I Stand" fame, and to the Lutheran Heritage Foundation.

NOVEMBER 10

This day marked the 22nd anniversary of the founding of the Lutheran Heritage Foundation.

From: Richard Ondicho Otiso

To: Robert Rahn

Subject: RE: Reformation Greetings

Dear Dr. Rahn,

Greetings from Finland in the mighty name of Jesus Christ, the soon coming King of Kings. I am delighted to read from your email containing blessed words of encouragement. I have not done anything worth to be recognized by anybody other than failings. When I look back at these 13 years that I have spent in Finland I feel that I have done nothing to stand and share. Of course I am willing to share of my human shortcomings. The last 13 years have been years of learning,

and I think learning is forever to me. I know of one thing, that God in His wisdom has called me to serve Him in serving these poor immigrants here. Some of our members are from Tanzania who did not differentiate liberal theology and confessional theology but today they are able to tell it. I did not achieve this by my own strength, but by God's grace.

The walk has not been easy, but God has always carried us here. I have always been grateful for the work of LHF more than those who have served it. I have seen how printed materials work more than a missionary in the ground. I have always thanked God for the good work that you have done. I have always thanked Anssi to have taken me to translation work from the start till I went to study theology in Tanzania. I have been thinking to be more involved in this work although from outside. I have been thinking of the Kiswahili literature and the need for more translations.

Today I met two families and invited them to visit our Divine Service and they both want to do it next Sunday. I count every single moment precious to me when I meet people who are Lutherans. I am sure this is lifetime work and that I am not doing for to earning a living but to bring the good news to all. I have come to realize that there are so many people in Helsinki who do not know about us and so now we have printed small leaflets to hand out wherever I am away from our home. Nothing more from me other than to be a servant of God and the people.

I take your words serious and I treasure every single word of wisdom from you.
God's blessings.

Rev. Richard Ondicho Otiso

Pastor: St. Barnabas International Evangelical

From: Robert Rahn

To: Richard Ondicho Otiso

Subject: RE: Reformation Greetings

Dear Brother,

“The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore, beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest. Go; behold, I send you out as lambs in the midst of wolves.” Luke 10:2, 3

Not much has changed since that Call was given to His first disciples. They did an effective work in the Name and power of the Lord Who sent them. Maybe it is time to reflect again on Who it is that sends us. It helps to get things in perspective. It is too easy to dwell on our individual circumstances and conditions even though they are real and of genuine concern.

Your message indicates some serious concerns and some deep reflections you have made in regard to what is seemingly an unmanageable condition. And yet I see in your message some indication on the growth of the church and the desire

on the part of individuals to hear the Word. It demonstrates that you have been out in the highways and byways compelling them to come in. Where will the voice be should you close the door of service?

I'm glad you have continued contact with Martti Simojoki. His support has been important and significant as I observe it. He has given the same interest and support to the mission of LHF for which we are deeply grateful.

It seems to me that any return to Kenya should be reserved until the time that the church has selected a new archbishop. One wonders when that will ever be as long as the bribery of officials can always derail any convention and election. How does the Lord put up with these hooligans and those that support hooliganism?

I surely join wholeheartedly with Anssi in discouraging resignation and working outside the church. That would be a dangerous course, in my estimation. Stay the course, even though it means working with wolves and forces of opposition. With Luther of old, see God as your refuge and strength. Battle the whims of Satan and "hold high the cross." There is no isolation greater than that endured by our Lord and Savior when "all the disciples left Him and fled" (Matthew 26:56b NASB) and when on the cross he cried out, "MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?" There is no comparable isolation that we can endure because He endured it for us and for our salvation. In our darkest hours we can know that He endured that isolation for us on the cross and overcame it for our sakes. This is the time to stay the course even though the waves be high, and currents be strong. Even as He stilled the storm for His disciples, He can get in the boat with us and calm the seas. I commend you to His care and compassion.

In Him alone,

RR

NOVEMBER 15

Eurasia Trip Report—by Rev. Matt Heise

Kiev, Ukraine—I visited with Bishop Vyacheslav Horpynchuk of the Ukrainian Lutheran Church (ULC) (25 congregations and 2,500 members). He had recently finished the translation of the *People's Bible Commentary* on 1 Corinthians. Since it had just been published, we celebrated its publication during the Sunday service. About 60 people attended in a room of a Zoology institute that the ULC rents on Sundays. Afterward, several influential members of the congregation gathered with me to commiserate on the situation in the Ukraine today. They are dumbfounded by the Russian hostility and were encouraged that those of us in "the West" understood their frustration. I tried to encourage them that they had Russian Lutheran brothers and sisters who prayed for them and cared about them.

Ankara, Turkey—I stayed with OIM missionaries Enoch and Krista Peterson.

They are doing ESL work in Turkey and have worked to get a Lutheran pastor to come and shepherd the small Lutheran congregation in Ankara. We had hoped to meet with the Turkish evangelist, Selcuk, who has supposedly been distributing our LHF catechisms throughout southeast Turkey, but he had just had some serious surgery and couldn't receive visitors. I also met with an Evangelical pastor named Armand who works with Iranian refugees in Turkey. He told me there were half a million Iranian refugees and gave some ideas about how to reach them via literature.

Finally, I met with Mikko and Kirsi Tiira who oversee our book translation and distribution in Turkey. They are members of the Finnish Lutheran Mission (FLM). Mikko pastors a small congregation in Izmir (20 members), the historic biblical city of Sardis. They are finishing work on a few books and are looking for a good Turkish Lutheran to help. Ferda, a journalist working in Istanbul, seems to be a possibility, but his English needs improvement. He is a member of the Istanbul Lutheran Church founded by Bishop Risto Soramies of the Mission Province in Finland. The Tiiras believe the time for overt mission work is rapidly coming to a close in Turkey as Islamists under President Erdogan assert more control. Thus, they are committed to getting as many books as possible out while they are still allowed to work as missionaries in Turkey.

In addition, FLM works in Bulgaria among Turks who live in the east of that country. The Ingrian Lutheran Church is also doing mission work among Russian speakers in Bulgaria (Bulgarians use the Cyrillic alphabet, too, and their spoken language is quite close to Russian). With Radoslav Radkov doing translation of Confessional Lutheran materials in Bulgarian, both Russians and Finns were encouraged to connect with him and his work for us.

Tbilisi, Georgia—My former students continue to work on translations and publishing. The Koehler *Small Catechism with Explanation* is ready for printing. We talked about getting *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* translated and published in Georgia. I gave the translator the electronic file so he could begin to familiarize himself with the project.

Koltushi, Martyschkino and St. Petersburg, Russia—What can I say? Russia always defies expectations. Beginning with an early snow, we ended up with mid-50s temperatures on the cusp of November. Despite the frozen political climate in regard to relations with the West, the Ingrian Lutheran Church is actively evangelizing and slowly beginning to grow again. I taught a course on Galatians for the two weeks I was in the town of Koltushi (ten kilometers outside St. Petersburg). We used our translation of *Luther's Commentary on Galatians* for the course, as well as the Greek text of Galatians.

I was able to get to our warehouse, the old pastor's home in Martyschkino, just about an hour's drive from St. Petersburg. My classmate and current Ingrian

pastor, Leif Camp, helps us freely with distribution, as does Pastor Alexander Hynov of Martyschkino. I brought greetings to his congregation and we toured the warehouse. It is holding up for a wooden home but needs some repair work on the roof. For now, though, the books are safe, and we are not charged for using the warehouse.

Tikkurila and Helsinki, Finland—Pentti and Marja Marttila were missionaries I knew from Mongolia. We talked about their work for FLOM (Finnish Lutheran Overseas Mission). FLOM is now working in Yakutia, the most northern Siberian province. Missionary Joel Norrvik is a friend of mine, and plans are being made to translate Luther's *Small Catechism* into the tribal Yakut language. We discussed possibilities in Mongolian, too. I met with bishop Risto Soramies and Pastor Juhana Pohjola on Saturday before an All Saints' Day service.

Meanwhile, they are slowly growing their mission province to 20-25 congregations without state assistance. But any help we can give with books is most appreciated. I attended the installation of Samuli Siikavirta, who recently completed his Ph.D. at Cambridge University, so they aren't finding dummies. There were 200 people present. I never heard so many glowing reports about the work of LHF! The pastor, Esko Murto (STM from Ft. Wayne Seminary), told me that he grew up reading LHF books. Samuli concurred. Two Russians who immigrated came up to me afterwards and in Russian told me that they had read LHF books from their youth! You are helping raise a new generation of Lutherans who know what their faith means!

Riga and Jurmala, Latvia; Taurage, Lithuania—I met our Russian translator and website director, Konstantin Komarov. To put it plainly, Konstantin is a blessing to LHF! He has been with us for years, but also amazed me with his filming and editing skills. He put together three YouTube videos where I narrated on Russia, Latvia, and Lithuania respectively. We discussed the work of his website and how many regular visitors he has (about 200). People have the opportunity to have us send them books, for which we ask a fee to pay for postage. Or, they may simply download the material.

We also met with the LHF Board in Latvia. Janis Smits, Alexander Biite, and Juris Ulgis, along with a young man whose name I did not catch (It was difficult to pronounce!). Janis is a member of the Latvian parliament; Alexander pastors Latvian and Russian language congregations, while Juris is the primary translator. They showed me the four books translated this year and the vast numbers that they have translated in the past. I saw a very impressive display of our books at Alexander's church, actually founded by the German Enlightenment figure, Johann Gottfried Herder in 1766. Juris says they bring in about 700 Euros (\$822) a month from the sale of books.

I also met with Archbishop Janis Vanags in his office. We had a nice 30-minute

chat, discussing the state of the church and the problem of young Latvians immigrating to other European countries due to the sluggish economy. Archbishop Vanags is concerned with how we can reach the younger generation. I gave him my card and asked him to let me know if there is anything we can do or publish to help them. He is very grateful for the work of LHF in the past and for the future.

We also drove four hours to Taurage, Lithuania on one of the days I was in Latvia. There Konstantin and I met with Pastor Mindaugas Diksaitis, who has completed the translation of Martin Frantzmänn's *The Word of the Lord Grows*. We talked about the possibility of doing more and asked him and Bishop Mindaugas Sabutis for their "wish list." (By the way, Bishop Sabutis drove over 200 kms from Vilnius to meet with us for the day!).

I was impressed to learn that Taurage is considered the "Lutheran center" of Lithuania. Lithuania is 77% Catholic, so Lutherans comprise only 0.6% of the population. Nonetheless, they have 20,000 members and 21 pastors for their 58 congregations. What amazed me was that they have summer camps where as many as 560 children have gathered for one camp alone! Furthermore, Lithuania provides Lutherans with the opportunity to teach Lutheranism to Lutheran children in the state schools, grades 1-12!! Lutheran schoolteachers would do the teaching, too, so we looked for what books we could offer to translate and help them convey the faith to a new generation. Needless to say, this information drove my excitement level through the roof!!!

Germany—I stayed with Pastor Roger Zieger, mission director for SELK (Independent Lutheran Church in Germany).

I did not get the chance to meet with Pastor Gottfried Martens in Berlin, whose church has a large number of Iranian refugees. I did travel to Leipzig and met with OIM missionary, Rev. Chris Ahlmann. SELK missionary to Iranians, Rev. Hugo Gevers, was also out of town. I did discuss the Iranian work, though, with my classmate, pastor Markus Fischer of Trinitätsgemeinde in Leipzig. A third of his 140 parishioners are Iranians. In fact, 40% of the baptisms in SELK this year have been of Iranians. As mission director, Roger Zieger believes that a German-Farsi reprint of Luther's *Small Catechism* is essential for the large influx of Iranians. (He told me that Gottfried Martens may very well have close to 600 in his congregation now, mostly Iranian!). There is also a need for an Arabic-English catechism as Iraqis and Syrians immigrate into the country due to persecution and Islamic radicalism. In short, much to do and print.

NOVEMBER 30

From: Leif Camp

To: Matthew Heise; Jeff Rahn; Robert Rahn

Subject: A little of my history with LHF

In 1995 I first came to Russia as a volunteer missionary with LCMS-World Mission (then called the Board for Mission Services), and I quickly became acquainted with Lutheran Heritage materials. The available books were warehoused right next door to the mission offices on Zanevskiy prospect in St. Petersburg, and we volunteers were often asked to help move them, load or unload trucks, and so forth. Among the books were a lot of bulky red English/Russian New Testaments. We also had the *Small Catechism* with Koehler's notes, (but it was titled *Can I Believe In God?*), *Here I Stand, God's No and God's Yes*, and a short book on Luther.

About half a year into my stay, I received a very valuable lesson. One day we were called on again to help unload a truck—it may have been *Good News Journals* or some LHF materials, I have forgotten that detail. Anyway, I noticed the security guard watching us, so I decided to grab a Bible and a couple of books to offer to the guard. His eyes popped open as he gladly accepted the New Testament and the books, and as he thanked me he added, "You know, I have been watching you guys load and unload books for over a year and this is the first time anyone ever offered me one." From that point on, I made a point of offering anyone who came to the mission—workmen, delivery people, plumbers—a Bible, a *Good News Journal* or two, and LHF books that were available. The books do no good sitting in a warehouse. Like seed sitting in a bin, they just sit; they need to be planted if they are to do any good, to bear any fruit.

So, the next year, 1996, when I was sent to Nizhniy Novgorod (still as a volunteer missionary) to open a mission site there and help the new, fledgling Lutheran parish get established, one of the tools I made sure I had was a large shipment of Bibles and LHF books and *Good News Journals*. I also decided that one way we would serve the parish and outreach to the community was to set up a Christian library where the LHF books would be in stock for both reading and distribution.

When the mission site opened that November, the staff included me, my Russian assistant Alexander Schmidt, a part-time translator, a part-time carpenter handyman, and a Russian volunteer who later became our librarian...then six years later, the pastor of the congregation and now the new rector of the seminary. I gave one standing rule to all the staff: every person who comes into the mission, delivery people, painters, curiosity seekers, police, and fire marshals, without exception, was to be offered a Bible. If a person had children, they were to be offered

a children's Bible, and if they had any questions, they were to be offered the appropriate LHF book or *Good News Journal*.

Initially the Russians struggled with this directive. The books were valuable and giving them away so easily seemed wasteful. Then one day the fire marshals came and said that the books which we had stored along one wall in the back hallway were blocking a fire exit. So, we had to move the books. Once the Russians realized that we had so many books, they were then more willing to hand them out. I forget the numbers, but that first year we gave out at least 2,000 Bibles and New Testaments and over 3,500 LHF books and *Good News Journals*—many to the unchurched, but also many to non-Lutheran congregations and pastors. OK, it is not politically correct to think so, but I still think part of Lutheran mission strategy should be to reach out to other denominations with the goal of making the *Augsburg Confession* the next ecumenical creed!

So why am I saying this: Well, LHF books are still a big part of the library and ministry of the parish in Nizhniy Novgorod. I visited there this last month to lead a seminar in Revelation—and, of course, I did use the *Good News Journal* on that theme. But during my stay I looked around the room where the seminar was held, the parish library, and I noticed certain books on the shelves that triggered some memories.

DECEMBER 1

(From the Christmas 2014 "Word at Work" newsletter)

On Christmas night, a stable door opened to reveal the Savior

by Jennifer Bagnall

The Holy Spirit works through your gifts to open doors all around the world to the Christ Child.

Around the world, the call is the same. From Sudan and Vietnam, from Argentina and Siberia, from India and China: "We need good Lutheran books! We want to learn more about the true God." The number of voices calling for help is ever-increasing. Like St. Paul, answering the pleas of the Macedonians, LHF stands ready to deliver God's Word wherever the Holy Spirit allows.

BUT WE CAN'T DO IT WITHOUT YOU. Just \$5. That's all it takes to translate and publish a book like Luther's *Small Catechism* or *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* into another language for your brother or sister in Christ. Imagine what God will do in the lives of His children through your gift of \$20, \$50 or even \$100!

LHF: Bringing good news of great joy for all the people!

A door closing: In Turkey, “It is urgent we print as much as possible”

by Jennifer Bagnall

Christianity has a long history in Turkey; in fact, the apostles Paul and Timothy were both born there. But as 2014 draws to a close, the situation is very different for Christians in Turkey, where 99.8% of the people identify themselves as Muslim.

Christian laypeople and their pastors are often persecuted for their faith, including job loss and imprisonment. In 2007, Turkey made international headlines when three Christian missionaries were horrifically tortured for hours before finally being allowed to die.

However, God has not allowed this spiritual darkness to completely extinguish the Light of the Gospel in Turkey! Among the 0.2% non-Muslims are the members of Istanbul Lutheran Church with its 150+ members, and they’ve also established a Lutheran preaching station in the city of Izmir (once called Smyrna).

The Finnish Lutherans who established the church “feel great urgency to get good Lutheran books into the hands of as many people as quickly as they can,” said Rev. Matthew Heise, LHF executive director. “They feel that in as little as three years, it’s likely that they’ll be kicked out of the country by Turkey’s Muslim political leaders. But they know that the books will stay and will continue to witness to the Turkish people when they can no longer be there.”

LHF has already printed seven different titles in Turkish, including Luther’s *Small Catechism*. Now, *Freedom of a Christian* is expected to be completed in early 2015.

“Freedom of a Christian is a very good book in an Islamic context,” said Kari Vitikainen, general secretary of Istanbul Lutheran Church. “Islam trusts on man’s ability to earn salvation with his own deeds, and many Turkish people carry Islam’s load even after they have become Christians. This book addresses this issue in an easy-to-understand way.”

“After His crucifixion, Christ appeared behind a locked door to His disciples, bringing them hope and comfort,” said Rev. Heise. “In the same way, we know that God’s Word, faithfully proclaimed in the books LHF publishes for them, will bring comfort and peace to Turkish Christians for generations to come.”

A closing door now wide open:

Iranian immigrants bring new life to German churches

by Jennifer Bagnall

Like many of the old cathedrals in an increasingly godless Europe, the pews of Lutheran churches in Germany—the land of Luther!—are often nearly empty on any given Sunday.

Then, to the surprise of Lutheran pastors in cities like Leipzig and Berlin, new faces began appearing: Iranian immigrants who had fled their homeland. “When the first Iranians arrived, people in our congregations were euphoric. Before then, it was unheard of that Muslims would convert,” remembered Rev. Hugo Gevers, a pastor with the Selbständige Evangelisch—Lutherische Kirche (SELK), an LCMS partner church.

Then, the trickle of new members became a flood as more than 200 Iranians have joined SELK congregations in 2014 alone. “Our congregations have realized that an immense responsibility now rests on us. For one, we have to translate our teaching, our services and our sermons,” said Rev. Gevers. Part of this pastoral care includes providing Lutheran materials in the Farsi language, which is spoken in Iran. LHF is looking into opportunities to assist with a German/Farsi side-by-side edition of Luther’s *Small Catechism*, so that German pastors might better instruct the immigrants in the Lutheran faith and prepare them for baptism.

“We also have to translate a world view and try to understand the background of Iranians,” Rev. Gevers continued. “Many of them are traumatized. Some have spent time in prisons, and some have even been tortured. We’ve realized that we need 150% effort, tears and very hard work to reach out to our brothers and sisters and to understand where they are coming from.”

This Christmas, Rev. Gevers is pleased to see how the Iranians have become part of their Lutheran church family. “Some of the former Muslims will be celebrating Christmas for the first time,” he reflected. “In our living nativity scene, we will have shepherds and even real sheep. But what is more important is that we will also have real magi from Iran!”

New opportunities open in Lithuania’s public schools

by Jennifer Bagnall

It’s almost unimaginable in the United States: Lutheran pastors allowed by law to teach the faith in public schools. Yet in Lithuania (a small Baltic nation to the west of Russia), just such an open door exists.

LHF Executive Director Rev. Matthew Heise recently spent time with pastors in the Consistory of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Lithuania (CELCL) and their bishop, Rev. Mindaugas Sabutis. Together, they outlined plans for LHF to translate books like *One Hundred Bible Stories* to help introduce Lithuanian school children to the Savior, Jesus Christ.

“The pastors indicated they could use 2,000 copies of a Bible storybook in the city of Taurage alone,” said Rev. Heise. “In addition to the work in the schools, the CELCL holds these summertime camps for youth, which are really well attended. In 2014, one camp had 560 children, and the other had 400. What a stunning opportunity to share God’s Word in the language of these youth!”

As the children and their families seek to join Lithuanian Lutheran churches, Bishop Sabutis indicated that confirmation materials, such as *Catechetical Helps* by Erwin Kurth and accompanying workbooks, are also important.

Highest on the pastors' wish list is a *Pastoral Agenda* and *Care Companion*, texts that include the rites and prayers for baptism, confirmation, marriages, funerals and more. "The last time an *Agenda* was printed in Lithuania was over a century ago, in 1907," explained Rev. Heise. "A current agenda will give pastors the resources they need to better minister to their people and will unite them in their practices."

Once completed, these translations will mark the first books LHF has printed in Lithuania in over a decade.

"This renewal of LHF publishing in Lithuania has been made possible by a supporter who recently passed away and remembered the LHF mission in his will," Rev. Heise said. "Through his generous gift, thousands of young children and their parents will be given a firm foundation in their Lutheran faith. They will have a constant reminder that they are God's beloved children and that Jesus died for them."

DECEMBER 2

From: Richard Ondicho Otiso

To: Robert Rahn

Subject: RE: SS Materials at work

Dear Rev. Dr. Rahn,

Greetings from Finland. I have been thinking since Sunday to share our developments but then I have been very busy yesterday.

Last Sunday there was one daughter who was teaching Sunday school. My wife has prepared all the materials from the parcel that you had sent to us and so as she was teaching, there was one lady from Adventist Church whose two sons I have baptized in our Church. She attended Sunday school and was in tears as the materials were very well made and more so when it came to answering questions from the teacher. Our sons were like lightening in answering biblical questions while her children did not have any knowledge at all. She then rushed to me after the Divine Service saying that from now onwards, she will never skip kids from attending Sunday School. Although she is not Lutheran, she has attended our services now and then since her husband is the chairperson of our elder's council. Who knows what the Holy Spirit is doing in her life?

As if that is not enough, yesterday morning I received a phone call from one lady who is from Kenya asking me if she can attend our Divine Services. She then went on to discuss how she moved from Kenya to Finland two years ago and wanted to attend our services but she was directed to a Pentecostal Church where

she attended for some time and later stopped going there since she did not like the kind of services there. She went on to narrate that she is a Lutheran from parish that I know and that she now wants to come home. I welcomed her to visit me in our home and talk more. God has been good to us that we have had people who visit us in funny way. The work of the Lord will continue with or without me here. Today when Juhana [Pohjola] called me on Skype I told him that I fear that if I moved to mission work the congregation might die if they ask somebody to take care of it.

I wish you well in your service for Christ. God's blessings.

Richard

DECEMBER 23

Today, God still opens doors to reveal the Savior to people who sit in darkness.

The apostle John reminds us in the book of Revelation that it is the Son of David who holds the key to open and close doors to mission opportunities. My recent visits to the former Soviet countries of the Ukraine and Russia were a reminder that God is in charge of the times.

In the 1920s, Lutheran pastor Kurt Muss admonished his congregation in Leningrad that the time for Gospel proclamation was closing and they had to be about the Father's business while it was still day. Upon his arrest in 1929, Muss chided the secret police agent who interrogated him. "You may think that you are in control, but God has allowed atheism to appear so that the church would awaken from its slumber." By 1938, though, the door was shut in the Soviet Union when all Lutheran churches were forcibly closed. Pastor Muss was martyred for his faith.

There was a long time of spiritual darkness in those lands until the end of the century when the Soviet Union collapsed and the Lord again opened the door. These were the first lands where LHF ventured forth to proclaim the Gospel that we are saved by faith alone in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Today, tensions are high between Russia and Ukraine. Yet, Russian and Ukrainian Lutherans are busy calling lost sinners to Christ.

In the Ukraine, Pastor Vyacheslav Horpynchuk shepherds a congregation of Lutherans who are well versed in the tenets of their faith. In Russia, the Ingrian Lutheran Church spans from the borderlands of Finland to the frozen taiga of Siberian Yakutia, seeking to penetrate Muslim, Buddhist and shamanist strongholds with the Gospel. In conjunction with LHF, Russian Lutherans are already distributing and planning to expand the dissemination of Christian literature to those who do not know or are coming to know our Lord.

As we reflect upon the Christmas message, that the Savior of the Nations has come and opens the door of life to all who call upon His name, please accept our

grateful thanks for your prayers and offerings to assist us in the mission work to bring Bible-based, Christ-centered and Reformation- driven books into the hands of those seeking the Truth of the Gospel.

Yours in Christ,

Rev. Matthew Heise, LHF Executive Director

JANUARY 9

From: Matt Heise

Subject: Skype Call with Radoslav Radkov

Jeff and I had a Skype call with Rado this morning. Here are some details... Rado was born in central Bulgaria, near Plovdiv. He was born in a Catholic region, so in 1997 when his priest went to Rome for a visit, Rado went with him. His interest in religion peaking, he started reading the Bible after his visit. He stumbled upon a small religious bookstore, of which there were many in the post-Soviet era (less today). There he found Luther's *Small Catechism*, published by Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS).

He began to rebel against the priest asking him to believe something just because the church said so. As he was now reading the Bible and asking questions, so he went to Sofia and became acquainted with the WELS people. He went to study in Ternopil and got to know Slavik Horpynchuk there. He currently lives in Varna, on the Black Sea coast. He works as a bus driver and also pastor of the congregation in Varna. He is also chairman of the Bulgarian Lutheran Church, founded in 1993 (no bishops in WELS-affiliated churches). There are only four congregations, two in Sofia, one in Varna, and another in the northeast town of Dunovsky). There are two preaching stations in Vidin (northeast). Currently, the seminary in Sofia has two students and classes are conducted online. Dr. John Vogt lectures from the USA in English. Of the two students in Sofia, one is Ilian, of Gypsy background, who is translating *100 Bible Stories*. Rado is still waiting for this as LHF was to publish it. The other student is named Arthur. Rado has finished the translation of the *Augsburg Confession* and is still looking for editors to check the *Apology*. He thinks they could print 250 copies of a bound *Small Catechism and Augsburg Confession* together while also printing an additional 250 copies of the *Augsburg Confession* bound with the *Apology*. He is hoping to begin translating the *Formula of Concord*.

With the fall of Communism, Bulgaria is experiencing a comeback for the Orthodox Church, and that often reflects adversely upon Protestants. So, the opportunities we have in primarily Lutheran Baltic countries (excluding Lithuania) may not exist here. Rado says government and the educational spheres are tied together, and even in his central region where there is a strong Catholic church, only the Orthodox have the opportunities to teach religion in schools, not the Catholics (and certainly not the Protestants).

Since Bulgaria was under Ottoman Muslim control for much of the late Mid-

dle Ages and Renaissance period (500 years), Bulgarian Muslims exist alongside Turkish. In fact, there are some radical Muslims who were stirred into action by a Finnish missionary in the area of Pazardzhik (juts slightly west of Plovdiv). It happened three years ago, but we were not apprised of the details. Of course, we find that interesting because the FLOM (Finnish Lutheran Overseas Mission) works in that area! Just south of Pazardzhik is Peshtera, where the Finns have a Lutheran congregation of about 40. Rado doesn't know them, so I hope to connect him to Mikko and Kirsi Tiira, who handle our translations of Turkish materials in Turkey but also know the pastor in Peshtera. FLOM also has a preaching station in Krusevo, just east of Plovdiv.

The Lutherans in Shumen (just west of Varna) appear to be just interested in money, according to Rado. That confirms my suspicions from a few years back when I was asked to assist some mission work there. The Ingrian Lutheran Church is hoping to do some mission work there, so we will see if they can get something going.

Ivan Laptev, my former student, told me he hopes to take mission trips to Bulgaria. Ivan is one of the best missionaries I know among the Russians, so I will keep in contact with him and hopefully connect him to Rado. Jeff reminded Rado that we printed *How to Respond to Muslims* with WELS back in the 1990s, so perhaps they could use some more copies?

With that, I have transferred all the scribbling from my McDonalds' napkin from which I took notes!! (And no sausage McMuffin stains on it, either!).

JANUARY 15

(From the January 2015 "Word at Work" newsletter)

"I fear for my physical safety."

LHF translator continues work in Muslim-dominated camp

by Jennifer Bagnall

Okach Omot Opiew lives with his wife and young children in the Dadaab Refugee Camp, located in Kenya near the Somalia border. Dadaab recently made U.S. headlines when members of Al Shabaab, al Qaeda's affiliate in Somalia, opened fire on non-Muslims living in the camp.

Unfortunately, such shootings aren't out of the norm in Dadaab, which, with its population of more than 425,000 residents, is the largest refugee camp in the world. Okach describes life in the camp this way: "Life here is very dangerous, especially for Christians, because Dadaab is dominated by Muslims," he says. "Christians are not allowed to live as Christians. When we go to the market or when we are in the bus, they blaspheme us by calling us 'gahal,' which means pagan.

"Our women are forced by the Muslims to cover themselves. If they go to mar-

ket and they are not wearing clothes like Somali women, they will be abused as our children are also abused on the way to school, even in class. They are forced to wear the Somali cloth in school, and some of them who refused were dismissed.

“They also force our children to contribute for their mosque construction in the school, but for us Christians, that is forbidden by the First Commandment.” Under this pressure, “some Christians become Muslim by force,” he concluded.

Yet it is in this setting that Okach perseveres in the work he feels God has called him to do: translating Luther’s *Small Catechism* into the Anuak language, spoken by his people.

Okach and his family are members of the Anuak tribe, which numbers about a half million people living primarily in Ethiopia and South Sudan. Thousands of Anuak are now displaced in refugee camps, having fled ethnic cleansing by the Ethiopian government in 2003. About 5,000 Anyuak are refugees to the United States, settled mainly in Minnesota and Maryland.

Most Anyuak are Christian, and Okach was born into a Christian family. He first learned of the Lutheran faith in 1993, while living in Ethiopia. Okach is determined to see that Luther’s *Small Catechism* is translated into the language of his people. With very little Christian literature translated into the Anuak language, “Anuak churches have no strong foundation of faith. We have a lack of educated theologians, and have only about 20 pastors,” Okach says. “Anuak churches are growing, but with a very shallow knowledge of God. It is as wide as an ocean, but one inch deep.

“The *Small Catechism*, translated into our Anuak language, will help our community of churches greatly with access to this wonderful, sound Biblical doctrine. I hope that the catechism may pave the way to open more Lutheran churches in our community.” Okach has nearly completed editing the Anuak catechism, which will then go to the press in the coming months.

Though he fears not only for his own safety, but also for the safety of his wife and children, Okach continues with his work, trusting that his Heavenly Father will guide and protect them.

“Here in Dabaab, twice they have attempted to burn the church I pray in, but God has protected His Church,” Okach says. “By God’s grace, it is my hope to carry out the great task of expanding God’s kingdom by attending seminary, perhaps in South Africa or the United States. If I can get this additional knowledge, I pray that I may one day help translate the *Book of Concord* into the Anuak language, too.”

“Let the children come to Me”: Sunday school materials for Southeast Asia

by Jennifer Bagnall

Imagine trying to teach a class with only one small textbook. There is no instructor’s manual, no teacher’s notes... and it’s a subject you don’t know a lot about. How well could you teach your students? Could you answer their questions?

This is the situation faced by Sunday school teachers throughout Southeast Asia. Many of them are new Christians who grew up in Buddhist homes, so they have no past experience with Sunday school to draw upon. Aside from *A Child’s Garden of Bible Stories*, translated into their languages by LHF, they have no materials to teach children about Jesus.

But now the situation is changing, due to the faithful support of children who adopted LHF’s “Let the Children Come to Me” project. Through their gifts, LHF has developed a 400-page Sunday school teachers’ guide that builds a year-long Sunday school program based on the Child’s Garden storybook.

“We hope to have the curriculum field tested this spring and then have it ready for wider distribution this fall,” said Rev. Ted NaThalang, LHF coordinator for Southeast Asia projects. “I expect that this program will probably also be used by non-Lutherans, because there is nothing else like it in Southeast Asia.”

Mission: Possible in Somalia

Somalia is often called “the country most hostile to the Gospel” – a seemingly impossible mission. In the militantly Muslim country of Somalia, threats to physical safety are so great that only 0.01% of the population dare to call themselves Christian.

It would seem impossible to share the Good News in such a hard place, but God provides the opportunity! As Somali people pour into refugee camps in Kenya, Lutheran missionaries and evangelists now have a new resource to share with them: *A Child’s Garden of Bible Stories*, translated into their Somali language.

“Somali children, as well as adults, need to read and study the Bible because there are so many false teachings around,” reflected Muhamed Gurhan, LHF’s Somali translator. “The Bible is the measuring stick by which they can distinguish the truth from error.

“Like any other Christian children, Somali children need to find answers for their questions about life and God,” he added. “What is the purpose of life? Where did I come from? Is there life after death? God answers these and many more of their questions through this Bible storybook.”

Mon Ami, Jésus: Sharing Jesus in Africa and Haiti

Yet another language edition of *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* will soon be available for spreading the Gospel in the mission field, thanks to Lutheran children who adopted LHF's "Mon Ami, Jésus" project. In nearly a quarter of the world's countries, French is the official language or is widely spoken by the people. The opportunities to share God's Word, introducing French-speaking families to their Savior, are many!

In some West African countries like Benin and Burkina Faso, the people continue to practice the animist traditions of their ancestors, worshipping the spirits of nature. In Haiti, voodoo remains a strong influence, while the great cathedrals in France stand nearly empty.

"Typically, we think of a Bible storybook as being only for children," said Rev. Matthew Heise, LHF executive director. "But in many parts of the world, adults are under-educated, and so easy-to-read books like *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* are perfect for sharing the Light of Christ with young and old alike."

A look at what goes into the printing process from behind the scenes indicates the various nuances that are involved. Much of our printing is done in Bangkok, Thailand and generally quotes are received from our printer there. On this occasion there were some questions about the printing of the catechism in the Nuer and Anuak language of South Sudan. It also requires coordinating shipments so that we can economize as much as possible.

James,

Thanks for the printing update. I need to receive the PDFs of the copyright/sponsor pages for the four books. Please send these as soon as possible.

Ted is heading to Thailand tomorrow. I spoke with him this week and he is getting the quotes from the printer in Bangkok, Thailand. This is the company that printed the Somali books. Ted may be able to share some additional information concerning Amity Press. If we do print in Thailand can you also send the Nuer catechism text to Thailand? How about the Anuak catechism? Just trying to economize on the shipping as much as we can.

You could also get quotes for printing the Dinka, Nuer, and Anuak in Juba.

Concerning Latvia, we also have printers that we work with in Latvia and could have our contact be in touch with them if necessary but let's first see what Ted comes up with from Bangkok.

Blessings, Jeff

FEBRUARY 9

From an eblast from the LCMS: Witness, Mercy, Life Together:

Catechisms, Creeds and Confessions in the EECMY

About one year ago, during President Harrison's visit to Ethiopia, the idea to produce significant quantities of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus' (EECMY's) confessional documents was born. Tsegahun Assefa, the Director of Children and Youth Ministry Department of the EECMY, explained how Lutheran identity, especially among the youth was a challenge. This led to a conversation about the confessional documents to which the EECMY subscribes.

According to the EECMY's Church Constitution in Article II, the confessional basis is as follows:

- The Church (EECMY) believes and professes that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and the New Testaments are the Holy Word of God and the only source and infallible norm of all Church doctrines and practice.
- The Church adheres to the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed, which were formulated by the early Fathers' and accepted by ancient church.
- The Church sees in the *Unaltered Augsburg Confession*, which was worded by the Church Reformers, as well as in Luther's catechisms, as a pure exposition of the Word of God.

Although it may seem strange to many people in the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS) to subscribe to less than the entire *Book of Concord*, many churches around the world subscribe to the ecumenical creeds, the Augsburg Confession, and Luther's catechisms. As every other document in the *Book of Concord* is a further explanation of the *Augsburg Confession* and the catechisms, there is no problem with not subscribing to the entire *Book of Concord*, provided that the other parts of the *Book of Concord* are not rejected. On the mission field, a challenge is that many churches that were started by European missionaries were never given the entire *Book of Concord*. It was only within the past decade that the EECMY had an Amharic translation of the entire *Book of Concord*, and that effort only provided 900 copies for the entire church. Another challenge for the church has been the lack of copies of these confessional documents. So, the project was born to provide 30,000 copies of the EECMY's confessional documents as an effort to increase awareness and knowledge of these books.

President Wakseyoum and Dr. Albert Collver exchange *Catechisms, Creeds and Confessions*. The book will be formally presented to the pastors of the EECMY by Lutheran Heritage Foundation in April 2015. In the meantime, the books are being or will soon be distributed to the synods of the EECMY so that people can begin to use them. When Dr. Wakseyoum saw the book he said, "Very good. Thank you.

This will be a help to our church in strengthening her Lutheran identity.”

Last year after the LCMS delegation visit to Ethiopia in January/February 2014, discussions began with Dr. Matthew Heise, executive director of Lutheran Heritage Foundation (LHF). LHF was very eager to publish *Catechisms, Creeds and Confessions*. In the preliminary conversation, Rev. Heise explained LHF’s mission is to publish confessional works and he was happy to work with the LCMS to do so. In an email, Heise wrote, “LHF is committed to printing those materials that are most needed for Ethiopia, as well as the *Book of Concord* by the end of this year.” *Catechisms, Creeds and Confessions* was published on January 2015. (It is quite possible that I saw a copy of it before Rev. Heise.) The partnerships between the LCMS and her RSOs, like Lutheran Heritage Foundation, and other entities is a great asset and a significant factor in having an impact on worldwide Lutheranism. We look forward to this continued partnership.

FEBRUARY 9

Indonesia:

Feb. 2-4, in the morning, I talked to a person who has applied for the layout/graphic design position that we needed so David can spend some more time with translation. She is good in English and seems to be knowledgeable in the programs that we are using. It would be good if she can do the work. Will probably give her three months trial period to see if she can do it. If she can help, there is a chance that we will get more Thai work translated. It is harder to find good translator than graphic designer and cheaper too.

The meeting with Jack Preus and Jeff along with TCLC (Thailand Concordia Lutheran Church) leaders and leaders from Vietnam, Cambodia and Myanmar turned out quite well. Everyone gave their ideas how LISA (Luther Institute of Southeast Asia) could help in the formation and training Lutherans in Southeast Asian countries.

Went to the Bangkok airport about 5 a.m. Flew from Bangkok to Jakarta on Feb. 5 and went directly on a van to Bundung to meet with the artist. Got there about 5 p.m.

Feb. 6 and 7 was spent working with the artist to see if they can really draw the pictures that I am looking for [in the new children’s Bible book]. I gave them descriptions of the picture of the Good Shepherd what we want in it, and they drew me a sketch and the finished picture in later email.

While in Bundung, I met with Rev. Bonar discussing about many things—LHF needs the receipt for the 5,000 copies of Nias Luther’s *Small Catechism* that was printed and confirmation of the money received from LHF which he said will do it right away. He thought that the report was sufficient. I am asking him to try to send us a good report each month along with receipts. He said that

some emails he did not receive because of internet problems. I am asking him to get better internet service so we can communicate regularly. We discussed about Rev. Mangisi's book, *Christian Freedom, Luther's Work, Vol. 31*, and its launching, and thanksgiving service for Rev. Mangisi and his faithfulness and commitment in sharing the Lutheran teaching with his people. It seems July 5 is a good date which is also his birthday. I hope maybe Matt can come. The book should be printed by April. He needs someone to help edit *Luther on Worship*, which he translated but feels that it is still hard to understand. He hopes to print it this year also. The *Book of Concord* is going through editing, hope to print this year also.

Nias' *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* text is done, along with the text of Nias' Luther's *Small Catechism* workbooks. Also, the text of the Batak *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* is done also. Not sure what is the best way to do their layouts.

Feb. 8, I traveled back to Jakarta and got there about 5 p.m. Had dinner with Imelda and her family to thank her for the work she been doing for us without pay.

It was raining all night. By morning the road and the areas around the hotel was flooded. I was going to meet with the printer to get update on the books but could not get out of the hotel this morning because the water was high, about two to three feet. Imelda is coming to get me with a horse carriage, no kidding. Water is too high in some areas for cars and small vans. My biggest concern is that according to the weather forecast, there are more big thunderstorms coming in tonight and the whole week. I told Imelda that it needs to get out of this area so I will be able to get back to Bangkok tomorrow. The carriage is here, so that's all for now. See how wet I would get out of this place.

Please pray for me too. TNT

Subject: Support of Okach Omot Opiew

Dear Rev. Heise,

In absolute awe and praise to God, I read the account of Okach Omot Opiew in the LHF newsletter for January/February 2015. We speak today of how Christians in the USA are slowly losing our religious freedoms; but we have absolutely no way of understanding what a man translating Luther's *Small Catechism* in the midst of abject hatred of the Gospel and the Christian Church faces each and every day of his life. As I read his story to my wife, we were both overcome with admiration for this man, his family, and the strength of their faith. We resolved that we would like to help him and family, in his current work, and in his desire to attend the seminary at some future date, God willing. Is it possible that we can do that? If possible, how can we do that?

This additional question may be answered on the LHF website, but I'd like to ask this here: At one of the congregations that I serve here in Western Nebraska,

there is a young man (exchange student) from Thailand. He attends church with his host family on a pretty regular basis. Are there any resources in the language of the Thai available from LHF? I would like to purchase them, if available, that I might share them with this young man so he can better understand the Christian (and Lutheran) faith. I realize that as with many places there may be many differences among the Thai in terms of language.

May God richly bless the work of Lutheran Heritage Foundation. My wife and I will continue our support of LHF as the Lord so wonderfully provides us the resources to do so.

In Christ Jesus,

Rev. Ted A. Bourret

MARCH 15

The suffering of a Christian—by Rev. Matt Heise

In the season of Lent, we in the West often “give up” something for the 40-day period. It is not a bad spiritual exercise to undergo a little suffering in order to discipline our bodies. Paul did likewise, as we read in 1 Corinthians 9:26-27: “So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.” But for many Christians in the world, suffering is not the exception but the rule in their daily Christian lives.

In the news recently, we read of the 21 Egyptian martyrs who died at the hands of ISIS with the name of Jesus on their lips. It is a sobering thought as we work with our Christian friends who carry on with the translations of African tribal languages, or Persian or Arabic, under very trying circumstances.

LHF works with many dedicated translators who put their lives on the line in order to proclaim the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Islamists are threatening our own brother, Okach Opiew, who lives in a Muslim-dominated refugee camp in Kenya, for being a follower of Jesus Christ. This reality does make our spiritual exercises look rather weak in comparison. But perhaps that is helpful in keeping us from thinking that our own spiritual actions contribute anything to our salvation.

What is most important during Lent is to meditate upon the suffering and death of Jesus. Our sacrifices cannot compare to His, the One who took upon Himself the sins of the entire world for our salvation. This message is one that brings comfort to our Christian brothers and sisters, too. Where can they hear it? Through the books and materials LHF translates and prints into their own languages.

In regions of the world where Christians feel threatened and alone, God speaks through His Word to tell them that they are His beloved children. When our

brothers and sisters in Christ read a book like Luther's *Small Catechism*, provided through your generous gifts, they know that they are in your prayers and that they are not alone. God's Word, faithfully proclaimed in the books LHF publishes for them, will bring comfort and peace for generations to come.

This Lenten season, please remember Okach and other Christians who serve LHF and our Lord so that others may know the Name to which every knee shall bow, both in heaven and on earth and under the earth.

MARCH 19

The LHF staff met to review the statistics are being used in publications to make sure they are accurately reported. In reviewing the various statistics these were compiled to reflect accuracy: 100—languages with which LHF is currently working; 83—total number of countries being served by translation and distribution; 744—number of titles published thus far. These statistics are reviewed and updated periodically so that everyone is on the same page.

MARCH 21

A note on how LHF made *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* more user-friendly by eliminating some stories and adding others, by adding maps and helps and other items as indicated below. Summary of LHF Changes to Concordia Publishing House's *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories*:

Bible Story changes and/or omissions from the CPH original edition as provided by Rev. Ted NaThalang, SE Asia Translation Coordinator:

- 1) "The Offering of Isaac" (CPH p. 28) – omitted because certain cultures have a history of child sacrifices. More teaching is needed before including this lesson in some regions' Bible storybooks.
- 2) "David's and Absalom" (CPH p. 59) – omitted
- 3) "The Young Man of Nain" (CPH p. 102) – omitted
- 4) "The Sick Man at the Pool" (CPH p. 106) – omitted
- 5) The story of the First Sin and Promised Savior have been combined (CPH p. 16-19)
- 6) Title of "The Ladder to Heaven" changed to "Jacob and His Dream" (CPH p. 30)
- 7) Image of Golden Calf replaced with image of Moses and the Commandments (CPH p. 48)
- 8) Title of "The Golden Calf" changed to "God Gives His People the Ten Commandments" (CPH p. 48)
- 9) Title of "The Lost Son" was changed to "The Merciful Father" (CPH p. 116)
- 10) The story "Judas Turns against Jesus" was replaced with "Jesus and His Dis-

ciples Celebrate the Passover” (CPH p. 128) so the Sacrament of Holy Communion could be included.

Bible stories LHF is adding to the CPH original edition with illustrations:

- 1) God Gives His People the Ten Commandments
- 2) The Baptism of Jesus
- 3) Jesus Teaches His Disciples
- 4) The Holy Spirit Comes
- 5) Saul is Changed
- 6) Paul Teaches About Jesus

Other material added to the CPH original edition:

- 1) Numbered Table of Contents
- 2) Scripture reference with each title of story
- 3) Questions added to the end of each story
- 4) Maps added at end of book
 - a. The World of the Old Testament
 - b. The Land of Israel in the Old Testament
 - c. Paul’s Travels

APRIL 5

[Trip plan for Rev. Robert Rahn]

Time for an update on “what’s happening” at the LHF front. Earlier, I alluded to the trip I’ll be making to Ethiopia right after Easter when I’ll arrive in Addis Ababa on their Easter Sunday, April 12. That Ethiopia trip will pack a lot of events into it:

- Bringing the Bishop and Dean of the Seminary from Sudan to Addis to meet with Dr. Al Collver, special assistant to the president of the LCMS, whose responsibilities include dealing with matters of church fellowship. For ten years we have tried to get fellowship established between the LCMS and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of South Sudan/Sudan together. For many, South Sudan seems like a difficult place to visit, so we are bringing church leaders from Sudan to Ethiopia, where LCMS church leaders are meeting.

- Attending the Mekane Yesus church convention. This is a church body with 6 million members and there will be 5,000 at the convention. Rev. Matt Heise, LHF executive director, and I will address the convention and release/distribute copies of two books: *Book of Concord* [and] *Catechisms, Creeds and Confessions* (7,500 of the former in Amharic and 30,000 of the latter in Amharic/English side by side). This is historic for the church that has never adopted the entire *Book of Concord*.

- Meeting with Mohamad Gurhan, the student we are sponsoring at the Westfield House, Cambridge, England (connected with Fort Wayne seminary) and who is going to plant a Somali congregation in Ethiopia. Somalia borders Ethiopia and there are many Somalians who escape to Ethiopia. Gurhan has land for a church to be built and even while he attends classes in England, he will go back and forth to care for the congregation.

- Traveling to Gambella, Ethiopia where there is a Sudanese refugee camp with some 700,000 refugees. Three of our vicars from CLIHM ended up here after they were forced to leave their congregations, due to tribal conflict in the South Sudan regions where they were serving congregations. They were part of the class of 14 on vicarage. We now have to determine how we will provide classes for them so that they can graduate and be ordained with their class. We will be sending instructors to Gambella as part of their service to the Sudan seminary. We will also obtain pastors from Mekane Yesus to do some teaching. We will be in Gambella to meet with the students and to find a suitable place for classes. The class also includes one deaconess and a local Sudanese pastor.

- Meeting with three other Lutheran bodies to provide them with the books being released. Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ethiopia, Lutheran Church of Ethiopia, Ethiopian Lutheran Church

- Meeting with the LHF Ethiopian translation team to determine our translation/publishing schedule for 2015-2016. Our translation team represents all four Lutheran bodies in the country, one of them being Wisconsin Synod (WELS).

- Visiting a souvenir shop to bring back some Ethiopian religious art pieces.

The Word at Work

The Mekane Yesus was more closely associated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA) until they began to accept homosexuality in their clergy. Mekane Yesus then came to us asking for a closer tie with a more conservative body. Early on, LHF provided a sampling as to where our church stood in matters of doctrine. It was seen in the books we published, including an earlier edition of the *Book of Concord*, but with limited copies.

An Item of Interest

In the last issue of the LHF newsletter, we featured the work of Okach Omot Opiew while living in a Kenya refugee camp dominated by Muslims. He helped with the translation of the catechism in the Anyuak language of Sudan. He adopted the Lutheran faith while living in Ethiopia and hopes one day to become a pastor. In the paragraph below you get a little glimpse into what Lutherans are enduring while remaining faithful. More and more, we in America are learning how easy it is to be Christian as compared to many under the domination of Islam and

the Muslim faith. From the message you get a little insight into the “peace loving” approach by Muslims. We are thinking of bringing Okach to Nairobi for safety and for preliminary study before he enters a seminary program.

The Anyuak catechism is at the printer and should be ready in about a month’s time.

The following is a conversation we had with Okachi. Please pray for him and his family.

Okach: Hello, Rev. Heise, how are you? Last month there were two Somali who came to me to convert me to Islamic. They asked me a lot of questions about my Christianity and they asked me also where there are pastors in our community or not. They said that they will come again to me. So now my life in risk. I have experienced the work [of] these people. If they want to convert someone they will not stop until they convert her/him. If they cannot succeed that thing, they will plan the way to attack that person. Now I am fearing for both my life and the life of my family. So I am requesting you or LHF to find a safe place for me and my family. Secondly, I am requesting you for Seminary that I may study theology.

Matt: What is happening, Okach? We will talk when I get to Nairobi. James May should be able to get you there. We will discuss moving you, if we can find the support, to Nairobi. Let us pray about that. For now, may His holy angels watch over you and your family! That is my prayer to our Heavenly Father.

Okach: The reason they come to me because they heard that I am a person who teaches as a volunteer in primary school with CRE (Christian Religious Education) and I am among those who preach in the church.

Matt: Please talk to James May, too. He should have come back to Nairobi yesterday. Meanwhile, we will pray...

Well, that certainly doesn’t cover the waterfront of LHF activity, but it gives some insight into the church in action. Let it suffice for our Easter greetings to you as loyal followers, prayer warriors, and partners in this mission movement.

MARCH 30

From: Ted Na Thalang

To: Kou Seying

Cc: Matthew Heise

Subject: Re: Translator

Dear Kou,

It is a good news that you found a Hmong translation expert. As you know it is so hard to find a good one, especially someone who understands what we like to

see how each book should be translated. I think at this point, it would be good to get the Luther's *Small Catechism with Explanation* out, both in Blue and White.

Then I would suggest to get the *Augsburg Confession* out so the students can use it right away instead having to wait for the whole *Book of Concord* done. In Asia, as I had mentioned to you earlier, we are using the *Book of Concord*, Concordia, 2nd Ed. by CPH. The reason is that it is easier to read and understand, it has many notes, timelines, etc. that are in one book right there for them to use. I have nothing against Kolb's *Book of Concord*. His is more for scholars than for people in Asia who needs something practical. This is not my decision only but the leaders and pastors in Asia choose Concordia by CPH for the reasons I mentioned. I hope you understand.

For example of the things that I have been trying to say is the translation of Vietnamese *Book of Concord* by a Vietnamese pastor in LCMS on his own. He does not want to work with LHF or anybody else, afraid that we are not Lutheran enough. He claims that he and his Vietnamese church in Vietnam that he started is the pure and true Lutheran church. This person is quite knowledgeable of Lutheran teaching and Vietnamese language. But when his *Book of Concord* is done, the Vietnamese pastors and even educated Vietnamese in Vietnam will not able to read and understand it. Since I don't know these languages, I let the readers be the judge to see if a book is well written or not.

LHF version of Vietnamese *Book of Concord*, CPH is going through editing now by Vietnamese pastors in Vietnam so that the language is well done. As these Vietnamese pastors editing our *Book of Concord*, they said that wow, it is much easier to read and understand than the other *Book of Concord*. Now they understand what the *Book of Concord* is teaching. They have no clue what the other *Book of Concord* is talking about. Even the title of *Book of Concord* is so difficult that it is hard for them to understand.

Anyway, I just want to share some of my thoughts with you about the way we do translation. If for some reason you feel uncomfortable to share some of our thoughts with this translator, maybe I can help. I know we had talked about [these] issues before. Since you are working with a new translator, I thought it might be good for him to know also. Or he may already know all these things.

APRIL 9

A Facebook message that came from Rev. James May and a response from me:

James wrote: "My predecessor, Rev. Dr. Anssi Simojoki, former director of LHF-Africa, was defrocked by the capital chapter of the Lutheran Church of Finland yesterday. He was ordained in 1972 when things were very different than they are today. Dr. Simojoki was very outspoken and published many critical op-eds in the Finnish papers against the direction higher criticism and liberalism

took the church. What was his offense and reason for defrocking? Not obeying church authorities and not submitting himself to the bishop. It didn't matter that the theology and practice of the bishop was in error. The new standard is obedience to the bishop. This phenomenon is not limited to Finland but the demand for obedience over against justice and scripture is rampant in Europe, America, Australia, and Africa. It is time the people speak without fear. The head of the church is no man or pope. The head of the church is Jesus Christ and we hear his voice very clearly in His Word, the Scriptures!!!!"

From: Robert Rahn

To: James Rev May

Cc: Simojoki, Dr. Anssi (Finland)

Congratulations to Anssi and to the faithful for their great achievement. They have followed the Scriptures, they have honored the risen Christ and now they have been honored by being removed from a dying, antiquated, Scripture-debasing church led by clerics who are impressed by their power, but have abandoned Truth. They will receive their due reward but from a Superior Power. Today we stand with Anssi and the entire Mission Province Church in their brave and courageous determination to hold to the Truth. May their numbers increase. God bless them all.

APRIL 13-14

From: Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sudan/ South Sudan (ELCSS/S)

Subject: Report on the Activities of CLIHM, Yambio, South Sudan

To: The executive director of LHF, Rev. Matthew Heisse, Dr. Robert Rahn, the founder and first Executive director of LHF, and Dr. Albert Collver, the executive director for church relations of LCMS

Introduction

In the name of the Triune God.

Allow me to take this opportunity on behalf of the Bishop of the ELCSS/S, Bishop Wilson Noah Rule, and on behalf of the CLIHM staffs, to greet and welcome all of you after the long trip that you have made from USA up to Africa. Indeed it is our pleasure to come from South Sudan up to this place in order to meet with you because we believed that this is an important meeting that we have been praying and waiting for, for a long time and today God has made it possible we meet and discuss issues pertaining to our church. It is also our conviction that this meeting is going to strengthen our relationship and produce a great impact and fruits that will help the ELCSS/S to grow more strongly.

We really acknowledge the continuous effort of the LHF for the translation work they do all over the world and to our young church in Sudan/South Sudan

and the support we get for training our seminarians at the seminary. We want to thank you very much for coming and for facilitating our coming to participate and share our opinion with you about the work we do in South Sudan. May God continue to bless you abundantly with the efforts you do for His people.

Brief Historical Background of how the seminary started

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sudan/South Sudan is a national church established in November 23, 1993, to first meet the spiritual need of the Sudanese people through the right teachings of the Holy Scripture as written in the *Book of Concord* and other Lutheran confessional books, and secondly to meet the social demands of the people by creating services such as education and health program for the needy. The church wishes to witness the Gospel of Christ alongside sister Christian churches as the Sudan/South Sudan have a pagan Muslim population which the Gospel has not reached.

In order to strengthen the doctrinal position and religious practices as [a] confessional Lutheran church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sudan by then decided to open a theological college in 2000 to prepare young people who would become priests, deacons, and deaconesses for the ministry. The college was established in Khartoum and later on to Western Equatoria where the church's head office is allocated, and it was given the name of Concordia Lutheran Institute for Holy Ministry (CLIHM). It started with a good number of pastoral students, deacons, and deaconess who graduated as the first bench in 2005. There was another second intake in 2009 which graduated in 2011 and we have the third bunch that started their studies in 2012 and will be ready for graduation at the end of this year, God's willing. The church intended to prepare these categories of church manpower in order to face the challenges of the third millennium and advanced world of science and other technologies.

Challenges:

- Insufficient funds.

- Lack of enough books for the library.

- Lack of national teaching staff who are well trained

- Inadequate seminary concrete buildings.

- Lack of exchange visit program for the teaching staffs to other Lutheran theological seminary.

- Lack of transport for the seminary

- Lack of family support for the seminarians.

- Lack of tractor to facilitate agriculture program for the seminary. (Food items are becoming very expensive in the market and we can produce enough food for the seminary if we have the tractor).

Signed, Rev. Nicholas Kumbo Louis, dean of students, CLIHM

APRIL 16

Rev. Heise addressed the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EEC-MY) Convention in Ethiopia.

Lutheranism in Ethiopia

In a sense, I am humbled by the task before me. It is not I who should speak about the Christian faith to you, but instead you should speak to me. Christianity has had a much longer life in your ancient land than in my new land of America. Although many Americans like to think that we are a Christian nation, or were, I have spent much of the last five years in Georgia where Christianity became the official faith around 330 AD, much like with you. In fact, I understand that your land may have been called “Colchis” [Coal-chis] at one time, which is what many people still call western Georgia today.

But in reality, your traditions, as we know, go back even further, to the days of the New Testament. In fact, we often use the story of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch to describe what the Lutheran Heritage Foundation does. The story is found in Acts 8. We are called to translate, publish, distribute, and introduce Christian books of a Lutheran conviction. As you all know, the Ethiopian eunuch was searching the Scriptures, trying to understand whom Isaiah was referring to. The Psalmist in Psalms 68 speaks about Ethiopians stretching their arms out to God, so we know you have long been seekers of the living God. So, when Philip asked the eunuch, “Do you understand what you are reading?” his answer was important.

“How can I understand if someone does not guide me?” This is what we try to do at LHF, now in about 100 languages and 83 countries around the world. By translating Martin Luther’s *Small Catechism*, we attempt to help explain just what the eunuch was reading and point people to the Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ.

In fact, this is what Martin Luther attempted to do after his visitation of the churches in the Saxon region of what we now call Germany. Luther was stunned by the ignorance he saw, not only from the parishioners, but also from their pastors. They lived like pigs, Luther said. He was never shy to speak bluntly, as you probably know! And so, he realized that they needed a primer of the Christian faith. Thus, the *Small Catechism* was born out of necessity. Luther’s hope was that the pastors and parents could teach their children the basics of the faith, knowing full well the verse from Proverbs 22:6—“Train up a child in the way he should go; and even when he is old, he will not depart from it.”

APRIL 28

To Rev. Matthew Heise, Rev. Dr. Robert Rahn

“Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant.” Matt. 20:26

I am happy to acknowledge and to inform you that all our meeting organized to open our partnership with the LCMS in Addis Ababa ended with success and brotherly affections. I am grateful to the leadership of LCMS and that of LHF for their concern in handling the matters regarding the church fellowship with us. Specific contributions you rendered to us in order to facilitate our trips from Yambio, Juba, Addis and back to Juba and Yambio are the great indications that you strongly care for us in the ELCSS/S. Our sincere thanks and gratitude are in place for the LHF under the wise leadership of Rev. Mathew Heise and in the person of our elder Rev. Dr. Robert Rahn, who made it possible for us to meet Rev. Dr. Collver in order to assure us of their commitments in LCMS to have us as fellowship partners so that our church can grow in faith just like the Lutheran churches in America.

Allow us together with Rev. Nicholas Kumbo to extend further appreciation to you in particular over all the expenses you incurred so as to make our meetings with you come to success and with fruitful results. We commend the tireless efforts and fraternal love shown to us by Rev. Dr. Collver; in educating us to understand how can we reach in full partnership with LCMS, though one priest representing LCMS in Kenya voiced a contrary view during the meeting, we assure you that we did not take it for bad; since in all societies such opposing views do occur in order to let people take the right direction. We are extremely happy of what we encountered in Addis and above all the positive contributions we got from Rev. Dr. Collver have made us strong both in faith and in love.

May God bless you all to serve his faithful people all over the world!

Rt. Rev. Wilson Noah Rule – Bishop, ELCSS/S

MAY 1

From: Rev. Alexei Streltsov

Subject: Message to Supporters of the Siberia Evangelical Lutheran Church

Peace to you dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

On April 22, Pastor Andrei Lipnitsky has visited the village Oravka in Chany District of Novosibirsk region. This village was founded by colonists from Estonia in 1894. It had even a church building, but at Soviet time it was confiscated and reconstructed to use as a school. Thus, religious life was extinguished. About 40 people came to meet the Lutheran pastor. They asked a lot of questions. At the end of the talk Pastor Lipnitsky gave *Small Catechisms* to everybody.

The very first time, Pastor Vsevolod Lytkin and Deacon Daniel Burlakov visited such a village nearly 20 years ago. You may remember this story from our very old newsletters.

Catholic priests phoned us and invited to come to this village. It was a long travel. First, from Novosibirsk to Irkutsk, then for eight hours by different vehi-

cles through the taiga (snow forest). Finally, we arrived to our destination, and spent a week there, communicating with the habitants.

The first settlers came to that place in the late 19th century, then many families moved from Poland (that time it was part of the Russian Empire) into deep Siberia. Their life was very hard; they rooted out trees and arranged fields. Then they lived there and [grew]. Pastor from Irkutsk visited the village once a year. He baptized, confirmed, gave the Holy Communion, conducted weddings. Last time a pastor was there was in 1935.

And then Rev. Vsevolod Lytkin became the first pastor who visited this village for over 60 years. Many old people talked him about the faith of their ancestors, and what terrible persecutions they gone through because of their faith. Half of the villagers died in the concentration camps during 30s and 40s (at the time of Joseph Stalin's regime). People were arrested if a Bible or prayer book was found in their homes. But older people still remember what parents taught them. For example, a woman who was asked by Pastor Lytkin if she knew what the Holy Communion is, said that she never in her life took the Communion, but she remembers what her mother taught. And then she quoted by heart about Holy Communion from the Luther's *Small Catechism*. Then she said: "Now my eyes have seen a Lutheran pastor; now I can die." And it sounded as in Luke 2:29-30, it was very touching.

That was so long ago, Bishop Vsevolod Lytkin said. But since then we have found many other villages where people have kept the faith, or even the memory of what their ancestors were Lutherans. The Volga Germans, Poles, Finns, Latvians, Estonians... We owe to these people because they have brought Lutheranism to Siberia. For many years we are searching for such villages and we try to do something to help their habitants. To comfort the elderly. And talk about Lord Jesus Christ and His Church to the younger.

Sadly, we do not have many resources to do this work. After all, we are a very small church, and we are poor. And distances in Siberia are huge. But we try because it is our responsibility before God.

Please pray for safe travels of the pastors in Siberia, and that they find more villages, whose inhabitants have been and will be Lutherans.

From: Wilson Noah Rule

Subject: Lutheran Confessional Church

Dear Rev. Russell Sommerfeld,

Jesus Christ is the Way, the Truth and the Life and there is no salvation through anyone else. He is the fullness of all divine revelation, which lives fully only in His Church. Our faithful must believe as true all our Evangelical Lutheran Church doctrine. This faith is necessary for salvation, especially for those who are aware of it.

I am writing to alert you that some of our South Sudanese priests who are working with you as missionaries in the LCMS of Nebraska District had been confusing our Evangelical Lutheran faithful in Malakal, and now they are continuing with this similar practice in the refugee camps in Gambella in the Federal Republic of Ethiopia. Those pastors with you do send money for their relatives and friends to break away with intention to form other churches within the one family of the Lutheran believers among the refugees.

We are Evangelical Lutherans of the confessional order; we practice one faith and one doctrine, now which one are they trying to form or introduce? We in Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sudan/South Sudan are grateful to you the President of LCMS in Nebraska, together with your faithful who have done a lot and still are doing to let our church grow in faith similarly like your church in America. Watch carefully on the pastors who are doing such misleading practices in order to divide or tear apart our faithful who are suffering in faith; and carrying their crosses in following Jesus Christ.

Dear Rev. Russell, the clear example of this is found happening among our church congregations in the refugee camps in Gambella, Ethiopia; whereby two churches have emanated already among the Nuer congregation leaving the people in battle with each group as reported by Rev. Nicholas Kumbo who has just come back from Gambella on the mission of empowering our vicars who fled to Ethiopia from the Greater Upper Nile Region. We do not identify exactly who was architect of this division or split? But some believers do tell us that the cause of the division seems to be coming from outside. And especially the words of encouragement they receive from their brethren in Diaspora in places such as America, Canada or Australia and so on.

Rev. Sommerfeld, concluding, I am not writing so that you are compelled to act in your capacity as the president, but a sharing of information and above all; the sharing of views so that we get to know what is happening in our churches. We have spent quite a long period of time without exchanging correspondences; and for this, I seize this opportunity also to wish you well in your administration. I was in Ethiopia last month to meet Rev. Dr. Albert Collver of LCMS; on the issue of seeking partnership with you and it was very good. I gratefully thank LCMS and LHF of their joint support in facilitating the meeting to be very successful.

Yours sincerely,

Rt. Rev. Wilson Noah Rule

Bishop

JUNE 15

(From the May 2015 “Word at Work” newsletter:)

**“Reclaiming our Lutheran identity”
Ethiopian pastors clamor for *Book of Concord***

by Jennifer Bagnall

They say a picture is worth a thousand words. This adage proved true when we received pictures of a book distribution. The scene was at Mekane Yesus Seminary in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, where LHF Executive Director Rev. Matthew Heise and LHF Founder Rev. Robert Rahn began the process of distributing LHF’s Amharic-language *Book of Concord* to every pastor in the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY).

Nearly 3,500 pastors lined up under the hot sun, crowding and pushing forward, just to pick up the free book. “Chaos ensued at least five times,” recalled Rev. Heise. “I looked over at Rev. Rahn, who was helping me distribute, and he was being crushed up against the piles of books, handing them out as fast as he could and laughing the whole time!

“We realized that the Ethiopian pastors simply haven’t had these books in decades, and they’re really eager to dig into them,” Heise concluded. “It was truly inspiring to see their zeal.” For most EECMY pastors, this was the first time they’d seen this foundational book of the Lutheran faith in a language they could easily understand.

“The EECMY has embarked on a five-year strategic plan to enhance the witness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in our nation and beyond,” said Rev. Dr. Wakseyoum Idosa, EECMY president. “Our goal...is to help ministers deepen their theological understanding of their identity and ministry as Lutherans.”

The EECMY was founded in 1959 and today is called the fastest-growing Lutheran church body on earth. However, Pentecostalism—the belief that the Holy Spirit comes directly to people, apart from the Means of Grace (i.e., speaking in tongues)—as well as liberal beliefs and practices of other Lutheran church bodies have influenced the EECMY. But a tipping point came in 2013, when the EECMY broke fellowship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America over the issue of gay marriage. Since then, church leaders have been making an effort to rediscover their Lutheran heritage and to determine what it means to be Lutheran in doctrine and practice.

It’s a big challenge, as “the EECMY needs to train more pastors quickly,” said Rev. Dr. Albert Collver, director of church relations for the LCMS and assistant to President Matthew Harrison. With only one pastor for every 2,000 members, the EECMY has asked the LCMS for assistance in training up to 10,000 pastors in the next five years, a goal that Rev. Collver said “puts a lot of pressure on their church body, because the danger is that pastors often are not trained as well as

everyone would like.”

Having the *Book of Concord* for all pastors, written in their own language, is an important first step.

“The *Book of Concord* is vital for the health of the Church,” explained Rev. Mark Rabe, who has been called by the LCMS to teach at the Mekane Yesus seminary. “To be without the *Book of Concord* would be like having the incorrect prescription in your glasses. Yes, you might be able to see the page, but you won’t have the clarity you need to understand Scripture, its central teachings and the One who is in the center: Jesus and the forgiveness won for sinners.”

“The EECYM appreciates LHF for availing the books to our pastors,” Rev. Idosa said. “The church also thanks all the men and women of God who financially supported LHF to do this marvelous job.”

“I never heard of Jesus until I came to the United States” International campus ministries plant the seeds of the Gospel

by Jennifer Bagnall

Christian mission work is challenging, to say the least, in countries like Saudi Arabia and China. But when people from those countries come to study at American colleges and universities, doors open!

More than 80 LCMS churches or organizations have established international campus ministries throughout the United States. Thanks to a mission grant from the LWML Iowa East District, LHF is providing the ministries with Lutheran books about God in the students’ own languages.

“Sixty to 70 percent of our international students come from countries where there’s very little opportunity to meet a Christian, get a Bible or visit a church,” said Hannah Moore, coordinator of international ministry at Memorial Lutheran Church and Student Center near the Iowa State University campus.

“We have to begin at a very basic level. For example, a Chinese man... wanted to know what baptism is, and a book like Luther’s *Small Catechism* in his language is helpful for answering some of those very basic questions about what the Bible teaches,” she explained.

LHF is also providing Lutheran texts for International Student Ministry’s “In-Depth Bible Seminar” in May.

Kate Cole, leader of the International Friends Association at the University of Michigan campus in Flint, is helping organize the seminar where the participating international students will engage in Bible study and worship for a week. In addition, Cole will help organize small groups of students and give them information on how to start their own small Bible study groups.

“The experience that we’ve had at past seminars is that about half of the participants ask to be baptized when they’re finished with the seminar,” Cole said.

When international students leave the campus, they take with them the books LHF has provided, and the books continue to teach for a lifetime.

“The fruit is so low-hanging!” Cole exclaimed. “The Bible is limited in many countries, and this is the only chance they have. One student from Mumbai, India told me, ‘I never heard of Jesus until I came to the United States.’ She never heard of Jesus until she came here! Americans have heard it all before, but to these students, it’s totally new.”

New Hmong resource

New resources for outreach to the Hmong are now available from LHF: Luther’s *Small Catechism*, in the White and Blue dialects.

Since the mid-1970s, approximately 170,000 Hmong have immigrated to the United States, settling primarily in the states of Wisconsin, Minnesota and California. Hmong communities are typically very close-knit and committed to keeping their clan traditions alive.

“More than 85 percent of the Hmong community is primarily animist,” said Rev. Kou Seying, a Hmong pastor in California who was LHF’s lead translator on the catechism projects. “It is a very difficult group to reach with the Gospel since animism has such a strong hold on the Hmong people even here in America.”

Until LHF’s recent publication of Luther’s *Small Catechism* and *A Child’s Garden of Bible Stories*, there wasn’t any Lutheran material available in the Hmong dialects.

JUNE 19

From: Nicholas Salifu

To: Jeff Rahn; Robert Rahn

Subject: Father’s Day special greetings

Sunday June 21 is Father’s Day! Praise be to God! I have enjoyed the special love and concern you have for me, my family and the churches that I serve [in Ghana]. There are not enough words that I can use to describe how you have become a blessing to the Kusasi Lutheran Mission. The churches are growing spiritually. People including Muslims are coming to be saved, and the school we started in 2012 now has 437 students who are learning about the love of Jesus.

Your prayers, encouragement and support in many ways have become a great blessing to us. Through LHF the gospel is spreading among Muslims and people who never heard the gospel. The Lord is using the children!

On this memorable Father’s Day, we pray the Lord’s blessing on you, your family and all your loved ones. You are in our prayers and thoughts.

From: Robert Rahn
To: Nicholas Salifu
Subject: RE: Father's Day special greetings

Dear Brother,

Thank you for the kind greetings and we wish the same for you. My wife often reminds me that while we lamented that it took ten years for Jeff to come along due to medical problems, it was God's design that he be born later in our marriage so that we could be working in the same organization since its founding. It truly is a blessing from God to be the parent of one who truly has a handle on the LHF organization, so that Matt and I can be about the spiritual matters while Jeff has complete control of all the important financial matters.

To God be the glory.

JUNE 23

From: Anssi Simojoki
Re: The Turku Archdiocese of the Lutheran Church of Finland

This is to inform you, my friends, what recently happened to me and where I am right now. I have had a relatively hectic programme in recent months. On top of that, there has occurred persecution from the side of Turku Archdiocese. In addition, I was evicted from the church premises. I was defrocked. I left the national Lutheran church to devote my time and energy to confessional Lutheranism in the Mission Diocese of Finland. Much time and energy has been consumed by all the practical challenges facing our exiled congregation in Western Finland. On top of that, theological work in the Lutheran Mission Diocese has also consumed my time and energy. The nine-year hymnbook project is finally in other hands that edit and print the book. Much physical work has been on my weekly programme in regard to our home, boats, and cottage. In Finland there is a fitting word of wisdom: only a lazy man enumerates his doings.

As a result, I grew more and more tired and lethargic. Speaking in metaphors, I had to flog myself for works ahead of me. Finally, in this month my wife Marja convinced me—together with my sister and my son-in-law (both medical doctors)—to attend the emergency unit of our local hospital. Immediately I was “arrested” and sent to the ward: my cardiogram was eloquent enough to justify this drastic measure. The pulse had dropped down to 35/min. Then I was sent to Turku University Clinic to receive a pacemaker. I soon returned back to our local hospital. I felt well and was in high spirits. When I walked from an encounter back to my room, I saw that all the nurses were gathered in there to help a fellow traveller in the next bunk. Then something hit me violently like a hunter's bullet. All the lights in my body went off—so to speak—and I fell into darkness. The last thing I observed was a sharp corner of a radiator to hit my face.

My heart had stopped. The nurses immediately commenced their efforts to resuscitate me. Fortunately, oxygen was at hand in the room. I woke up after four to five minutes in a terrible condition. A couple of ribs were broken. Fibrillation took its physical toll. I was sent on an ambulance to Turku (c. 50 miles) and a doctor flew on a helicopter to our rendezvous place where he climbed into the vehicle. In 24 hours since the first operation I received on June 15 my second ever pacemaker. This second one is more sophisticated, directing and guarding the pace downwards and upwards, thus blocking all extremities. Additionally, I was given a personal wireless spy device to report to the university clinic all the data it collects from my pacemaker while I sleep. The first pacemaker guarded only downwards. This other one guards also upwards: when my heart stopped the pulse was c. 200/min.

After three days I was discharged. I am now at home recovering and strolling in our lush garden. My grandchildren help us in lawn-moving and gardening. For the first time in six years, I feel that I am retired, not only tired.

The salvation, both spiritual and physical, comes from God. He had gathered all those nurses into our room as if in readiness for my tribulation that was already underway. There was oxygen. If the hit would have occurred me farther away from those amenities, I would not type these lines anymore.

I have also learned a lot of the benefits of a responsible welfare-state. When I underwent a bypass-operation 11 years ago, our private cost was c. 300\$. My recent hospitals were luxuriously comfortable and well-kept. After walking a whole day on the floor and aisles, the bottoms of my white hospital sock were still white. The ambulance, the helicopter and the best specialists are available for everyone at a relatively low price, or, we had paid for those services in taxes in the course of decades. People with low income are treated as well as people with hefty purses.

My intention in writing to you is to express my gratitude to God. It also contains a motive to mobilize you to pray for me and my wife, when the Holy Spirit effects such sacred and salutary impulses.

JULY 14

From: Robert Rahn

The Bible tells us we should always be ready to give answer for the hope that lies within us. Witnessing opportunities are always available. Such was the case when my wife, Donna, and I displayed at the Canadian Lutheran Women's League Convention in Ontario and visited with the keynote speaker, Rev. Robert Bugbee, president of the Lutheran Church-Canada.

In our conversation I pointed out to him that our neighbor in the display area was from Canadian Lutheran World Relief and, as often is the case, a booth is

hosted by a non-Lutheran. In this case it was a young girl, who was once affiliated with a Pentecostal church but interested in Lutheranism. We talked about the importance of faith-building through the Word and mentioned the catechism. We promised to send her an English copy. I asked Pres. Bugbee to follow up.

We also discussed the possibility of establishing some kind of LHF presence in Canada and having IRPRs strategically located.

We also mentioned the growing number of immigrants in Canada and how our books might be a special avenue of help.

Mission work can be done right in the halls of a Lutheran convention, was my comment.

JULY 15

Dr. Nelson Unwene, LHF translation coordinator for Nigeria, reports on the persecution of Christians by the Boko Haram terrorist group that results in burned churches and martyred Christians.

Unwene estimates that more than 13,000 Nigerians have been killed in six years of persecution. The Boko Haram is an extremist group allied with al-Qaeda and their activities have left Lutherans fearing for their lives.

Both Dr. Unwene and Dr. Michael Adoga, translation coordinator for the Yala language, have indicated that the books being provided by LHF go a long way in bolstering the faith of those facing persecution.

JULY 21

Rev. Rahn attempted to make an assessment on matters pertaining to the to the ELCSS/S with leaders of the church and with Mr. Rob Lutz, a regular volunteer serving that church body.

One of the needs of the church is to develop a short and long range plan relative to an education program. The concentration up to now has been on seminary education while Rob has used his expertise in elementary education planning. It was pointed out that whatever programs are considered they should all be conducted under and through the office of the bishop, Rev. Wilson Noah.

Programs like the hospital venture were introduced independently by the church and have been successful. The bakery program, however, has only been hit and miss. This was meant to help generate income for the church but results have been minimal. A deaconess program needs attention and direction. A plan had been developed in Baguga for an agricultural station, but it hasn't advanced. Rev. Rahn announced that in his next visit the whole matter of the Rich Valley Center will be discussed. This was a building project that was to encompass the church offices and auditorium. The project was aborted when the Nairobi-based construction company went bankrupt and the church ended up with a solid

foundation and a poorly constructed second floor that needed rebuilding. Funds were not available for continued construction and nothing has been done to correct the situation for the past five years.

Another project attempted as a fund raising effort was the conversion of a medical van into taxi use. This project failed.

Another issue that has received continued activity is the pursuing of official church fellowship status with the LCMS. The ELCSS/S has received official membership in the International Lutheran Council, which is a worldwide assembly of confessional Lutheran churches. Rev. Dr. Al Collver, LCMS assistant to the president, has been positive about getting this issue to the next synodical convention.

Plans were also discussed relative to the graduation ceremonies connected with the current seminary graduating class. A problem is that some of the class members are in Gambella, Ethiopia. The plan is to have the bishop conduct a special ceremony for the four members who are in Gambella so that their families can participate in the event.

Finally, the question was discussed as to how arrangements might be made for a container to be shipped to Yambio from America.

AUGUST 7

From: Rev. Robert Rahn

To: Daniel Grams

Subject: RE: Your thoughts on the Rift between Bol's group, Rev. May and Bishop Rule

Daniel,

My thought in one word is TRAVESTY.

However, we will be meeting with Bol this next week to discuss with him Lutheranism in Sudan. My question will be, "Why duplicate Lutheranism in America" with ten different Lutheran confusing groups? Why not consider the church becoming a district of the ELCSS/S?" Of course, there already is some baggage, as you know. When first Bol contacted Rule, he was told there would be a cost to join the ELCSS/S. Whatever that meant. Rev. James May in Nairobi got under the ire of Bishop Rule when he was invited to Bol's group (before they organized) to teach them the catechism. Rule got his dander up and told May never to come to Sudan again. I said, "He will come to Sudan to teach at the seminary." Period. We are waiting to see his reaction to May's scheduled teaching stint in October. Bol is Dinka and there is where the conflict is. We will challenge the tribal lovelessness and ask them if they can't just agree to get along with a district within the church. Am sure they will probably balk at that.

Some thoughts on the problem of tribalism are given by Rev. James May:

I think we as mission partners need to think how we can positively have an effect or influence the situation which we all recognize as sinful. I have started by preaching about it and I have heard no complaints, but people in the pews have little power in the church; they do influence the pastors and bishops but have little power. It is similar, I suppose, in America. Certain parishioners try to influence the pastor and it is his job to follow what is right and wrong, what is godly and what is sinful. Like you and Russia, I have spent quite a bit of time studying the history in Tanzania, and in particular, mission work. Tribalism was also there at that time, but the missionaries forced the issue of making them work together and seeing all people as the people of God in Christ Jesus. The missionaries were the leaders and the first bishops. The negative side was they refrained from ordaining locals for a long time, too long, and then the office of non-ordained evangelist was created, the sacraments became to be despised. But tribalism was addressed. Oddly enough it is starting to return ever so slightly in Tanzania. Part of the reason is because dioceses are formed along tribal areas and they do not have the same integration that an urban area in the USA would have. Still the US has many “tribal” areas and not enough is done to include and reach out to Hispanics and other ethnic groups... but that is the USA. In Africa, the mission partners cannot reclaim bishoprics [office of bishop] BUT they do have great influence with money and donations. This is one area that is severely being misused by Africans along tribal lines both in the church but even greater in the government... which leads to the many civil wars. Mission partners need to use money to force the integration issue. They at least have to try. LHF could really be a great asset in this and it will help to make the church a church of all tribes and nations rather than a tribal church which results in the segregation and abuse we see in Sudan, Kenya, Ghana, and other countries. Please consider this and see how we can work to improve it as it will not remedy itself.

Talk to you soon.

P.S. On Tuesday I will go to Kisii for a youth seminar that will last till Sunday. 400 youth were invited, 500 have already registered!!! Yes, more are coming than were invited. Which reminds me of a crisis situation, that youth event will exhaust our remaining Swahili catechisms. All 10,000 have been distributed, but it is a small amount considering there are seven million Lutherans in Tanzania and 100,000 in Kenya. Can we include this in the immediate print run? Otherwise we are stuck!

SEPTEMBER 14

From: Jeff Rahn
To: Simojoki, Tuomo
Cc: Matthew Heise; Robert Rahn
Subject: RE: Mohamed Gurhan

Dear Tuomo,

Thanks for your message requesting an update on the work of Mohamed Gurhan. I just received the following update from Mohamed last week. This summer he established a Somali Lutheran Center (SLC) in Ethiopia. He is still enrolled at Westfield House and will be continuing his studies next year. I will also forward you a few other recent messages we have received from him.

From: M. Gurhan
To: Jeff Rahn
Cc: Matthew Heise; Anssi Simojoki; Robert Rahn
Subject: RE: Wire

Dear Jeff,

I planned to do so many things during this month and the next month and am really in need of the remaining US\$ 850 wired soon. I allocated part of this amount to send to my children in Nairobi and the other part to purchase 60 copies of Somali Bibles, 20 copies for SLC center in Addis Ababa and 40 copies for Jijiga.

I am preparing to travel next week to Jijiga, to conduct a catechism seminar, baptize several new converts and to organize the believers there into a congregation. After the seminar, I might secretly travel to Hargeisa, Somaliland, to visit and organize a small group of believers there.

In the first week of October, I will visit another group of Somali believers in Dire Dawa city, Eastern Ethiopia, with the intention of organizing them into a Lutheran congregation and to seek potential future coworkers. Later in October, I will travel to Elkare and Filtu towns in Somali Region, to meet some believers there and see if SLC can takeover Norwegian Lutheran Mission's (NLM) abandoned facilities in Elkare. NLM asked me to visit their abandoned center in Elkare with the intention of handing it over to SLC if we are interested to use it.

On my way back to Addis Ababa, I will stay a day or two in Nagele to visit few Somali converts in the town.

SEPTEMBER 15

(From the September 2015 "Word at Work" newsletter)

Fire Damages Russia Warehouse

by Jennifer Bagnall

A late-August fire at a storage facility in Martyshkino, Russia has partially destroyed LHF's supply of Russian-language Lutheran books housed there. "According to neighbors, about 20-30 youth were goofing around the area about a half-hour before the fire. The fire was started accidentally by [those] youth drinking and smoking on the wooden stairs of the warehouse," said Rev. Leif Camp, who distributes LHF's books in Russia. "The police are trying to locate those responsible, but the chances are slim that anyone will 'fess up."

More than 40,000 books (including the Russian *Small Catechism*, *Book of Concord* and *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories*) as well as tens of thousands of Russian *Good News* magazines were stored in the warehouse. Rev. Camp credits the firefighters' quick response with limiting the damage.

"The real danger now is that books will get moldy from water damage," Rev. Camp said. Over the next few weeks, "we are planning to unpack, pull out damaged books, dry what we can, and repack the dry ones." Rev. Camp is being assisted in this task by dozens of volunteers from area churches and missions.

"The reaction of the churches to this loss is a witness to how much the people here value LHF literature," he said. "Just about anybody I meet from the church asks about the books and if they can still get them."

Rev. Matthew Heise, executive director of LHF, said plans are underway to replace the most-needed titles first.

Anyone who wishes to help LHF provide Russian catechisms, Bible story-books, or books for pastors can give online at LHFmissions.org/donate and designate your gift for Russia. Or, if sending your mission gift through the mail, write "Russia" on your check's memo line.

"As we prepare for 2016, we will definitely build these needs for Russia into the LHF budget," Rev. Heise said. "While this was an unexpected expense, we're confident that God will provide for our Russian brothers and sisters in Christ."

500th Anniversary Celebration: The Reformation comes to Southeast Asia! LHF plans *Book of Concord* translations in 8 languages

by Jennifer Bagnall

In 2002, Rev. Ted Na Thalang (LHF's coordinator for Southeast Asian projects) traveled into Cambodia to see if there were any Lutherans to be found.

"I met with 12 Christian leaders from different denominations. They asked me, 'What kind of Christian are you?' I said, 'I'm Lutheran.'" And they asked,

‘What’s that?’ They had never heard of it,” he remembered.

“So then I asked them, ‘Do you know who Martin Luther is?’ and they said, ‘Oh, you mean that black guy from America?’ They thought that Lutheranism was a cult, a new teaching!” he laughed.

Though Lutheranism was a new teaching in Cambodia, it was one that was joyfully received. A decade later, God has called His people to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Cambodia (ELCC), now a body of more than 30 congregations. How did the Holy Spirit do His work? Through Luther’s *Small Catechism*, translated by LHF into the Khmer language.

While more than 95 percent of Southeast Asians are either Buddhist or atheist, the Gospel is being eagerly received by ever-growing populations in countries like Cambodia, Thailand, Vietnam, China, and Indonesia—areas where LHF has expanded its translation work.

Now, as the 500th anniversary of the Reformation approaches in 2017, LHF is undertaking a massive project to continue building a solid foundation for Lutheranism in Southeast Asia: translating and publishing the *Book of Concord* into the Thai, Khmer, Bahasa Indonesia, Korean, traditional and simplified Chinese, Vietnamese, and Hmong languages.

Indeed, Rev. Na Thalang reports, LHF’s books are making an impact far outside of Lutheran circles in Southeast Asia. “In Thailand, for example, we’ve distributed 10,000 catechisms—but there are only 1,000 to 1,500 Lutherans there. So who is using the book?” he asked. “Some examples are the Baptist and Pentecostal seminaries, who use the catechism as a gift for their graduates because it’s based on Scripture, in their language and easy to read.”

The entire *Book of Concord* will be equally treasured, Rev. Na Thalang believes. “We don’t have to sell LHF books; they sell themselves,” he said. “We always go back to what Luther and the Reformation leaders believed. Luther wanted God’s Word to go to all people, not just his small group. We at LHF base our vision on continuing what Luther began: bring the Gospel to all nations and all people, and God will bless that.”

Circuit congregations join together to provide Vietnamese *Book of Concord*

by Jennifer Bagnall

When Carl Bassett left the Vietnam War behind in the mid-1970s, he left with a hardened heart. After years of seeing his fellow soldiers killed at the hands of enemy fighters, he couldn’t have cared less whether the Vietnamese people lived or died.

So it was a poignant moment when Rev. Carl Bassett urged his fellow circuit pastors to lead their congregations in working together to provide for LHF’s Vietnamese translation of the *Book of Concord*.

“Christ worked on my heart over the years, opening my eyes and my heart to remember that Christ died for the Vietnamese people, too,” said Rev. Bassett, pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church in Niles, Mich. “When [LHF representative] Rev. Tom Batsky brought this project to our attention, I thought, ‘Wow. Thank you, Lord.’”

Ten congregations from the Michigan District’s St. Joseph circuit have committed to raise the \$18,000 necessary to fund the project by Reformation 2017. By working together, each congregation needs to raise only \$1,800 over the two years—a very attainable goal, said Circuit Visitor Rev. Michael Roth.

A start to raising the funds “will probably be to designate the funds of our circuit Reformation service,” Rev. Roth said. “I think a project like this is going to really unite our circuit around a common mission. “This *Book of Concord* will be an invaluable resource especially for the pastors of churches in Vietnam,” he said. “They hunger for trusted, Confessional materials. They don’t have a lot of books available to them, and so the ones they do have are quite valuable.”

What’s the *Book of Concord*?

The *Book of Concord* is a collection of writings by leaders of the Reformation and includes Luther’s Small and *Large Catechisms*, the *Augsburg Confession*, the Apology of the *Augsburg Confession*, the *Smalcald Articles*, the *Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope* and the *Formula of Concord* (in addition to the Apostles, Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds).

“LHF places such strong emphasis on broadly translating the *Book of Concord* because wherever the Lutheran faith is confessed—in whatever nation, whatever the language—the *Book of Concord* answers the question, ‘Why am I a Lutheran?’” said LHF executive director Rev. Matthew Heise. “Christ and His work of redemption is the central article of faith. No other book or collection of human writings gives such comfort to Christ’s church and His disciples.”

With this statement of faith translated by LHF into an increasing number of languages, the church of the 21st century is assured that there will remain a true confession of faith.

Republic of the Congo: African Lutheran pastors study marriage

by Jennifer Bagnall

When Westerners today hear of theologians studying marriage, many assume they’re studying the topic of gay marriage. In socially-conservative Africa, however, a different marriage issue has arisen: widowhood.

“In practice today in Africa, widows are despised more than non-virgins,” explained Rev. James May, an LCMS pastor serving a mission organization called Lutherans in Africa. “Their lives are very harsh.” Rev. May recently spent sev-

eral days with Lutheran church leaders in the Republic of the Congo, studying what Scripture and the *Small Catechism* have to say about marriage reflecting the Church's relationship with Christ. Of particular interest was how the Church is to care for widows.

When an African couple marries, tradition holds that the groom's family must pay the bride's family a dowry, which often leads to thinking of the bride as property. If the husband dies, the wife usually is not allowed to remarry because of deeply-rooted animistic beliefs.

"It's believed that when a person dies, he becomes a spiritual ancestor who can communicate with your god and who can bring you blessings or curses, depending on your sacrifices to the ancestors," Rev. May explained. "The more children you've had, the more power you will have to communicate with this god." So, when a man dies, Rev. May continued, his wife cannot remarry but must remain in the deceased's family to bring up their children, who will give more spiritual power to their family name.

"The greatest harshness for widows is two-fold: poverty and lack of a helpmeet," he said. "In a male-dominated society, women struggle to get not only jobs, but also justice. Who will defend them in day-to-day life?"

Widows' defense, the Congolese pastors discovered, must come from the Church (see Ephesians 5 and 1 Timothy 5, as well as the 6th and 9th Commandments and their meanings). "Not only should the families care for them, but the Church especially should," Rev. May concluded. "Not doing so is equivalent to denying the faith and being an unbeliever."

SEPTEMBER 17

Report on Central Asian trip: September 4-17, 2015

by Executive Director Rev. Matt Heise

Tbilisi, Georgia

I met with my former evangelists and pastors with whom I served for several years in Georgia. While I recovered from jet lag, we discussed the past and potential projects. We had printed *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* in Georgian for 2015. The work progressed more quickly than I thought it might, so we had no more projects slated for 2015. Being more experienced now in my role, I recognized the need to plan for 2016 book projects earlier. So, we discussed the needs of the Lutheran Church in Georgia. As Dr. Robert Kolb had once led a seminar, the Georgians knew and respected him and were always eager to translate *The Christian Faith*, a basic primer on our beliefs from a Lutheran perspective. A translation had been attempted in the past, but the translator was not that proficient in English or theology. No longer even having the copy of this translation, we decided to translate Dr. Kolb's from the beginning. There is also a desire to

translate his book, *Teaching God's Children His Teaching: A Guide for the Study of Luther's Catechism*. At present we have the *Book of Concord*, Luther's *Small Catechism*, and *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* translated into Georgian.

Chennai, India

Cherub Sundaram, our translation coordinator and the son of the late good friend of LHF, Rev. John Sundaram, met me and took me around India. I had the great opportunity to visit the site where it is believed that St. Thomas, Jesus' disciple, was martyred. There seems to be a strong tradition behind this theory that dates back to the early years of the Christian Church.

While in Chennai, we also met with our two book publishers. The first publisher printed the Tamil *Book of Concord*, which Pastor Sundaram translated. The publisher is a Christian and has printed our books before. Cherub is very pleased with the speed and quality of his work. The *Book of Concord* was well done, I thought, with a firm binding.

The Hindi book publisher was a Hindu and made no bones about telling me he printed Hindu works. He rarely if ever does Christian books, but I have to say that the quality of his printing was as good as I have seen. Apparently, he will print even Christian books for Indian rupees! Cherub agreed that the quality of the Hindi *Small Catechism* was excellent but felt that the publisher's slowness in printing and lack of communication would preclude further work with him.

We traveled to Ambur, a city between Chennai and Bangalore, where we were able to release the Tamil *Book of Concord*. This function was attended by the president of the Ambur region for IELC (Indian Evangelical Lutheran Church) and the church president, Rev. Raja Gamberam. The IELC is the LCMS' church partner. Approximately 50-60 pastors and deaconesses participated in the release.

Afterwards, we overnighted in a local hotel and then set out for Bangalore, Cherub's hometown, the next morning. On the way we had the opportunity to visit the site of Theodor Naether's Lutheran church in Krishnagiri. Naether was the first official LCMS missionary, beginning service for us in 1894. He helped build a chapel (1895) that is still in use, although a larger church was constructed as the congregation grew. There is also the Lutheran Home for Polio Victims. I had the chance to visit Naether's grave (he died in 1909) and that of two of his young children.

After arriving in Bangalore, we flew the next day to Nagpur through Mumbai. We had a layover in Mumbai, so we exited the airport to have some coffee with Pastor John Kirubakaran [Trinity Tamil Lutheran Church] and P. Christopher, who heads up an IELC program for street children in Mumbai. If you remember the Oscar-winning film a few years ago, *Slumdog Millionaire*, it highlighted the lives of street children in Mumbai, many of whom are Muslim. Mr. Christopher says that they are trying to evangelize the children as they work with them, and

I mentioned it might be useful to translate *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* into the local language, which would be Hindi. They both thought this could be a good means to teach the Faith to the children, so we will seriously consider translating and publishing that book into Hindi for 2016.

We then flew on to Nagpur, where we overnighted before releasing the Hindi *Small Catechism* at the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Madhya Pradesh on Sunday morning. Bishop Emmanuel Panchoo was delighted that we would help them. This is the first time Cherub has connected to this church, whose roots go back to a Swedish Lutheran mission from 1923. It has about 20,000 members and was very pleased to have Luther's *Small Catechism* in Hindi. About 60 people attended the Sunday worship service.

As concerns potential 2016 publications, I gave Cherub a translation of Luther's *Small Catechism* in Punjabi, a document Dr. Rahn received a few years ago from a Canadian pastor of Indian background. Cherub will have someone check the translation as we have not worked in Punjabi previously. Other potential books—a reprint of Luther's *Small Catechism* in Malayalam as well as Walther's *Law and Gospel*, in both Malayalam and Tamil. *Growing in Christ* in Tamil is another possibility. Lastly, we hope to begin work on the Hindi *Book of Concord*.

Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

I concluded my trip with a visit to Kyrgyzstan, where I had taught on occasion when I was a missionary. I had only planned on one day, as I hoped the bishop, Kenjebek Botabaev, would travel back with me to the States. However, in a political move, he was refused a visa on September 3. (Everyone was refused a visa on September 3, one week after the USA and Kyrgyzstan abrogated a treaty between the two nations). We will try again next year, but I used the time to learn how the translation of the *Augsburg Confession* into Kyrgyz was going. It was completed and ready to print!

I also met the new translator who would have more time to work on translations, as the previous translator was very busy and took three years to complete the task. We signed a contract with the new translator, and he agreed to have the Apology of the *Augsburg Confession* finished by late January/early February. (In fairness to the previous translator, he was very busy with academic work at a university. The new translator, a colleague, is completing a dissertation and will have more time). We agreed that if all goes well, he could begin translating *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* into Kyrgyz afterwards.

SEPTEMBER 25

From: Wilson Noah Rule
To: Robert Rahn; John Riay; Japheth Dachi
Subject: Re: Gambella

Rev. Dr. Robert Rahn,

Greetings from Juba in the name of the Lord.

I have seen your communication to James and copied to me. All what you have written are in place; except that the plan for their ordination will be communicated to them later. What you are to do at the moment is to teach them, form them and graduate them. They shall be ordained after a year of their pastoral work experience which we shall organize immediately after the graduation. About their ordination, as I had shared with you earlier; leave it to the Bishop, and the Bishop together with his assistant shall first organize their pastoral work for spiritual experience which will help them a lot in the course of their priesthood as it is enshrined in our constitution.

Thanks, and prayerful best wishes!

From: Robert Rahn
Sent: Friday, September 25, 2015 4:46 PM
To: Wilson Noah Rule

Dear Brother,

Thank you for your message, Brother Bishop. It does confuse me to a certain extent, however, if you indicate that the constitution of the church calls for this procedure for ordination, then it is not a matter of discussion. My confusion relates to your statement “all that you have written are in place.” The one item that has never been clarified was the letter of invitation for Rev. May. We finally had to assume that his service was not desired in Yambio. What I had done with the teaching schedule was to provide for a stellar team to close out the year of education and we have lost a remarkable instructor coming to teach a topic that will be a source of difficulty for the future pastors when it comes to interpreting the Book of Revelation. We have moved Rev. May from the schedule in Yambio and assigned him to teach the Gambella students and the students attending Kebede’s university in Addis. We have asked Rev. Jock and Rev. May to conduct some kind of graduation exercise upon the completion of his teaching stint in Addis. It was my intention to go to Gambella but I have altered my travel schedule to come to Juba via Addis or Nairobi (not yet determined).

(ALERT) As I was writing I heard from May and he discovered his schedule will not allow him to be in Addis at the time we suggested, so we are now waiting for Kebede’s recommendation for a time that would be agreeable. Due to the fact

that ordination will not be taking place, Rev. Heise will not be accompanying me on the trip but will extend his European visit during this time and visit Sudan at a later date.

You mentioned in one of your messages that you were in Khartoum for the ordination of two men. Where did they receive their training? Where will they be serving? When I'm in Yambio, I would like to receive a new pastoral report on the state of the church, how many congregations, pastors, deaconesses, evangelists. This information is something that should be available on a regular basis and perhaps you are keeping that record for quick reporting to officials when church fellowship, and church conferences discussions continue to take place.

We are concerned and waiting for an answer to questions relative to the health of Nicholas' wife. I believe Rev. Heise wrote about that.

I have talked to Rev. Heise and alerted him to the fact that this will probably be my last trip to Sudan. I have also talked to him about stepping down as the program director of CLIHM. Since we have a year of grace before the next possible class, we will be discussing this here and we can also discuss it when I am in Yambio. I will be celebrating, God willing, my 80th birthday in January and it may be time to hand the reins to someone else if the ELCSS/S so desires.

We continue to pray for the students who are completing their course and entering a new phase of service in the church. It will be good to be with you in November and to participate in the graduation for some very fine students, according to all reports from instructors who have been there.

SEPTEMBER 25

J.N. Cherubin ("Cherub"), India translation coordinator, reports on a trip he made with Rev. Matthew Heise braving the Indian heat, chaotic traffic, pollution, etc. He notes that it takes a certain toughness to endure the India travel and recalls the travel Rev. Rahn did with his father, Dr. John Sundarum.

To: Robert Rahn

Cc: Matthew Heise; Jeff Rahn

Subject: Re: Handbook of LSC

Dear Dr. Rahn,

Thanks for your mail. God has been gracious that we were able to complete those book release programs covering long distances. Rev. Matt has been an excellent co-passenger braving the Indian heat, chaotic traffic, pollution, etc. His past life in Eurasia has made him tough even to travel in tropics. You are tough too. I remember you and my dad taking up that long journey to Guntur, Nagercoil, and Trivandrum. I also remember you asking for a "Vada" (made of pulse flour and chilies) in Chennai airport. You had those hot vadas and remained cool like any

other Indian. My father was worriedly looking at you.

Dr. Rahn, I know the village where you laid the foundation stone.

Thanks for the information on the translated version of *Growing in Christ*. This book had been published in 1960, just four years prior to my birth. After Rev. Matt left, I read the book and found it is a good choice [of] handbook for teaching Luther's *Small Catechism*.

I am glad that you are impressed with the way that the *Book of Concord* and Hindi catechism have turned out to be. In the past, my father wanted to help Concordia Press, a church institution through whom he used to all the printing work. The ailing press, which was about to be closed down, survived. But the director of the press didn't help him properly by giving him expected quality. Moreover, he never had proper manpower.

Only during nights, the DTP worker would come, and father had to go to the press and sit with him for whole night. After I took over, the first thing that I did was I cleared off Concordia Press from our path.

Yes, Rev. Matt has been encouraging me to plan to write the biography of my father. Two of the former IELC (Indian Evangelical Lutheran Church) presidents are wanting me to take their interview or video film their interviews on the mentorship they received from father. They want me to do this before they die. They feel that his story would inspire future pastors and people of God.

Finally, yes, it is need of the hour that we should extend our services to other Indian Lutheran denominations.

Thanking you, Cherub Sundaram

SEPTEMBER 29

From: Matthew Heise

To: Jeff Rahn; Robert Rahn; Jen Bagnall

Subject: FW: July Report from Pastor Salifu; Iraq Hameed Altai

Keeping you gentlemen (and lady) informed of this Eric Gates' email and my response. I am especially intrigued that the LCMS did a Kurdish catechism in the 1920s!!!! This might be worth looking into. I know Alan Saeed would [be] useful as a reader/editor for Kurdish. He stayed with me when he was in Moscow and we were seeking ways to get him to the US or Canada as a return to Iraq was dangerous (as a Lutheran believer!).

OCTOBER 26

My Trips to Jigjiga and Hargeisa

Report filed by Muhammad Gurhan, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Earlier in September, when I finished furnishing the Somali Lutheran Center in Addis Ababa, I started looking for a reliable caretaker who can stay at the cen-

ter during my travels. After more than a week of search, on September 21, I got a woman through a middleman. Next day, I booked my flight to Jigjiga, Somali Regional State of Ethiopia and landed there on Wednesday, September 23.

Mr. Khalif, the Somali Regional State's director of Diaspora Affairs department, with whom we communicated earlier, received me warmly at the airport and drove me towards the city. On the way, Mr. Khalif excitedly informed me about amendments made to the Somali Regional State's constitution. Cheerfully he said, "Brother Gurhan, I have good news for you. Last week, our government officially recognized the existence of an underground Somali church. Now, you can teach and preach your faith anywhere in the Somali Region. Even you can build seminaries for the Somali church, but you should be careful, the wolves are still around." Previously the constitution of the Somali Regional State allowed non-Somali Christians to teach and preach their faith to their own communities, but it denied the existence of Somali Christians in the state.

When I settled in my hotel room, Mr. Khalif left me, and I went out to see two of my younger siblings in the city. When I reached their house, they were there with other relatives and some of their neighbors waiting for my arrival. I greeted everyone and handed over some gifts I bought for my brothers' families. Then we started talking about almost everything: family, politics, Islam, my relocation to Ethiopia, etc., until midnight when they called a cab to take me back to my hotel room. My brothers told me about a tension in the city caused by the state's constitutional amendments and advised me to stay, the next two days, in my hotel, for it was Islam's Idul-fidri, and public holidays.

Saturday morning, September 26, I met a group of 12 believers and seekers in my brother's house. I taught them the catechism for two hours, using a Power-Point copy in my laptop and distributing to them photocopies I made from the only printed copy I had. Then we prayed together for an hour before my brother provided lunch for the entire group. Though we wanted to sing few hymns, the group was too scared of my brother's Muslim neighbors, who share the same compound with him. About half of the group was seekers who even had no idea how Christians pray or worship God.

From September 27 to October 5, I met more than 20 older believers and about 15 new converts and seekers. My brothers told me that there are many other seekers in the city, who are scared of exposing their faith to someone they don't know well. Many of the seekers I met were in haste to be baptized, but I advised them to learn more about their new faith in Christ and wait for the right time.

Tuesday morning, October 6, 2015, I travelled by bus from Jigjiga, to Wajaale (about 70 km), the border town of Somaliland, on my way to Hargeisa. I went through the immigration office, like everyone else in the bus, and when they searched my suitcase and cleared me, I took another bus to Hargeisa (about 90

km). At noon we reached there, and I settled in one of the downtown hotels. Although the Somaliland authorities didn't deny me entry into the country as they did to the late Reverend Abdiweli Ahmed, a Somali pastor from Garissa, Kenya, who tried to visit Somaliland in 2012, they treated me very harshly.

Plain clothed police officers were regularly monitoring my activities, watched my hotel room, and followed me to everywhere. Sunday morning, October 11, while I was away to meet one of the believers, they searched my room, tore my suitcase zip apart, destroyed my laptop and took my camera and three books, including my English Bible. Tuesday morning, a police officer came to me in my room to inform me that they know me and my mission in their country and that I am not welcome in Somaliland anymore. As soon as the officer left me, I packed my belongings, took a taxi to the bus station, and travelled back to Ethiopia.

During the week I was in Hargeisa, I met only two of the several dozen believers there. Even though I planned to see more, I avoided them for the sake of their own security. Next Tuesday, October 13, I returned, safe and sound, to Jigjiga, Somali Region of Ethiopia. My initial plan was to conduct a catechism seminar for about 10–15 new converts in Jigjiga and baptize them, but it became impossible to find a safe venue. The only and most suitable place I was counting on was Mekane Yesus church center. I went there to meet and discuss my plans with Reverend Mitiku, the pastor of Jigjiga congregation. I met him and two of the elders, whom we knew each other for two decades, in their church office. They received me warmly and we chatted friendly about an hour before I reveal the purpose of my visit. When I told them my plan to conduct five days catechism seminar for Somali believers and I need to use their facilities, the atmosphere changed. They suddenly resisted the idea and started to excuse themselves. At last, they said the church elders will meet to discuss the issue and asked me to return the following day for their decision.

The following day, the elder I met at the center informed me their decision that I can use their place only if I pay Eth. Birr 1,000 (about US\$ 50) per day for the venue. That was something I was not expecting since I considered myself as one of the founders of the congregation. I said I [couldn't] afford it and left. As my expectation of finding a secure location for the catechism seminar faded away, I decided to meet and teach two of the new converts every day for a week and baptize them. We agreed the baptism to take place in my brother's house from October 23 to 26.

Even if the financial and security situation of the protestant Christians in Ethiopia's Somali Regional State improved tremendously during the last five years and the Somali authorities acknowledged the existence of the underground Somali Church, many of the Somali believers here are jobless and the poorest of the poor, who can't even afford to eat once a day. Therefore, I decided to use the funds allo-

cated for the seminar to buy dry rations and distribute to the families of the new converts. I bought 200 kg of rice, 200 kg of sugar, 200 kg of wheat flour, 100 liters of cooking oil, and 20 canisters of skimmed milk. Each candidate received 20% of the ration after their baptism.

On Friday, October 23, I baptized three male converts. On Saturday, I baptized two female and one male converts, and on Monday I baptized another three male converts. In total I baptized in Jigjiga two female and seven male converts. There are [a] dozen other new converts and seekers still waiting to be taught and baptized.

Jigjiga is generally very safe city and the church is growing faster than I expected – “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few.” The church here needs a pastor and its own place of worship located in a more secure area. There is a great need for Christian literature, particularly the Somali translation of the *Small Catechism*. The church needs material support as well as Christian missionaries who can teach. There are seekers and new converts in almost every district of the Somali Regional State, whom some of them contacted and invited me to visit their district. Despite the fact that I am planning to visit them next year, the region is geographically the second largest in Ethiopia, and traveling by public transport is not ideal for my security. Therefore, I would like to request additional funds to be raised for the purchase of one double cabin 4x4 Toyota.

Next Friday, October 30, I will travel to Dire Dawa, to spend a day or two to visit a small group of Somali believers there. Then I will continue my journey to Addis Ababa.

OCTOBER 31

Europe Travel Report — Rev. Matthew Heise

The Bible study groups on Saturday, October 31, numbered close to 250 Iranian and Afghan refugees! I attended the Reformation Day service as well as the All Saints’ Day service on Sunday. Pastor Gottfried Martens is doing remarkable work, although I fear he may burn himself out if he doesn’t receive (or accept) help. Due to his constant duties of leading a congregation of about 800 (approximately 500 former Muslims, and he is the only pastor!), we really didn’t get the chance to converse much at all. I had hoped we might consider his request to have the *Good News Journal* translated into Farsi (Iran’s predominant language), but given his extensive duties, I fear it simply would not be carried out. I decided to drop that request and concentrate upon the Farsi *Small Catechism* (more on that later).

I also met Finnish missionary Tarya Ikaheimenon (spellcheck just LOVES Finnish names!). Tarya has worked in Papua New Guinea and Afghanistan; hence she is fluent in Dari (language of western Afghanistan) and is helping Pas-

tor Gottfried with the 50 or so Afghans in the congregation. We have published the Dari *Prayer Book and Catechism*, and I brought five copies which she took gladly. She expressed a desire to have us reprint the book, and Jeff Rahn has already contacted the author, Pastor Harri Lammi in Finland (Tarya knows him, too). The print is rather small, so she requested a larger font size if we reprint. Harri believes that the book should be re-edited, too. Iranians can also understand Dari, so we will have to take this knowledge into account when exploring a reprint.

A report from missionary Rev. Leif Camp:

A Good Word from Camp St. Petersburg, Russia
СОБРАНИЕ (sah-BRA-nee-ye) Meeting, Gathering

“Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.” Phil 2:1-2

The Church of Ingria has her struggles but is trying hard to remain faithful to this heritage. Mid-October is always the month when the Lutheran Church of Ingria holds her annual synod—the annual gathering which elects the synodical council, votes on various organizational matters, and oversees the annual accounting of the Bishop and the various committees of the church. This year’s Synod was also attended by Siberian Lutheran Bishop Vsevelod Lytkin in what many hope is a closer relationship between our two church bodies. Pastor Krikiva from the LCMS was also there (forgive me is I spelled his name wrong), and representatives from other church bodies.

Besides the usual elections and so forth, the Synod passed two resolutions on official position statements—one on the Inerrancy and Inspiration of Scripture, the other standing against same sex marriage.

Regardless of the fire at the warehouse and work involved there, I also attended and handed out a gift bag of Lutheran Heritage books to the delegates—this year the *Book of Concord*, *Let us Pray*, *On the Freedom of A Christian*, *Here We Stand*, and *A Child’s Garden of Bible Stories*.

We are removing the wet books which had already begun to mold. Each weekend finds we make a little more progress. At the same time we are salvaging books, the workmen are putting on the “temporary” roof. Once the roof is on, we can re-connect the electricity and dry out the warehouse space—we are hoping that will be in the next week or so. As far as other building repairs, we will also do a quick façade, but otherwise we need to wait. Legally the building does not belong to the church. They were in the process of filing the legal papers to receive ownership when the fire broke out (it is the historic parsonage of the church which

at one point housed seminarians who commuted to St. Petersburg to study at the Seminary at St. Anne's—all the seminarians were later martyred). Now the only recourse the congregation has is to file suit. Hence, our repairs are only temporary. If the congregation gets to keep the building, then serious repairs will begin.

NOVEMBER 6

Dear Jeff,

To you and everyone at LHF, thank you so much for your gift of Bibles for the sake of the Gospel here in Puerto Rico! We have received all of the cases, have placed them in each seat at our church, and are using them for our services and Bible studies. We were able to send a handful home with people to use personally and we have a good stock left for sharing in our mission work and future church plants. Today we snapped a few pictures of the members of the church with the new Bibles. They are such an incredible asset and we are truly thankful.

El Señor sea contigo (The Lord be with you),

Rev. Matthew D. Ruesch

LCMS Church Planter, Latin America

NOVEMBER 29

Visit to Ethiopia — *Rev. Robert Rahn, LHF founder*

While the major portion of this report deals with Sudan, there are several things that could be said about my stop in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. My purpose in routing through Addis was to meet with Dereje Tilahun, LHF translation coordinator. There are several books on which we wished to get an update—*A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* and *Getting into the Theology of the Book of Concord*.

We needed assurance that the publishers would be capable of producing a good product, seeing the ACG is going through the final review process and will be ready for printing. We visited the printing plant of Haileselassie Tefera where the printing will be done. This will be an important volume for the Mekane Yesus Church as it will be the first book published in 20 years for use in the Sunday schools of the church.

During our short time in Addis we also took a trip to Bishoftu where Dr. Kebede Yigezu is establishing a new church body—the Lutheran Church of Ethiopia—and establishing the Maor Theological College. This five-story institution has the first floor completed and I met with 45 students to give them a word of encouragement and to talk about the formation of the LHF, as requested by Dr. Yigezu. Earlier, Dr. Phil Giessler and Dr. Bernie Lutz had taught his students and the three vicars who came from the Gambella refugee camps. (As I write this, Rev. James May is at Maor teaching the book of Revelation). When the two-week intensive course is completed, he and Rev. Japhet Dachi will fly to Gambella where

the three students and one deaconess will have their graduation.

It was interesting that while driving to Bishoftu we noticed that the full harvest of wheat and teff (a grain for flour) was underway. No 24-foot combine for the harvest but men and women with short sickles cutting and stacking the crop, which will be taken to a “threshing floor,” ala Old Testament style, and donkeys and oxen will walk on the grain and then the winnowing process.

While in Addis we also met with Mohammad Gurhan, LHF translation coordinator for Somali works. Gurhan was attending the Westfield House in Cambridge, England but is now attending the Mekane Yesus Graduate School evenings and during the day working on establishing the Lutheran Church of Somalia in Jijiga, Ethiopia (borders Somalia). The land for the church has been provided. Gurhan currently has a Bible class in Addis with about 20 Somali people. He needs a larger apartment to accommodate the group.

What one should notice is that once again the publishing of books like ACG and Luther’s catechism has led to the formation of two more Lutheran church bodies—the Lutheran Church of Ethiopia and the Lutheran Church of Somalia.

The woes of travel included the attempt to get six suitcases to Sudan along with the ten taken by Dr. Lutz. Our pleas for humanitarian aid consideration were heard and some breaks received. In Addis, my attempt to use a credit card was thwarted and a \$600 cost loomed. I laid out the total cash I had in my possession in the amount of \$460 and pleaded for grace. The fourth supervisor granted leniency and lowered the weight to a \$430 level. The cargo included 15 laptop computers with solar blankets, clergy albs, graduation gowns, shirts, baptismal napkins, communion ware, clergy crosses, ultra slim Bibles, communion wafers, desk crosses, and many other items.

NOVEMBER 30

Sudan Trip Report — *Rev. Robert Rahn, LHF founder*

I have just returned from a trip to South Sudan and herewith provide an update on events that may be of interest to you. First of all, this goes to all those who were faithful servants in teaching members of the current class graduating from the Concordia Lutheran Institute for the Holy Ministry, Yambio, South Sudan. Each of your names were read at the graduation service as a tribute for your ministry to the Ev. Lutheran Church of South Sudan/Sudan. Rev. Japhet Dachi stated: “Reverend guest of honor, Rev. Dr. Robert Rahn, allow me to name them to show that CLIHM cherished their endeavors.” The names of the instructors were then read.

Graduation ceremonies were held on Saturday, November 21 for the ten members of the class in a special five-hour service attended by some 300 people, a group overflowing into a tent to accommodate all participants. The Rev. Dr.

Bernard Lutz preached for the event using 2 Timothy 2:8 as his text and theme, which begins with the words: “Remember Jesus Christ.” He pointed out that the Word of God is powerful and that it cannot be chained. The students were called to “endure all things so that they may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory.” v. 10

The students will be enduring the prospect of being without ordination. Bishop Noah Wilson Rule explained that the dilemma the church is facing in regard to a shortage of funds and he doesn't want to place a student until there is a guarantee of support for the ministry. He hopes that the delay for ordination will be short. Several of the students will be going to Ethiopia to obtain advanced degrees. Each of the students were given a laptop computer with a solar blanket. Dr. Lutz promoted the project with donors from California and time was spent after the graduation ceremony in teaching the students how to use the computer. Various individuals contributed funds so that a special clergy cross could be provided. LHF provided a special ultra-thin copy of the NKJ Bible. The PLAN FOR SUDAN effort promoted by Dr. Lutz also allowed gifts of albs, stoles, clergy shirts, and black socks. The five deans received baptismal napkins, communion wafers, and a Luther seal lapel pin from the LHF. Earlier, Rev. Mark Oien sent each student a copy of the *Lutheran Study Bible*.

After the service, representatives from the State Ministry of Child and Social Welfare and a representative from the State Ministry of Education, Science & Technology were present to speak. Later, the LHF provided a dinner of chicken, beef, rice, and bread.

The next day, Sunday, November 22, a service of thanksgiving and commissioning was held. The church was celebrating its 22nd anniversary, and as part of the service, five deaconesses were commissioned. I served as the preacher for this event using Acts 8 as my text, the story of the Ethiopian eunuch. We pointed out that the story shows that THE WORD WORKS. I pointed out the action verbs in the story and asked: “Who is in your chariot?” Even as the Eunuch responded, “How can I understand unless someone guides me,” even so we are called to step into chariots and explain the Scriptures, it is what the church is called to do, it is what ministers are called to do, what deaconesses are called to do. Philip “preached Jesus to him!” It is what we are called to do. The eunuch's call for baptism shows that THE WORD WORKS.

The commissioned deaconesses received gifts from LHF, including LHF tote bags, Luther seal lapel pins, and a special stainless-steel cross based on Matt. 14:30 where Peter walking on the water begins to sink and cries out “LORD, HELP ME!” Engraved in the crosses' upright are two hands, one reaching up and one reaching down. I told the deaconesses to let it remind them that help is available because of the cross of Christ on which Jesus reached down for them and saved

them. Each deaconess wore a special uniform that was designed by Dr. Lutz and sewed by a local tailor.

The convention of the ELCSS/S had as its primary agenda item the revision and updating of the church constitution. The only election called for was the general secretary and treasurer. Since the constitution calls for a paid treasurer, the process was outlined for selecting a treasurer. An acting general secretary was appointed to provide time for names to be submitted for consideration. Receiving much discussion on the convention floor, was the official name of the church. Since there was some confusion as to how and where South Sudan and Sudan should be noted; a motion passed to henceforth use this designation: ELCSS/S.

The dilemma of finances was debated at length in the context that the subsidy from LHF is gradually declining by design. Rev. Peter Anibati, acting treasurer, commended LHF for all of its help and called for the church to begin seriously the effort to stand on its own two feet. There was some concern that the funds of the church need to be centralized and not held in several accounts.

The ELCSS/S is awaiting word on its application for fellowship with the LCMS. The Bishop had been invited to attend the meeting of the ILC in Argentina, but visa problems prevented his attendance, which he regretted. Some discussions in regard to fellowship will be discussed at a sub-committee meeting of the CTCR on December 10. The convention noted that the ELCSS/S will be celebrating its 25th anniversary in 2018 and that preparation should be underway as soon as possible.

The convention also called on the LHF to help conduct seminars for all church workers during the year 2016 when the seminary will be out of session. During the convention, Dr. Lutz gave an introduction to stewardship, but time was limited for him to complete the topic.

Other participants in the convention/graduation/commissioning were Dr. Reijo Arkkila, Rev. Lassie Raty, and Rev. Antti Saarenketo, all from Finland and the LEAF (Lutheran Evangelical Association of Finland) organization. Rev. Antti was serving in Juba until the war broke out. He plans to return to Juba next year.

It was a costly adventure to get those 15 laptops, solar blankets and all the other items to Yambio with Lutz taking ten suitcases and the six I took resulted in excess baggage fees of over \$3,000—and that is with airlines discounting our luggage because it was humanitarian aid.

Central, Eastern Europe, and Central Asian Trip Report

Rev. Matt Heise

Mongolia, Nov. 3-7: I stayed with my former missionary colleagues, the David Baker family. David was called to serve in Kazakstan, but due to the increasing difficulties placed upon missionaries, moved to Mongolia recently to work

with the large Kazakh diaspora there (more about that later). I met with Pastor Purevdorj (Puje) Jamsran just after I flew in, as he was heading out for a mission conference to Turkey. (I used to teach Old Testament at Puje's Lutheran Bible school in the northern city of Darhan.)

Bertil Anderson (NLM-Norwegian Lutheran Mission), a missionary pastor with NLM and from the Swedish Mission Province Lutheran Church (not the state church), had enlightened Puje about the *Good News Journals*, so he had every copy except the new ones (and issues 32-40, which we will send to his daughter, who works for a Wall Street firm and who will come home for Christmas). Puje also has contact with many Mongolian Christian churches in America and will be attending a conference in Denver in March 2016. This might be good opportunity to distribute Lutheran materials for them in the future.

As some of you may be aware, Larry Rockemann is spearheading our Mongolian project, a project to create Lutheran materials in Mongolian and to honor LCMS members Russ and Cathy Shockey, who spent most of the 1990s teaching English there and connecting and helping Christian groups. I believe a retranslation of the *Small Catechism* is in order (as it was done quickly, and in a wooden fashion by foreigners, so that there would be something in the local language). Puje also wants to begin work on the *Book of Concord*, as well as doing *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories*. I gave him Dr. Robert Kolb's books, *Making Disciples: Baptizing*, as well as *Teaching God's People the Catechism*, for future projects.

David Baker continues to work with Kazakhs, and we have funded the enrichment and Koehler's *Small Catechism*, which will be completed by the end of 2015. David has also requested *Law and Gospel* (Walther), while the *Augsburg Confession* is about done and needs editing. (The Apology is in translation). Perhaps the Kazakh materials can also be added to the Mongolian project as they are for Kazakhs in Mongolia? It seems bringing books into Kazakhstan will be very difficult now.

Latvia, Nov. 7-11: I met with the board of LHF-Latvia again, and since we all converse easily in Russian, we conducted our conversations in that language. Some requests—Janis Smits, a Lutheran pastor and member of the Riga City Council, recommended the Chinese-Latvian *Small Catechism* as increasing numbers of Chinese come into the country. They also mentioned Tamil as a language need. Our director, Juris Ulgis, also was looking for something to address Islam. He was quite taken with the possibility of translating Bernie Lutz's book on evangelizing Muslims (*Guidelines for Sharing the Faith with Your Muslim Friend: The Do's and the Don'ts*). Also, Guitars Baikov's new book on the Canon. And lastly, perhaps a reprint of the "How to Respond" series, focusing on TM. (It seems a popular preacher in the Lutheran Church, Juris Rubenis, has created his own resort center and is preaching a type of meditative practice that doesn't sound very

scriptural.) And now lastly, Jonathan Fisk's book (*Broken*) will be ready to print in January 2016.

Nov. 9: To tie Lithuania in with Latvia, we have the option of shipping some *Good News Journals* (in Lithuanian and Latvian) with an Orphan Grain Train shipment in Spring 2016. Both countries said they would appreciate more copies. We could also send some Russian copies along, too, for Konstantin Komarov in Latvia (he is our coordinator for Russia).

On November 9, we drove to Siauliai, just across the border into Lithuania. We met with Pastor Mindaugas Diksaitis, who manages our revived work in Lithuania. (We received approximately \$62,000 from a pastor in America who was of Lithuanian descent, designated for Lithuanian translations.) Due to the inactivity of a translator, this work fell behind. Pastor Diksaitis has his own large congregation and was leading youth group activities during the summer. We discussed how best to get the project back on track.

Future projects: Complete *Book of Concord* (they have *Augsburg Confession*, the *Apology* and the catechisms (large and small) in Lithuanian already. Also interested in *Inside the Reformation* (CPH) for 2017. They will need time with graphics, though.

I did not go to Russia this year (my visa ran out and I deemed it unnecessary to renew at the moment). Since Konstantin Komarov manages our work from Latvia, I spoke with him about needs. Translations of the newest *Good News Journals* elicited great interest, as well as a reprinting of Mueller's *Dogmatics* and translation of Luther's postils.

Nov. 11-14: (Bulgaria) Our translator, Radoslav Radkov, works with WELS and comes from a Catholic background. He has worked with LHF since 2011 and since the WELS Lutheran congregations are quite small (he may have 15 parishioners on a Sunday), he also works as a trolleybus driver five days a week. He is completing editing work on the *Apology* to the *Augsburg Confession*. He hopes to begin work on the *Formula of Concord* by the end of this year. Protestants are beginning to come into his church and baptism is often a stumbling block for them, so he was interested in Dr. Robert Kolb's book on baptism, which I gave him. He also wants to translate Luther's short tract on the Magnificat as Orthodox and Catholics often misread the role of our Lord's mother.

Nov. 14-19: I traveled in Slovakia with Viola Fronkova, a friend of Dr. Kolb and the author who is transcribing the notes of the late bishop of the Lutheran Church in Czechoslovakia/Slovakia, Pavel Uhorskai (1919-2010) into a book called *Church Under Oppression*. We have printed a book of this nature before when publishing Jouko Talonen's *Church Under the Oppression of Stalinism* in Latvian and about the Latvian Lutheran Church. Hence, I believe this book is

timely, given the powerful witness given by the Lutheran Church in Slovakia and the potential in Europe for persecution in the future. It emphasizes our common theology of the cross, which Luther espoused compared to theologies of glory. (One Lutheran pastor was imprisoned simply for translating the *Augsburg Confession* into Slovak!)

The book was printed the day after I left Slovakia, and the 1,200 issues quickly ran out. Anticipating this eventuality, we talked about publishing a further 1,500 copies for the Lutheran church. I met her publisher, Mikulasz, a dedicated Lutheran who seemed more interested in getting the book out than making a profit. She also plans a second volume for 2016 which will focus upon the persecution of other additional pastors. The third volume would concentrate upon the persecution of the Lutheran theological faculty.

Speaking of the theological faculty of Jan Comenius University, I did a presentation for about 12 students in Bratislava. We worked with Prof. Lubomir Batka last year in publishing Martin Luther's *95 Theses* with commentary. Prof. Batka used our funds for printing and sold the copies for a reasonable sum that makes it attractive in the eyes of some people who sometimes don't value books given out for free. The profit made was enough to provide sufficient funds for a reprint of 500 additional copies. His plan, I think, works well. The theological faculty uses our funds as seed money and pours them back in order to reprint books.

This year, we are looking at *Luther on the Two Kinds of Righteousness* (500 copies, 1,500 Euros needed) and to begin work on Robert Kolb's *Luther and the Stories of God*. The other translations are done by graduate students, so the costs associated with translation/publishing are minimal. But the Kolb book would require a professional translator, as it would have many more pages and would be more costly. The money would not all need to be provided in 2016 as this project would be slated for completion in 2017 in time for the celebration of the Reformation. But work would need to begin in 2016. One last point about the translators of the Luther books. These graduate students come from Slovak-speaking regions, including Romania, the Czech Republic, and Vojvodina (Serbia), so this would open the door to potential translations in those other languages (Romanian, Serbian, and Czech).

Lastly, I was able to get to my grandfather's village (Cierna Leohta) in eastern Slovakia and meet with relatives of persecuted pastors. I did a presentation there for the Lutheran congregation in Slavošovce, two kilometers from Grandpa's hometown. I overnighted with a family of Gypsy Lutherans. The husband is a schoolteacher and the only Gypsy Lutheran church administrator for eastern Slovakia. We talked about doing the *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* in Slovak, so that it would be available to all children. But for 2017, we are looking at an *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* translation into the Roma dialect for Gypsies, as

a form of outreach. I am hoping to appeal to my family members at Christmas (Grandpa and Grandma Kral had nine children!), and encourage them to support a project that celebrates the Christian faith (not all are Lutheran, so I will say “Christian” faith) of our great-grandparents and grandfather, who brought their Christian faith to America (and retained it).

Nov. 19-23: I began my trip in Germany by spending Reformation weekend at Holy Trinity Lutheran in southwest Berlin. SELK Mission Director Roger Zieger allowed me to stay at his home for free, so it was my base while I was traveling in Germany.

I overnights with the Mahsmans back in Berlin and then traveled to Leipzig for the weekend (November 20-21), staying with my classmate, Pastor Markus Fischer. I met with Alexander Schneider, a member of the Luther Einigungswerk (Lutheran Unity— <http://www.einigungswerk.org>). Alexander is a layman who is interested in the Lutheran Confessional revival that is taking place in Saxony of the former East Germany. He is a parishioner in the state church and is optimistic that there is the opportunity for change in Saxony. Recently, the Saxon Landeskirche elected a bishop, Carsten Rentzing. Rentzing is opposed to women’s ordination and gay clergy (and marriage), which is more in keeping with Saxon Lutheran theology but not that of the state church. He will be in office for the next 15 years! (There are regional churches in Germany that all belong to the larger state structure, the EKD—Evangelical Church of Germany).

How can LHF help? We discussed the need for pastors inclined to Lutheranism to rediscover their Confessional identity through Lutheran books that have been out of print in German. They were written in the old Fraktur (Gothic script), so they would need to be transcribed as most Germans do not read Fraktur easily today. Here is a portion of Alexander’s email to me, as we talked about reprinting, for example, the following...

Martin Chemnitz *Handbüchlein* (enchiridion)—PDF of 16th century original already downloaded, but there seems to be a German version available in the US: Georg Brumder, Milwaukee 1886. I could also do the transcription from the Handschrift but would need some remuneration for it (I can invoice as I am a freelance translator).

Prof. Ernst Luthardt *Luthers Ethik*—A small, compact book of about 100 A5 size pages published in the late 19th century. Very well written, chockfull of engaging Luther quotes and a quicker read than Paul Althaus.

I also talked with Missionary Pastor Hugo Gevers who works with the Iranians in the Leipzig region. Hugo speaks Farsi and is overseeing our translation work of the *Small Catechism*. The work is moving more slowly than expected due to some problems with translators. These Iranians also translate the weekly

sermons in Farsi, and it appears that when their names were published online (they requested it, in fact), the Iranian mullahs began to put pressure upon their families back in Iran! So many translators have quit, saying they could not endanger their families back home. So, the target date for the catechism has moved to 2016.

I also supplied Hugo, at his request, with the Gospel tracts in Arabic as well as the *Small Catechism*. Hugo has been utilized by the German government to help with translating for refugees, so he often visits the asylum dormitories every week. He told me that there is almost a dividing line in the dorms between the Iranians/Afghans and the Syrians. The Iranians/Afghans are very open to Christianity, but the Syrians are very firm in saying that they are Muslims. Nonetheless, Hugo has initiated contact with many as they are more able to speak English than the Iranians/Afghans. Being a South African of German ethnicity, Hugo converses easily in English. So, I left him with the Arabic resources since the number of Syrians is steadily increasing in the country. (He tells me that they are very grateful to Germany and are disillusioned about the Assad regime and Islam in general in Syria. So, there is hope that he and his colleagues may make inroads within the asylum centers.)

November 22, Hugo also baptized five Iranians, so I had the wonderful opportunity to attend the Divine Service with about 140 in the Lukasgemeinde in Leipzig (about 50 Germans and 90 Iranians/Afghans). He also leads services in nearby Borna, where there is a predominantly Iranian congregation, and leads a Bible study group of Iranians in Torgau, where Katie Luther is buried!!

When I returned to Berlin on Sunday, I also talked with Christoph Weber and Roger Zieger. Christoph is the brother of LHF's longtime friend, Wilhelm Weber, Jr. (and the son, of course, of Wilhelm Weber Sr.). Christoph works for SELK in southern Africa and is currently leading their new work in Mozambique. Working in conjunction with Missionary Pastor, Carlos Winterle (now of South Africa but originally from Brazil), we have been asked to translate the *Small Catechism* into the dominant local language, Chisena, as many Mozambicans do not know Portuguese.

DECEMBER

(From the Christmas "Word at Work" newsletter:)

A door closing? In Turkey, "it is urgent we print as much as possible"

by Jennifer Bagnall

Christianity has a long history in Turkey; in fact, the apostles Paul and Timothy were both born there. But as 2014 draws to a close, the situation is very different for Christians in Turkey, where 99.8% of the people identify themselves as Muslim.

Christian laypeople and their pastors are often persecuted for their faith, including job loss and imprisonment. In 2007, Turkey made international headlines when three Christian missionaries were horrifically tortured for hours before finally being allowed to die.

However, God has not allowed this spiritual darkness to completely extinguish the Light of the Gospel in Turkey! Among the 0.2% non-Muslims are the members of Istanbul Lutheran Church with its 150+ members, and they've also established a Lutheran preaching station in the city of Izmir (once called Smyrna).

The Finnish Lutherans who established the church "feel great urgency to get good Lutheran books into the hands of as many people as quickly as they can," said Rev. Matthew Heise, LHF executive director. "They feel that in as little as three years, it's likely that they'll be kicked out of the country by Turkey's Muslim political leaders. But they know that the books will stay and will continue to witness to the Turkish people when they can no longer be there."

LHF has already printed seven different titles in Turkish, including Luther's *Small Catechism*. Now, *Freedom of a Christian* is expected to be completed in early 2015. "*Freedom of a Christian* is a very good book in an Islamic context," said Kari Vitikainen, general secretary of Istanbul Lutheran Church. "Islam trusts on man's ability to earn salvation with his own deeds, and many Turkish people carry Islam's load even after they have become Christians. This book addresses this issue in an easy-to-understand way."

"After His crucifixion, Christ appeared behind a locked door to His disciples, bringing them hope and comfort," said Rev. Heise. "In the same way, we know that God's Word, faithfully proclaimed in the books LHF publishes for them, will bring comfort and peace to Turkish Christians for generations to come."

A closing door now wide open: Iranian immigrants bring new life to German churches

by Jennifer Bagnall

Like many of the old cathedrals in an increasingly godless Europe, the pews of Lutheran churches in Germany—the land of Luther!—are often nearly empty on any given Sunday. Then, to the surprise of Lutheran pastors in cities like Leipzig and Berlin, new faces began appearing: Iranian immigrants who had fled their homeland.

"When the first Iranians arrived, people in our congregations were euphoric. Before then, it was unheard of that Muslims would convert," remembered Rev. Hugo Gevers, a pastor with the Selbständige Evangelisch—Lutherische Kirche (SELK), an LCMS partner church. Then, the trickle of new members became a flood as more than 200 Iranians have joined SELK congregations in 2014 alone.

“Our congregations have realized that an immense responsibility now rests on us. For one, we have to translate our teaching, our services and our sermons,” said Rev. Gevers.

Part of this pastoral care includes providing Lutheran materials in the Farsi language, which is spoken in Iran. LHF is looking into opportunities to assist with a German/Farsi side-by-side edition of Luther’s *Small Catechism*, so that German pastors might better instruct the immigrants in the Lutheran faith and prepare them for baptism.

“We also have to translate a world view and try to understand the background of Iranians,” Rev. Gevers continued. “Many of them are traumatized. Some have spent time in prisons, and some have even been tortured. We’ve realized that we need 150% effort, tears and very hard work to reach out to our brothers and sisters and to understand where they are coming from.”

This Christmas, Rev. Gevers is pleased to see how the Iranians have become part of their Lutheran church family.

“Some of the former Muslims will be celebrating Christmas for the first time,” he reflected. “In our living nativity scene, we will have shepherds and even real sheep. But what is more important is that we will also have real magi from Iran!”

New opportunities open in Lithuania’s public schools

by Jennifer Bagnall

It’s almost unimaginable in the United States: Lutheran pastors allowed by law to teach the faith in public schools. Yet in Lithuania (a small Baltic nation to the west of Russia), just such an open door exists.

LHF Executive Director Rev. Matthew Heise recently spent time with pastors in the Consistory of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Lithuania (CELCL) and their bishop, Rev. Mindaugas Sabutis. Together, they outlined plans for LHF to translate books like *One Hundred Bible Stories* to help introduce Lithuanian school children to the Savior, Jesus Christ.

“The pastors indicated they could use 2,000 copies of a Bible storybook in the city of Tauragė alone,” said Rev. Heise. “In addition to the work in the schools, the CELCL holds these summertime camps for youth, which are really well attended. In 2014, one camp had 560 children, and the other had 400. What a stunning opportunity to share God’s Word in the language of these youth!”

As the children and their families seek to join Lithuanian Lutheran churches, Bishop Sabutis indicated that confirmation materials, such as *Catechetical Helps* by Erwin Kurth and accompanying workbooks, are also important. Highest on the pastors’ wish list is a *Pastoral Agenda and Care Companion*, texts that include the rites and prayers for baptism, confirmation, marriages, funerals and more.

“The last time an Agenda was printed in Lithuania was over a century ago, in

1907,” explained Rev. Heise. “A current agenda will give pastors the resources they need to better minister to their people and will unite them in their practices.”

Once completed, these translations will mark the first books LHF has printed in Lithuania in over a decade.

“This renewal of LHF publishing in Lithuania has been made possible by a long-time friend of Rev. Rahn, who recently passed away and remembered the LHF mission in his will,” Rev. Heise said. “Through his generous gift, thousands of young children and their parents will be given a firm foundation in their Lutheran faith. They will have a constant reminder that they are God’s beloved children and that Jesus died for them.”

DECEMBER 10

A conference phone call with a sub committee of the CTCR covered a number of topics, but the main question asked pertained to doctrinal issues as it related to the ELCSS/S and church fellowship with the LCMS.

It was pointed out that the church was truly confessional as almost all teachers at the seminary were from the LCMS, including high officials of the synod. It was also pointed out that the initial curriculum for the seminary of the church was constructed with help from the seminaries of the LCMS. There seemed to be a concern within the sub committee that the granting of fellowship would mean financial dependency on the LCMS. It was assured by Bishop Noah Wilson that the first interest was to be associated with a church body that had similar convictions, doctrine, and confession that the ELCSS/S had.

At one point a reference was made to the fact that it was on August 31, 1999 that a request was made by the late Bishop Andrew Mbugo Elisa addressing the question of fellowship with Dr. Al Barry and with each President serving the LCMS. Offers were made for meetings to take place in Nairobi with Pres. Kieschnick but the scheduled meeting was canceled.

Bishop Rule respectfully urged the group to take action on this fellowship question as quickly as would allow.

The only question with regard to doctrine was whether I knew of any doctrinal issue that would prevent fellowship. My answer: “Absolutely none.” I reported that this church from its very beginning has been built on the foundation of the confession and doctrine held by the LCMS, all training of Sudan pastors has been by sound confessional pastors, mostly from our two seminaries and from the clergy ranks of the synod.

I asked if they had seen our report on “The History of LHF Involvement in Sudan” that was sent to Dr. Collver. It was distributed to them. I told them that they would have noted the names of prominent members of the LCMS, including high synod officers starting with Dr. Scott Murray, the first instructor in the

seminary program. Men from both seminaries taught in the CLIHM. I pointed out that the curriculum for the seminary had been worked out in cooperation with faculty members at Fort Wayne—Dr. William Weinrich, Dr. Timothy Quill, Dr. Rick Nuffer, and under the advice from Dr. Bernie Lutz.

Q: Do you think the ELCSS/S can thrive without the major support from America?

My answer: Having just attended the convention of the church a few weeks ago, I was pleased with the discussions held relative to stewardship and the discussion on the premise that it is time the church took seriously its obligation to be prepared to stand on its own two feet. While that will be a challenge for them, I believe they are heading in the right direction relative to finding ways to be self-supporting.

Q: Do you think that there is an assumption that fellowship equals funding?

I pointed out that this matter was discussed at our meeting with Dr. Collver and Rev. Shauen Trump in Addis last March. Bishop Rule at that meeting pointed out that money was not the issue as they sought fellowship with LCMS, but that the first interest was to be association with a church body that had similar convictions, doctrine, and confession that the ELCSS/S had. They sought fellowship because of this primary concern.

Q: Is there any connection/discussions between the Lutheran groups in Sudan?

Well, this is a new phenomenon as we only heard about other Lutheran churches in Sudan in the last year or two. No, there is not a lot of interaction. Why? Well, three years ago when I was in Yambio I saw electrical poles, this last trip I saw electrical poles and electrical lines strung, but there is no electricity. This depicts a difficulty in communication. Even though it seems everyone has a phone, it still isn't easy to communicate. And it is even worse traversing the roads to get from one place to another. For instance, the road between Juba and Yambio, a mere distance of some 150 miles, is unsafe, if not for the ruts, then the bandits waiting to hold you up. Bishop Rule has had limited discussions with the Bol group.

Q: Have you heard of the interest by the Anglican church to become part of the LCMS?

I only learned about this today when I received the PR release from Dr. Collver and the pictures showing Bishop Elijah meeting in St. Louis with officials of the LCMS. I find it strange, however, that with our principle that the bishop of a local area is the primary contact, that this matter was never discussed with Bishop Rule or any meeting held between them in Sudan.

Q: We have heard rumors that Bishop Rule is charging a fee for pastors to be ordained. Could you confirm or comment?

Bishop Rule has decided that he would not ordain the current class of 13 candidates until there is assurance that they can be supported in their assigned parish. He doesn't want to place them in a congregation and then find that they have left because they had to find support by working another job. I can see, however, how such a rumor could get started because of Bishop Rule's delaying ordination. I would categorically say it's nothing more than a rumor.

Q: What about the size of the ELCSS/S?

I had asked the Bishop to provide an up-to-date statistical report in preparation for this meeting, but it has not been received. The last report indicated there were 140-150 congregations and 40,000 members.

Q: This is quite a bit smaller than the Anglican group, although the ELCSS/S has been in existence for almost 25 years. I would say that the Anglican numbers are somewhat inflated unless the members are out there hiding in the bush! You would say that the numbers are inflated, then?

Yes. At one point I did allude to the fact that it was on August 31, 1999 that a request was made by the late Bishop Andrew, addressing the question of fellowship with Dr. Al Barry and with each President serving the LCMS. Offers were made for meetings to take place in Nairobi with Pres. Kieschnick but the scheduled meeting was canceled. I would respectfully urge you to take action on this fellowship question as quickly as would allow. I don't know your procedures, but I would hope that this question might come before the convention in 2016; although Dr. Collver in our discussions in Addis felt that it may not happen until 2019. Thank you for providing this avenue for discussion.

DECEMBER 13

Rev. Japhet Dachi and Rev. James May travel to Gambella, Ethiopia to conduct the graduation service for the three students who were driven out of South Sudan during their vicarage and ended up in refugee camps. The LHF provided special training for them with classes both in Gambella and in Addis. Rev. May spent two weeks with the students teaching the book of Revelation. Dr. Lutz had also spent a month with the students prior to going to Yambio.

DECEMBER 15

(From the Christmas 2015 "Word at Work" newsletter:)

All around the world, children are waiting to meet the Christ Child

by Rev. Matthew Heise

Dear Friends of LHF,

This is the time of year our churches ring with the sounds of Christmas preparations! Like generations before them, children and grandchildren are memorizing "Away in a Manger" for their Sunday school programs, while parents fashion

halos for the heavenly hosts and headdresses for young shepherds watching over their flocks by night.

For us, Christmas is a wonderful season filled with beloved traditions. But for millions of people around the world, December 25 is just another day on the calendar. Their children and grandchildren have never even heard of the Lord of the Universe, Jesus Christ.

As I write, I'm traveling on behalf of the Lutheran Heritage Foundation to faraway countries, where the streets are brimming with children who will grow up never knowing how much Jesus loves them.

In Mongolia, for example, I've met men and women living in fear of the mystical shamans, whom they believe can talk to the spirits and cast spells that bring misfortune into their lives. And you would not believe the scene in Germany, where millions of refugees are spilling into the country from predominantly Muslim places like Iran and Syria.

We have a message of hope and life to share! Look at the faces of dear ones and ask yourself, "How can I help introduce these children to the Christ Child?" Here's one answer: join LHF in giving free Bible storybooks like *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories*, translated into the Mongolian and Arabic languages, to families curious about the Christian faith.

Working through His Word, the Holy Spirit can make new generations of Christians, whose children and grandchildren will join us in worshipping the newborn King!

You can help point the way to the Christ Child!

by Jennifer Bagnall

From Chile to Siberia, from South Africa to Thailand, families are waiting to learn of the one true God. Each year, LHF undertakes several new translation projects that share the Gospel ways children can easily understand. Bible storybooks like *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* and *Bible Stories in Pictures*, translated into more than a dozen languages with more on the way, are used to teach Sunday school and by parents in home devotions. Through your offerings to the LHF mission, these books are given free of charge to thousands of families seeking to know more about the Babe, born in a humble stable, who died that they might live.

Peru: *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories*

"A children's book of Bible stories in Spanish would be a huge blessing here," says Rev. Mark Eisold, an LCMS missionary in Peru. "The children need to know the stories of Jesus, on their level and through something that they may take home with them."

LHF is just beginning the Spanish translation of *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories*, a beautiful full-color Bible storybook. Thousands of copies will be distributed not only in Peru, but throughout most of South and Central America, as well as to North American Hispanic ministries.

Ukraine: *My First Catechism*

There are 3 Lutheran church bodies in Ukraine, where excitingly, about 20 percent of their members are children attending Sunday school and confirmation classes.

“One of the greatest challenges facing our church body is a lack of resources for teaching our people,” says Rev. Slavik Horpynchuk, bishop of the Ukrainian Lutheran Church. “Many of our members are young families, and they need materials to teach their children about the Savior, Jesus Christ. This is especially true among young parents who are themselves recent converts to the faith.”

To help meet this challenge, LHF is publishing a beginner’s catechism into the Ukrainian language.

Ethiopia: *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories*

Ethiopia’s largest Lutheran church body, the EECMY, is one of the fastest growing church bodies in the world, with over a million children. The problem? They have very few Lutheran resources for teaching Sunday school.

“It is good that LHF is preparing A Children’s Garden of Bible Stories in the Amharic language,” writes Dereje Tilahun, coordinator for LHF’s Ethiopian projects. “Ten thousand Bible storybooks would not be too many.”

Ghana: Catechism Workbook

Enrollment at Concordia Preparatory School in northern Ghana recently exceeded 475 students - half of whom come from Muslim families. The young students clamor to learn the *Small Catechism* in religion classes, but workbooks are needed in the Kusaal language to help reinforce what they’re learning.

China: *God's Word for You*

Teenagers need to have their faith strengthened too, but few books about Jesus, written from a Lutheran perspective, exist at their level.

Now, LHF has begun work on an original Bible storybook for teens, called *God's Word for You*. Each lesson is written at a more advanced level than a child’s Bible storybook and includes illustrations that are appealing to teenagers, particularly in China and Southeast Asia.

Once the book is complete, LHF will translate *God's Word for You* into several Asian languages, including traditional and simplified Chinese.

Papua New Guinea (PNG): *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories*

Though over 95 percent of PNG’s population identifies as Christian, a huge

challenge to the faith still exists: traditional, animist teachings from the past continue to hold the PNG people in their grip. Children live in fear of evil spirits they believe lurk in the highlands, and cults beckon.

Bible storybooks are desperately needed to reassure PNG children that they are God's own children, and they don't need to be afraid. *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* has been translated into the Tok Pisin language, and LHF will soon begin on the page layouts. The printed books will be given to Sunday school teachers (who currently have no curriculum to teach from) and to parents to read with their children.

Message from Bishop Vesovolod Lytkin (Siberia)

Peace to you dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ!

Now we have gone through the middle of Advent. Someone once said that "the Church turns our life into a permanent feast." So yesterday we lighted a special candle that is brighter than the other three—pink, not purple, to remind us that most of the fast days have already been passed, that Christmas is soon.

Our Bishop said in his sermon on Matthew 11:1-10, Saint John the Baptist had a right to ask this question: "Are You the one Who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" [Matt. 11:3].

After all, if (now imagine for a moment this "if"!) it was an error, John the Baptist's whole life was in vain. In vain he spent his early years in the desert, in vain he preached under the scorching sun, in vain he is now in the prison, in vain he will die, all is in vain.

We also can doubt. "Are You the one Who is to come or are we to wait for another?" This is our common human question, our almost daily prayer to God.

Are You the one when I feel so bad? Are You the one when this world hurts me? Are You the one when my beloved ones are dying? Are You the one when those mired in poverty who deserve happiness? Are You the one, or maybe we just made a mistake in our faith? Maybe we are just wasting our time for all these prayers?

"Faith and hope"

However you should know... Although some fanatics say that a doubt is a sin, we are in good company, headed by Saint John the Baptist. So, are you doubting, John? Doubt is not a sin. Doubt turns into a sin only when it turns into temptation. When people refuse to believe that the Son of God came into the world, but they create their own "gods" according to their views. When does doubt turn into temptation? When we prefer our response instead the God's word. When we think we know better than God how shall we live. When does doubt turn into temptation? When we stop going to church. (As many people think: why go

there? I can spend my time more usefully, trying to make money, or to relax after a hard work. Aren't millions of people thinking in such way, giving up, letting to doubts to win over them?)

And so, although Christ performed His wonderful miracles, the main miracle is different. The main miracle is that God incarnated and was born of the Virgin Mary and became one of us to dwell with us. The main miracle is that the Kingdom of God has become part of this world, and this Kingdom is touchable and tangible as tangible is the piece of unleavened bread and a taste of wine, that become the Body and Blood of Christ on the altar.

The main miracle is that in this world where there is the Church—as a hospital for sinners, as a shelter for those who doubt, as an island of calm in the midst of ocean of evil and cruelty. We will not understand this, if the most important thing in our life is our health and satiety. We will understand this, if we recognize that we are to live forever, and the most important thing for us is forgiveness of sins and salvation.

Blessed is he who takes no offense at Me. [Matt. 11:6]

So, blessed are you, John the Baptist, because you “had prepared the way for the Lord,” pointing at Him in the presence of a great multitude of people. Blessed are your disciples, because, as you took no offence on God, so they also took no offence, but came to Christ. Blessed are those who stay in faith, in spite of the circumstances. Blessed are all who aspire to the main miracle which is constantly perpetrated by God on earth that the Eucharist is.

Blessed we are, brothers and sisters, because we come to the church, to obtain here new strengths for our Christian life, in order to move through all the fears and trials, and to persevere and to endure, and to meet the coming Christ one Day, and, together with John the Baptist and with all the saints to say to Him: “You are the one Who is to come, we did not wait for another.”

Please pray for our Bishop Vsevolod and for all clergymen and laymen in Siberia.

We wish you a blessed time of Advent!

DECEMBER 15

This is how things start for a program to provide continued theological education when the seminary is not in session during a given year, such as in 2016. During this time pertinent seminars are to be held for all professional workers in the church and the lay leaders. These seminars must be prepared for in advance.

From: Robert Rahn

To: Robert Roberts

Subject: RE: Getting Ready for 2016

Robert/Eileen,

Thanks for giving this prayer time in preparation for a possible trip to help with the seminars. I'm not sure what is in mind for the five to seven days, but I have some suggestions in the interest of cost-saving. I would say they be five days and the sessions include everyone in maybe three to four locations if you have a month's time for South Sudan. Perhaps on Saturday morning you could have a sermon study session with the pastors and evangelists. Something should be figured out as to what could be done for the north region and where it could be done since Khartoum seems to be kind of a hot bed for persecution of Christians.

Scheduling these in mid-May would give the needed time for planning. Maybe we could schedule another session in July, or another agreed upon time with one of our clergy coming or having Giessler for a month if his health permits. Or Lutz coming to finish his stewardship topic. All this in the "mulling" stage. You can work out with John Jock just what the program would be in Gambella.

DECEMBER 21

Rev. Rahn received a letter from the Concordia Plan Services which said: "For the past 50 years, CPS has been honored to serve the workers of the LCMS that have answered the call to ministry. We at CPS want to celebrate the people who give of themselves to reach others with God's love. That's why this year we've created the SPIRIT OF SERVICE AWARD.

"The Award is designed to honor workers or volunteers who go above and beyond to serve their ministry community, and who make a real impact by spreading the Word of God. In this, our first year, we received over 160 nominations. We would like to congratulate you, as you are one of this year's SPIRIT OF SERVICE AWARD nominees! We thank you for your service to your local ministry and to the LCMS as a whole. We will honor three awardees in 2016 with a \$2500 gift to the ministry they serve."

Upon receiving the notice, Rev. Rahn indicated that it was an honor to be nominated, and that no matter the end result, it was another indication that God, indeed, had blessed the ministry. Yet, all glory ultimately belongs to Him because JESUS NEVER FAILS.

From: Larry Rockemann

Subject: FW: Thank you for your wonderful Christmas gift!

I've had Christmas early. Frankly, serving LHF, I have Christmas all year long! As I am privileged to serve LHF, I am able to see and hear "up-close-and-personal" how our great and gracious God continues to gift people in this world with the treasures of His Son, our Savior Jesus, through the work of the Lutheran Heritage Foundation. To be sure, I'm certain that this caught our founder early on and

it catches all of us daily as we go about our work with LHF.

When I was at our meetings in Macomb a couple weeks ago, I noticed the newly translated/published books on the cart in the hallway at LHF... and I couldn't help but notice the Amharic edition of Giertz's *Hammer of God*. (What Lutheran pastor hasn't read this at seminary?!) I begged for a copy of it to take with me (though I didn't have to beg too hard...). I had Fasil in mind. When I arrived back home, I wrote a note to Fasil, tucked it inside the book, and sent it off to him. The email note back from him says it all. It says what I know all of us at LHF hear so often yet may be tempted to miss in the busy push-and-pull of the days. It says, "Thank you for the gift."

That's what we do—what I get to do! Through the work of translating, publishing, distributing, and introducing those core, foundational books of our Lutheran faith, we are putting into the hands and homes and hearts of people all over the world the gift of Jesus for them. Listen to Fasil in his email. Don't you hear the joy in his voice—the awed-silent "Wow!" of the shepherds kneeling before the manger? "To you is born a Savior, Christ the Lord." I must admit that the short email from Fasil Alehayehu Getahun made my day—my year—my Christmas! It is a testament to how God continues to gift the world, people of every background and language and culture, with His Gift of the Savior. Simple means. Simple human words. Cradling the Word. 90 languages. And counting.

Rejoice!

From: Fasil Getahun

To: Larry Rockemann

Subject: Thank you for your wonderful Christmas gift!

Dear Pastor Larry:

I've received *The Hammer of God*. Thank you for your special Christmas gift. This book is a gift for all Ethiopian people. Thank you for everything you're doing among us. This is really the right time to support the evangelism work in Ethiopia. The Lord is doing great things among the youth. They need a lot [of] books, discipling this generation is reaching the next one.

God bless you all. I'm so happy. Amesegenalehu—means—Thank you.

Yours in Christ,

Fasil

JANUARY 4

Prepare the Way for the Lord: Christmas in a Refugee Camp in Leipzig

by Rev. Hugo Gevers

[This article is shared with us by Rev. Hugo Gevers of Die Selbständige Evangelische–Lutherische Kirche (The Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church of German or SELK), a sister church body of the LCMS. Rev. Hugo Gevers is the Lutherische Kirchenmission (LKM) missionary to the migrants and the underserved in Volkmarsdorf, Leipzig, Germany. LKM is the mission arm of the SELK. Rev. Gevers works alongside the local SELK congregation, St. Trinitatisgemeinde, which is housed in the historic Lukakirche in Volkmarsdorf, to reach migrants, refugees, and the underserved Germans living in the area with Witness and Mercy, and bring them into Life Together.]

Right from the start our efforts to organize a Christmas party for the refugee kids seemed to be hampered by almost everything and everybody. But still we received the go-ahead to share around 250 Christmas gifts with children in a refugee camp in Leipzig.

But I was absolutely frustrated when all these kids were moved to smaller towns around Saxony just three days before our party. What to do? There was no going back as the 250 presents were all ready and packed in our home! Initially, I tried to organize a Saxony-wide trip. But this became an impossible option since we had to plan each event separately and also had to negotiate with each and every refugee home coordinator. In a situation like this, we have no option but to wait for God to act on our behalf. And so it was.

All of a sudden, we were given a hall in a refugee camp in Leipzig and could share with all of the children in the camp. But would we get our volunteers to join us for this event exactly one day before Christmas Eve? The efforts of these volunteers really surprised me beyond measure. We managed to get 16 helpers on board. This included members, as well as the parents of a member who were visiting from South Africa. In addition, the security staff of the hall also helped. This was amazing! And so things just all fell into place.

In the home we were received with open arms by the staff as well as by the refugees themselves. I will never forget these golden moments: children who have seen nothing but war all their lives with the precious gift in their arms, perhaps for the first time in their entire lives. Their boxes included a musical instrument, clothing, writing material and a toy. And the far greater gift was the message of Christ, which I was able to share in Farsi and which a member of our church then

translated into Arabic. The kids then literally tore the little Gospel tract from my hands. It was a wonderful experience! God prepared the way and the hearts of these kids as well as their parents for us.

A big thank you to all the volunteers! When it was all done, the refugee coordinator personally thanked us all for organizing the event. She even heaped us with praise! What a difference to the initial open resentment which we experienced!

And last, but not least, was the performance of our brass instruments. An unforgettable experience was seeing these old ladies clapping their hands to ancient German music. This must have been totally strange to them and yet they were so appreciative!

The event allowed us to do the main thing necessary for further work: build trust. Our faces are known and some of the families attended the Divine Service at Lukaskirche on Christmas Eve.

JANUARY 9

Dr. Rahn,

A blessed new year to you as well. I have an elders' meeting coming up in two weeks, but I mentioned to them in November that this was coming. I expect full support of the trip and timeframe.

I have already started re-reading the standard pastoral care volumes. I also plan to contact Bishop Peter about what he would like to see addressed. I have a connection with a couple solid professors who can provide some direction too. And I'll also ask Bishop Peter what, if anything, I can bring for the churches. Last time, I brought a bunch of vestments and several big boxes of communion wafers, plus solar lamps and clergy shirts. I'll be working towards booking flights in February/March. I'm hoping to work with the travel agent again so I can get a couple days layover in Brussels to visit my brother. I'll keep you updated.

Rev. Andrew Smith

JANUARY 13

From: solid dec Rudge Pereira

To: Robert Rahn

Subject: SAILORS CFSD MINISTRY. 2016. DIFF LANG BOOKLETS

Dear Brother Bob,

Greetings to you from Colombo, Sri Lanka. We do not use the word LUTHERAN which is detrimental to our work. We thank you very much for your consistence in encouraging us.

We have won another of our many court cases that center on efforts on the part of thieves to steal our valuable property. This is a common practice in a cor-

rupt government. Nevertheless, those gangsters seem to have made an appeal at a higher court. We will have to wait & see if the high court will accept this. And if it does, it means expenses would be higher. And time for the ministry would be less.

When you [budget] for 2016 you could create an avenue for us to get parts of Biblical [literature] like only the Book of Proverbs, Luke, John, Acts will be most helpful especially in Vietnamese, Indonesian, Philippines, Tagalog, Chinese, Korean, Hindi, Mayayalam. Concani Maldivian books are done here by an Englishman. (Sign of true dedication)

Our number of students have recently increased. This means more time is needed for the teaching ministry. Stage I. Sow the seed first.

God Bless you all for the work of 2016.

Rudge, Maureen, Kirk & Wittenberg.

From: Robert Marshall

To: Robert Rahn

Subject: RE: Circuit Gift

Hi Dr. Rahn,

A blessed Epiphanytide to you! Aha! This gift IS a reality!!! Thanks and praise be to God. I had heard about this nearly a month ago. Rev. Kurt Lambart's (St. Matthew's/Westland) grandfather passed away (just weeks after his dear wife passed), and I attended the visitation which was here in downriver as 90-something year old Walter was a long-time member of St Paul/Trenton and I'd visited both he and his wife several times during one ailment or another. As Kurt and I chatted, he revealed that several in the circuit were a bit surprised to hear a report that there was a large sum in the treasury; Kurt said that all agreed that the funds weren't doing any good just sitting, and that LHF would be a great beneficiary of the funds. His grandparents were married for 70+ years! From my conversations with Walt, he would have testified to the truth, "Jesus Never Fails!"

JANUARY 18

From: Anssi Simojoki

To: Matthew Heise

Subject: Re: Gurhan

Dear Brother Matthew,

I am obviously a slow partner. It does not stem only of age and laziness. I only try to clear my various obligations one after another. I should do my writing work, and yet, there is so much else to be done. Thanks for your patience and optimism! Indeed, the Mission Diocese has chosen its path to the missions.

The congregations are not only generators of finances. They, all and singular, are also active players inside the diocese. Mission diocese is not building up a new

mission society. The idea is that of working with existing confessional Lutheran missions. In clear language, this means LHF, Lutherans in Africa, and LHF-Africa. Right now, the mission work is a trident: James May's work in Africa, the Somali Lutheran Church of Mohamed Gurhan, and Lutheran village mission among the Jarai tribe in Vietnam and Cambodia. There is a Jarai family in northern Finland. The father has connected the Oulu congregation with his people in the South-East Asian mountain regions. The congregation did send him to a preaching trip among c. 50 villages. What is needed is teaching and after some time, establishing a church structure over there.

In this trident we want to work officially and closely with you. It has been my plan and effort to connect Gurhan to the conservative Lutheran church in Ethiopia, EELC (Ethiopian Evangelical Lutheran Church). This morning I finally received a message that the Rev. Mekonnen Geremew and Mohamed Gurhan have been connected.

My role in the Mission Diocese is to act as an elderly statesman and part-time visiting missionary teacher in Africa. My third son Tuomo is in charge of the official mission work. There are many practical things to be sorted between you and him.

It is true that I have planned a trip to Kenya and Ethiopia. It would be a great pleasure and privilege to visit Ukambani together with you.

From: Robert Rahn
To: Simojoki Martti
Subject: Reactivated

Dear Martti,

Our data entry person let me know that you have reactivated your monthly mission gift to the mission and ministry of LHF. We are very pleased to receive your gift and to have you back on board as an international partner. We thank God for you and your family participation.

Actually, 2016 is kind of a significant year in that it will be my 55th year in the ministry, our 55th wedding anniversary, and the year that both my wife and I turn 80. It's also a significant year for Jeff's family. They will celebrate their 20th wedding anniversary. It's also the year that Mackenzie turns 16 and Carter becomes a teenager at 13. We will be on the cruise in early April.

So, Rev. Otiso should have started his new Call with the Lutheran Evangelical Association of Finland. I just sent him another box of education materials just before Christmas. I have another box to get off to him in the next weeks—more Sunday School material and copies of Luther's *Small Catechism* in English. It seems to me that he will continue to serve St. Andrew's. Thank you for your support of the congregation. It was very meaningful to him, as he has expressed to me.

JANUARY 22

Dear Rev. Tony Boos,

Greetings by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ from Bangladesh Lutheran Church Mission. I pray you are doing well by the God grace.

Dear Pastor, I would like to inform you that I was visited our mission field as Satkhira District and Jessore District last week of January 2016. Did you remember the mission field where we baptized and form the new congregation these villages? Next February first week, I again will be there and stay four days. Our Lutheran church schools are already started from January 2, and we are providing some general education materials supplies to the all school's teachers and students. It's not enough but we continue to the God's work. And we have very urgent need.

Lutheran resource in Bengali language as Lutheran *Small Catechism* and *Lutheran Service Book* and etc. Dear brother you know very well what is the needed for Bangladesh Lutheran church ministry. We are facing many challenges and fight against many bad things. We have a need for at least four evangelists for new local congregations.

Another question I would ask is about your plan for the Bangladesh Lutheran ministry this new year 2016. We eagerly expected your kind consideration and support for God's Kingdom to expand in Bangladesh. I would like [to] invite you please come and visit this work of God.

Please pray for me and my staffs, congregations, schools and all ministerial activities. I look forward your kind response.

God bless you!

Yours in Christ,

Rev. Monotosh Banarjee

Founding President – Bangladesh Lutheran Church Mission

Rev. Phil Giessler,

This morning the Friars Club had a post-celebration discussion and all the nuances of the event were reviewed. After that I'll get together with the King's Royal Order of Stuffers for the next celebration. The winter mailing is being put out today. Here is how the birthday celebration went down:

A DESCRIPTION OF A SIGNIFICANT EVENT OCCURRING ON THE OCCASION OF AN 80TH BIRTHDAY. Here are the details of that event:

Greetings,

Some folks knew about the surprise celebration, but nothing filtered down to me, so it was a real surprise. It truly was a birthday to be remembered!!!

Jeff told me to stop at his place and we could ride with them to the new restau-

rant he was going to take me to on my 80th. When we drove up, I was only intent on getting into the driveway without running into his car parked in the drive. I was oblivious to cars (later discovered) parked down the street and on the street in front of their house. We entered through the garage and were told to see the kids in the living room. They were sitting sheepishly (later discovered why) across the room and as I walked towards them, they pointed to the bridge. There is a bridge that leads from one bedroom to the second in the upper open living room area. When I looked up, I saw and heard the group gathered on the steps and on the bridge. So, the surprise having been orchestrated and enjoyed by all, we commenced with the hors d'ouvres, soup, chili, cake.

Later the cards were presented and one original gift! My golfing partner, Pastor Otten, had rigged up what he called a new briefcase. It was one of those plastic cases that looks like a milk case, to which he attached a belt for a handle. It was all wrapped up with duct tape in a yard waste bag. Several packages were inside that were also wrapped securely with the duct tape. The first one I opened was a large plastic container inside of which there was a jar securely wrapped, a jar of herring. We had one time talked about German dishes missing from Christmas celebrations. Next was a neatly wrapped item in the duct tape flavor and what fell out was another seldom served exotic vegetable—a rutabaga (this is so ancient that my spell check can't even come up with something). In addition, there was a bottle of brandy. I guess that was to wash it all down. On the other two delicacies he had written that it was soul food. It presented some good humor for the evening even though it came at my expense. He'll be surprised when this appears in my next book.

An earlier gift had been delivered by UPS from Rev. Wilton Fluegge, the senior member (93) of the "Friar's Club." This is the coffee group that gets together on a regular basis. Four others at the party are occasional invited guests to our "club"—Jim Riske, Thrivent Insurance; Rev. Paul Burow, local semi-retired pastor (represented by his wife as he was ill); Mark Loessel, friend who was a neighbor when we were in Fort Wayne; and Rev. Matt Heise, LHF director, who gets occasional invites when I'm out of town. Now you can see that this Friar's Club has some far-reaching historic connections. Rev. John Merrill, our former pastor, now semi-retired, is still too young for active membership. We are thinking of inviting him when it warms up and he can come by motorcycle.

The evening came to an end with the proverbial lighting of the candles and singing before serving the cake and ice cream dessert. No, the smoke detectors had been disconnected prior to the lighting!!! Actually, the two candles that were lit were an 8 and an 0, saving the fire department a call.

Now that the cards (all 45 of them) have been arranged on the mantle and around, we can enjoy the memories of the day and thank God for the opportu-

nity to celebrate these years. We can also anticipate continued LHF service and ministry as long as the Lord provides the health and strength to do so. I appreciated all the cards, some of them with gift cards and others having notices that a gift in my honor was given to LHF, as Donna had suggested when she was asked what could be given. As Donna likes to report at birthday events, “Remember that the closer you get to the end of the roll, the faster it goes!” or “We count up and the Lord counts down.” And you may have your own slogan that’s appropriate, especially at age 80. Two of my cards had a cow theme. Those suggested that “when you reach 80 you should milk it for all it’s worth.”

Even though one probably has to wait until the 100 level before you get newspaper coverage, I’m glad you were among those who covered the event by recognizing it with the greetings you provided, whether by card, mail, phone, Facebook, email, or personal greeting. Those greetings had a global flavor, having heard from a number of friends from other countries. We thank God for you and all those who participated in this event and helped us to enter a milestone era.

R. Rahn, the Octogenarian

FEBRUARY 8

The LHF Board of Directors met and approved the budget for the year 2016. The budget once again included a major gift from a private foundation in the amount of \$200,000. It represents a \$20,000 grant and the remaining portion to be used for matching gifts from new donors and from those who have not sent a gift in the past 13 months.

Rev. Heise presented an extensive report to the Board outlining the books published around the world, totaling 782 titles to date. He also listed the anticipated new titles that would be published during the year in at least 16 different languages. He noted that he intended to travel to Japan, South Korea, Kenya, Ethiopia, Papua New Guinea, Australia, Central Asia, and Eastern/Central Europe.

Two new IRPRs were introduced—Rev. Robert Pfeil of Northern Wisconsin and Rev. Gene Holtorf of Kansas, bringing the total to 11 working in the field.

The Board approved the addition of a part-time staff member to assist with media matters, keeping the website current, producing updated PowerPoints, looking after the Facebook page, and assisting in English publications. Rev. Heise reported on how LHF makes connections with people via public relations in e-blasts, Facebook and the “Word at Work” newsletter. Despite dire predictions several years ago that “print was dead,” readers continue to respond very positively to LHF’s bi-monthly print newsletter.

The new project for Sunday schools, VBS, and day schools was continuing to receive strong interest. So far 80 requests had been received for the “PNG”

project (People Needing God) for Papua New Guinea. Funds received from the project will go towards publishing the Tok Pisin edition of *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories*.

Heise pointed out that our books and materials would be used and were already being used in a variety of places. For Iranian, Afghan, and Syrian refugees coming to Lutheran churches in Germany, the Farsi edition of Luther's *Small Catechism* is being prepared. The elementary school children in Vietnam are using the children's material published by LHF. Youth in Tanzania are using the Swahili edition of the catechism.

Board action included the approval of promoting Mr. Jeff Rahn to the position of Assistant Executive Director in recognition of his direct involvement in and understanding of all phases of LHF activity on a global scale. It is also a way to have someone in charge when Rev. Heise is gone on many international trips.

FEBRUARY 9

Rev. Simon Gatluak, assistant bishop of the ELCSS/S, wrote a message of thanks to me after I had visited the refugees that fled from South Sudan to Gambella, Ethiopia with some 700,000 living in area refugee camps. Walking to the Sunday worship service, I had picked up a long stick and attached a small cross to the top of it. While preaching the sermon and having it interpreted into the Nuer language, I realized it was getting a little long for many children who were sitting on the dirt floor of the church. I had them get up and I took the stick with the cross and we marched around the congregation singing "I Want to Follow Jesus," a hymn from the Lutheran Service Book. I did not remember the words exactly but made them up and had the children sing the refrain. The Bishop remembered the event as being inspired and one that lingers in the heart. He indicated that it was a reminder that Jesus will lead millions of people to the cross and to eternal salvation. Simon writes:

"Receive the greetings from Gambella Ethiopia. We in Upper Nile South Sudan and Gambell congregations of ELCSS/S remembering you always and the good work you did among us of planting the good seed of giving a training to these young men Simon Lul, Peter Koryom, and Gabriel Padoch all of them now are doing well and expanded God Kingdom through them many come to the faith and we thank God for that.

"We also ask your prayer so that they are ordained and serve the people of God. As the pastor in the area these men are qualify for the work of the holy ministers. We prayer that one day you will come back to upper Nile and Gambella. May the Lord of Hope be between us and you."

In Christ, Rev. Simon Gatluak

FEBRUARY 10

From: Charles Kazimilio

To: Robert Rahn

Dear Rev. Rahn,

Sorry for the inconvenience. Will you forgive the new church like ELCSS/S with its new pastors of 2010? We are only left 6 of 14. And we still stand confessional Lutheran. We need relationship with you LCMS in USA confessional body. We need more to grow spiritual thru farther studies, to equip our church too. A young church like this could not just left on the way like this because of the errant way of one person like this. How do you look for its futures?

We the young pastors, we are like grass dying for nothing because of one elephant beating down the grass while feeding only the stomach with no mind for the church future. Forward this message to Dr. Colver from LCMS that we are down here apologizing for missing a meeting with him. We were not aware that it was scheduled by the Bishop. Had we known we would have gone to meet him to greet him and to represent our church because we need partners. Will you forgive the church? No pride can serve God, but humility. And humbleness is ours in the church as we look forward to get what we hope for.

Phil. 3:12-13. Humility And humbleness is ours as we live. Philippians 2:15

With blessing from God,

Rev. Charles Undo Kazimilio

Young Pastor from Tòmbura County

Giara Lutheran church Parish. WES

FEBRUARY 11

From: Matthew Heise

To: Noah Bishop Wilson

Hello, dear Bishop Wilson,

We have received word that you may have had surgery in Khartoum, so please accept our prayers for a speedy recovery.

As you remember, last year we met in Addis Ababa with Dr. Al Collver, the representative to the president of the LCMS. Pastor Rahn and I were hopeful that this meeting might be the beginning of fellowship talks between Missouri Synod and the ELCSS/S.

Therefore, we were very surprised and saddened to hear that when Dr. Collver arrived in Juba this week, there were no talks with your church. You were not there. Could not someone have been delegated to speak for you if you were unable to come to Juba? We are afraid that a wonderful opportunity has been missed.

This brings me to a more painful statement. We receive little communication from you personally, despite our efforts to support the ELCSS/S. We are troubled by this lack of communication. This week I had a meeting with the Board of LHF. They asked me many questions about the ELCSS/S, many of which I could not answer. They are concerned that LHF is spending a disproportionate amount of its budget in South Sudan/Sudan. Pastor Rahn is trying to find ways to make the church more independent. The bakery is one of those projects. But our primary task, as you know, is to translate and print Lutheran books. If we receive little information, it is difficult for us to help you. Please understand that LHF cannot continue to support the ELCSS/S with large amounts of money and little idea of how it is helping the church.

We pray God's blessings upon you and especially for your healing.

Dear Pastor Heise,

Greetings in the name of our Lenten Savior and Lord! This letter contains information concerning the Sudanese Lutheran Mission Society (SLMS) and the breakaway group, the South Sudanese Lutheran Mission Society (SSLMS). The information in this letter came as a result of speaking at the SLMS' Annual Conference held on November 7, 2015 at St. John Lutheran Church in Storm Lake, Iowa and an email from Rev. Wichiang T. Wetnyangran that came today.

As I was visiting previous to the November SLMS meeting, I was made aware of this other group in conversation with Dr. Jeffrey Thormodson and others. From the conversation, I gathered that Rev. Matthew Wichluol Both (who is listed as the President of the SSLMS), Rev. James (Gadet), and others have begun this alternate Sudanese mission society—the South Sudan Lutheran Mission Society (SSLMS). One of the main reasons I was told for this breakaway organization was that they believed that the Lutheran Heritage Foundation had supposedly given a huge sum of American dollars (\$300 million according to Wichiang—an amount far in excess of LHF's actual budget for everything) to the bishop of the Sudanese Lutheran Church in South Sudan—Rev. Wilson Noah Rule and he had used these funds inappropriately. The SSLMS has also started a breakaway LWML patterned after the LWML of the SLMS.

The Sudanese Lutheran Mission Society is served by President Rev. Wichiang T. Wetnyangran who serves at Peace Lutheran Church in Hurst, Texas. The Sudanese EIIT (Ethnic Immigrant Institute of Theology) student I am mentoring (Vicar Gatluk Reat) was supposedly "elected" to be one of the SSLMS Board of Counselors, but he is not. At the November meeting he was elected as the treasurer of the SLMS. Gatluak and I have had a number of conversations about this other organization and those who have broken away from the SLMS in hope of establishing a counter organization to SLMS and to support those opposed to

Bishop Rule in South Sudan.

I am sharing this information because LHF is accused of having contributed to this division which we did not do since LHF doesn't have the kind of money we supposedly gave Bishop Rule. Because of the supposed role of LHF I am sharing this information with you because you should know about this. I would encourage you to visit with President Sommerfeld and Dr. Thormodson at the seminary about this situation since Bishop Rule has been in contact with President Sommerfeld and I learned of this situation from Dr. Thormodson.

Further, I am concerned about the divisive effects this has already had on the church in South Sudan. They have had enough conflict thanks to the civil war there. They don't need to have the members of the church divided against one another as well.

I have been told that there will be a meeting in St. Louis about or between these two groups on March 17 & 18. Wichiang has asked that I be there because I am on the LHF board and I have worked in the Sudanese community. Does LHF have someone in St. Louis who could attend? Should I consider doing this? I think that a better representative for this meeting would be you! I can send you hard copy of the email from Bishop Rule to President Harrison as well as the SSLMS officer sheet if you so desire. The Lord's continued blessings be with you.

In Christ,

Rev. Dr. Armand J. Boehme – LHF Board Member

FEBRUARY 15

From: Yohannes Mengsteab

To: Robert Rahn

Subject: Tigrigna/Eritrean Hymnal

Dear Pastor Rahn,

It was great to visit with you via phone last week. I hope your vacation in Florida was pleasant and you are back home safely.

Thank you also for your willingness to consider the Eritrean hymnal project. These are the purposes of and what the project would look like: There is a song book that is currently used by the Eritrean Evangelical Lutheran Church. The new hymnal will be used by the Eritrean Evangelical Lutheran Church in and outside the country. My plan is to work with the church in Eritrea, and they will be involved in its editing and approving for its use in the church. The hymnal will include:

- all the hymns that are in the song book
- some new hymns that were translated from Lutheran Worship during our time in North America
- African hymns (from the Lutheran churches in Kenya, Tanzania ...etc.)

- new Eritrean hymns (songs).

It will be in the *Lutheran Service Book* format and will include: the lectionaries, the Psalms, Divine Services, ..., evening and morning prayers (especially to be used by the family), daily lectionary, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgiving, the Creeds, the *Small Catechism*.

I am going to work on it to make sure that it is doctrinally sound, and I intend to involve Eritrean leaders in the translation work as well as the musical settings to give it an Eritrean flavor. The leaders in Eritrea will also be involved in its doctrinal review; I intend to visit Eritrea soon, if there be funding for the project.

Funding request: \$50,000

\$30,000—for musicians and people to help with the musical settings (I have two young musicians in mind and one of them is my son, who has a degree in professional music and composition from Berkeley College of music)

\$5,000—Meeting expenses for the musicians

\$5,000—Travel expenses to meet with the leadership of the Evangelical Church of Eritrea

\$10,000—Translation, writing and data entry and typesetting

Thank you so much for your support. May the Good Lord keep you faithful to the end!

WHEN DIFFICULTIES ARISE IN THE CHURCH'S LEADERSHIP

It was on this date that problems surfaced relative to unaccounted expenditures in the ELCSS/S and the effort began to determine how major funds were received into a Juba account and how those funds were expended. The following exchanges took place, indicating that these were serious problems and if they were not handled or information was not provided, the Bishop should resign. This major event demonstrates the difficulty of managing funds when they aren't reported.

Below I record several messages that provide the scope of the problem. For a full year we attempted to get answers but we were on the receiving end of silence and evasive tactics which resulted in the election of a new bishop. Readers will notice that I am temporarily stepping outside of LHF's chronology to closely follow the progression of this storyline. The timeline will continue as before at the date of February 16, 2016.

From: Bernhard Lutz

To: Peter Anibati; Nicholas Louis; Elinama Jacob Bisi; Al Collver; Jephtha Dachi; Robert Rahn; Matthew Heise

Dear Leaders of a Christian Church:

Greetings in Jesus!

My heart aches as I read and re-read the recent reports regarding the failures pronounced upon the Spiritual Leader of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of South Sudan and Sudan. We all are aware of the power of Satan who opposes all that is holy, decent, good and God-pleasing. This year will be my eighth visit to the people of South Sudan. Only God knows if He wills this forthcoming visit to assist the leaders of the Church to grow strong in His precious and holy Word. We are praying that the Holy Spirit will give all of you the courage, understanding and wisdom needed to deal with a difficult and dangerous problem. Asking someone defiant and self-willed to resign from a lucrative position will be challenged and rejected, even with the evidence that is demonstrated by the facts you have listed in the request for Rev. Rule to resign.

The Church's One Foundation is Jesus Christ Her Lord! His Word is powerful and filled with love. May the Triune God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit guide the leaders of the ELCSS/S. It has taken many tears and much love for God and His Word together with the fear of reprisals to reach your position. On the basis of the evidence you shared, you the leaders have my prayers, hand of support, and continued assistance to maintain the CLIHM as a responsible and effective educational component to train and equip servants of the Lord Jesus Christ. To God be the glory!

In this Lenten Season, these 40 days of time for prayer, fasting, and repentance, may each of us see our personal need for a loving and gracious Savior. With His Word and Spirit to guide us, let us be confident that God will guide us to success in dealing with the tensions that surround us in so many ways. So we daily pray: Thy will be done!

On February 15th of 2016, the Finance Committee passed a resolution to suspend all funds for the ELCSS/S except those to be used for translation and publishing projects. The suspension meant that pastors in Sudan would receive no financial support, but it also meant that LHF leadership's freedom to operate on the basis of the budget would now come under closer scrutiny and all matters would be monitored by committees. Daily operations became more cumbersome and time consuming. The preaching of the Gospel was curtailed. One could certainly think that God cannot be pleased when the Great Commission is thwarted. This was the fallout of one person creating uncertainty for all. This was a case where everybody lost.

Dear Peter [Anibati],

I thank you, Peter, for including me in the group of recipients of your serious message! I still treasure the memories from Khartoum and Yambio in the 1990s and during the early years of the new millennium when we together and under

the late Bishop Andrew Mbugo Elisa were building the ELCS in the North as well as in the South. We had so many reasons to be grateful for God's work and rejoice in in the Lord. We should also keep in mind that God always tests individual Christians as well as his entire church in the purpose that everything which is not built on the solid foundation of the Word of the Lord would collapse. Moses was denied access to the Promised Land. David lost, by terribly sinning, all eventual self-confidence and had to pray for mercy as we can read in the wonderful Psalm 51. Peter fell and was forgiven. What pleases me in your appeal to Bishop Noah is its humble but resolute spirit.

What I can do is to greet you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ with the promise that I willingly join the chain of those who beseech the Lord for the rescue and renewal of ELCSS/S. Personally, I still treasure the pleasant memories from your study-time when we met and worked together at Tschwane, South Africa. Your church in the Sudan is now in dire need of all the knowledge and wisdom you drew from the well of God's revelation and Lutheran theology.

Be safe in the Lord and richly blessed in the name of Jesus.

Daktari Anssi Simojoki

What follows are suggestions given to the leadership of the Sudanese church in regard to dealing with problems that surfaced.

From: Robert Rahn

To: Peter Anibati, Elinama Bisi, Nicholas Kumbo Louis, Matthew Heise, Robert Rahn, Jeff Rahn, Bernie Lutz.

Subject: The church moving forward

Dear Peter,

Cordial greetings on this Lord's Day when we have confessed our sins and heard the absolution. This is also available to the good Bishop and should be offered. So when the Bishop comes to defend himself, he should be given an opportunity to address the main issues that have been raised and he should be asked if he is willing to address these issues and declare what his program of correction will be in regards to, first and foremost, the issue of finances. Will he abide by the convention resolution that all finances be brought into a central treasury of the church? This would be the first area where the bishop could show good faith by outlining a procedure that will be immediately followed to combine the treasuries. It should be accomplished within a matter of maybe two days. Account closed!!

He should then be asked the second obvious concern, how was the money spent? This disclosure should go back to the time the first rental agreement was

signed and when the first payment was received from the Minnesota South Sudanese Mission Society. This commitment should be made immediately, and a written report filed within days. Any other funds that have come into the Juba treasury should also be considered, be they from Finland or elsewhere. A full disclosure should be made.

Those would be two very important areas that the church has already addressed as a body. There can be no accusation that this is something contrived by a group of dissidents. This was the church asking. Emmanuel knows well that he did not provide, nor did the Bishop encourage him, to provide the report the convention asked for. I was there to witness this request as it was made. Now I am also accused of not liking the bishop. I'll like the bishop even more, should he repent and follow the steps of full disclosure that you, your church leaders, our Finance Committee, and the LHF Board of Directors is requesting.

After this matter is addressed and resolved, the bishop can then be asked for a written six month, one year, two year, and even five-year plan of action for the ELCSS/S. This would include a timeline to implement the resolutions of the convention relative to elections, ordinations, job description, and hiring of a treasurer. Given his good faith and intended resolution of all these matters, he could remain in office and eventually a service of repentance and absolution be conducted for all involved.

It would be a day of rejoicing and renewal if the bishop would take the lead and demonstrate that he is interested in being a true servant of the Lord, elected into office by expectant people. If it is a case of continued shifting of blame and refusal to assume responsibility, he thereby demonstrates an inability to lead as the shepherd of the church. His intent must be to confess that he being the first and foremost of sinners, calls the church of sinners to repent, and in forgiveness move to be the Church Christ called it to be. Will he do it? Will he be led by the Spirit to do it? Will he declare his intent to do it as the appointed head of the church? It is in his hands. By the time the first two options are addressed and completed, you will know if resignation procedures need to continue. What a time of rejoicing it would be if responsibility is taken and commitments made to work together to bring a new harmony and direction in the church. Our foremost interest is repentance and restoration upon commitments made.

Seeking restoration through repentance and renewed commitments,
R. Rahn

FEBRUARY 26

Jeff Rahn wrote:

Nicholas,

I am addressing this message to you as acting treasurer of the ELCSS/S and

including Peter as the former treasurer, the Bishop, and the General Secretary. The LHF Board of Directors has suspended all transfers to the ELCSS/S due to a lack of financial transparency surrounding the Juba rental arrangement. This also extends to other individuals who were planning to send support to the ELCSS/S through LHF for specific projects. During the budget process we have routinely inquired if there were other sources of support including, but not limited to, church income-generating projects and amounts coming from other partners. LHF has worked tirelessly over the years to obtain grants/gifts for projects that would help the ELCSS/S become self-supporting and less reliant on LHF for support for salaries and church operations. This would enable LHF to continue to focus on translation and publishing projects and the seminary program.

The information that has been received relative to the rental property in Juba is utterly disturbing in that it was never disclosed to LHF as to the extent of revenue that was being generated by this arrangement. Correspondence dated 24/06/2014 from G4S Ordnance Management indicates a \$9,000 per month rental agreement contracted for three years (2014-2017) paying a total of \$324,000. A letter dated 15 April 2014 from G4S states in part “we have now been your tenants for seven years” indicating that this arrangement goes back to around 2007-2008. A copy of the rental agreement for September 1, 2013—September 1, 2014 indicates a monthly rent amount of \$10,000. Based on the information provided in the correspondence (relevant copies attached) I have determined that the total amount of revenue generated by this arrangement during 2007-2017 amounts to potentially \$876,000 USD as shown below:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Monthly</u>	<u>Annual</u>
2007-2008	6,000	72,000
2008-2009	6,000	72,000
2009-2010	6,000	72,000
2010-2011	6,000	72,000
2011-2012	6,000	72,000
2012-2013	6,000	72,000
2013-2014	10,000	120,000
2014-2015	9,000	108,000
2015-2016	9,000	108,000
2016-2017	9,000	108,000
		876,000

We are pleased that the church has access to this revenue source and pray that it continues in order to support her operations. Please, however, address the following questions surrounding this arrangement.

- 1) Please explain why the extent of this rental arrangement was never disclosed to Lutheran Heritage Foundation.
- 2) Please confirm how much has been received from this arrangement and the time period covered if the above information is incorrect.
- 3) Please provide copies of all rental agreements/documentation for this arrangement going back to 2007.
- 4) Please indicate who was aware of this rental agreement and the amount that was being generated by it.
- 5) Who are the current signers on the Juba bank account ending in 9290 into which the rental funds have been deposited?
- 6) Please indicate the dates/dollar amounts/purposes of disbursements from these funds.
- 7) What is the current balance in this bank account?
- 8) When will the funds from this Juba account be combined with the central account per resolution of the last convention?
- 9) In 2013 who authorized John Deang to sign the agreement? Is he an elected official of the ELCSS/S? Where is John Deang now?
- 10) What other amounts have been deposited into this account, where did they come from, and what were they for?
- 11) Please provide bank statements for this account going back as far as possible.
- 12) Other than this rental agreement, please identify all other income generating projects of the church and indicate how much is being generated, where the funds are being deposited, and how the revenue is being used.

Please treat this matter and the questions raised above as serious and urgent. We look forward to receiving your detailed and timely reply so that the LHF Board can further review and discuss this matter.

In Christ,

Jeff Rahn – LHF Director of Operations

MARCH 1

From: Nicholas Louis

Subject: Re: ELCSS/S Finances

Dear Jeff,

Greetings to you from Yambio in the blessed name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Thank you very much for addressing the message to me as the acting treasurer of the ELCSS/S with your questions and concerns for the information that has been received relative to the rental property in Juba.

1. I was assigned as the acting treasurer of the ELCSS/S account in Yambio,

not of Juba last year 2015 in December after the general convention. These three months I have completed in the job cannot qualify me to give a correct financial reports of an account that I am not signatory to it. But what I know is that these are two different and separate accounts, and there are people in Juba who are signatory to that account and they can be asked to give a correct accountability for that account, not any member of the ELCSS/S. Rev. Dr. Robert Rahn knows and is aware that there are two different accounts in the ELCSS/S, and he can witness to you by himself how people during the last convention pleaded with the dean of Central and Eastern Equatoria to give a report for that account but it was not given. If that information was disclosed to the people during the last convention, I think any person who attended the convention could be in position to say exactly what he/she had heard.

2. The rental arrangements and how much has been received for the time period covered up to date, who are the signers on the Juba account ending in 9290, what is the current balance in this bank account, what other amounts have been deposited into this account, where did they come from, and for what purpose they were sent, and who authorized Rev. John Deng to sign in the agreement, are good questions but I am sorry that I am not capable to answer them because I don't want to lie to you and to God, it is only the Bishop who can answer those questions because he worked as a pastor and dean of central and eastern Equatoria deanery before becoming the bishop of ELCSS/S and he knows the genesis of how the account was opened. And he is also the right person who can provide you with all the rental documents going back to 2007 and the bank statements for this account going bank as far as possible.

3. Regarding when the funds from this account will be combined with the central account in Yambio per resolution of the last convention is something that people have asked for and are waiting to hear from the bishop when he comes back to Yambio, he will be the one to tell them when exactly.

Let us continue to pray for ELCSS/S so that God's will may be done.

Have a blessed day, and please don't hesitate to ask any question if you are not satisfied with this answer.

From: Jeff Rahn

To: Anibati, Peter

Subject: Wire

Peter & Nicholas,

This afternoon I wired \$9,500 to the account as follows: \$4,500 Roberts South Sudan Seminars Budget; \$3,600 Pastor Stipends; \$1,400 Operating expenses. Please confirm receipt of the wire upon arrival. This wire was authorized by the LHF Finance Committee on Monday with the stipulation that no further funds

will be provided until the church in convention has resolved the financial transparency problems. The Board meets on June 21 and expects a detailed update on the matter at which time the Board will decide if stipends will be continued for the remainder of 2016. Blessings on the seminar and convention preparations and I trust the bakery project is also moving forward.

SEPTEMBER 13

From: Peter Anibati

Subject: ELCSS/S ordinations in Gambella & Yambio

Dear brothers in Christ,

Greetings to one and all at the LHF. We are always thankful for the generous help you at LHF are ready to share with the ELCSS/S. Our unique partnership has been created by God and you at LHF have really gone beyond your mission statement to create a viable and active Gospel centered church body the ELCSS/S. While we respect and cherish our partnership with the LHF, we would like to respond gently, lovingly, but firmly regarding the ordination of the vicars who were prepared and qualified for the call into the active ELCSS/S ministry. While any pastor can duly ordain another pastor, the ELCSS/S in good faith agreed to reserve this noble task of ordination for the office of the bishop. However, the *Book of Concord* rightly advises that when there is malfeasance of office, the faithful have the right and God-given duty to ordain pastors into the Holy Ministry. So, this is exactly what we have done with the vicars who have been certified by the faculty of CLIHM and have received calls to work in the congregations of the ELCSS/S.

We rejoice greatly that our brother professor, Dr. Lutz was with us at that time. We were honored to give him the esteemed duty to ordain the ten qualified vicars who are greatly needed in the mission of the ELCSS/S in all South Sudan and Sudan. We are pleased that he accepted our invite to ordain the vicars. We pray and hope that this will not cause problems in the work of LHF. As we indicated earlier, the decision to ordain these men did not come from the LHF nor did Dr. Lutz request for it, but it was a decision taken by the ELCSS/S executive leadership which comprises the deans, pastors and the laity.

We at the ELCSS/S rejoice greatly as we now move forward to start new mission fields as well as repair the brokenness caused by the poor leadership from the office of the Bishop. In this regard, we request the LHF to support us to move out of this confusion! The ELCSS/S has had a successful beginning but since the unfortunate election of Rev. Wilson Noah Rule as bishop of the ELCSS/S, the church has been in confusion. The elected spiritual leader has neglected to assist the deaneries and congregations of the ELCSS/S. In many ways the Bishop's performance has lacked integrity, love, and humility. We now have no bishop to lead

us spiritually. Satan has used this situation to try to destroy the ELCSS/S, but we trust in the Lord Jesus Christ who is the church's one foundation.

Brothers, we desperately need a leader to help us get back on our feet and begin once again doing the evangelist's task. For this reason, we sat after the ordination and Dr. Lutz was here with all the pastors who came for the ordination and the council members and resolved the following: 1) Extra ordinary convention to be held at the end of October, 2016 to elect a new bishop for the ELCSS/S. Rev. Wilson will be invited to come and answer the questions which the previous convention has raised in 2015 about the rental property in Juba. If he fails to come any decision taken will be final. 2) Three representatives would come from each deanery and international delegates would come from LHF, LEAF, LCMS, and other Lutheran church bodies in Africa. 3) Thirdly, it was resolved that we request the LHF to help finance this mini convention since Wilson has refused to release funds from the UN rental.

In conclusion, we wish to inform you that Rev. Wilson tried by all means to sabotage the seminar on stewardship as well as the ordination service. He had written letters to the government officials and had specifically instructed the national security to make sure that the occasion did not take place but the government refused and said it was not their mandate to prevent the church from having its programs. As a result, many government officials came to attend the ordination and they all appreciated the work of the ELCSS/S. They advised that we call a meeting soon and resolve the issue with Bishop Wilson; they even said if Wilson does not come, they will be there to witness the election of the new bishop. About a thousand people attended the service on September 4, 2016. Will share some pictures from the ordination service later, it's difficult to upload photos this side due to lack of faster internet!

On behalf of the leaders of the ELCSS/S leaders,
Rev. Peter Anibati Abia

From: Bernhard Lutz
To: Peter Anibati ELCSS; Robert Rahn
Subject: Come Follow Me!

Peter et al: Greetings in Jesus!

Thank you for the email. God bless South Sudan, its government, Christian church bodies, and especially members of the ELCSS/S. People need Jesus. Without Him there is hopelessness and despair, failure, and fracture of family, friends, and all else. God give to all of you sailing in troubled waters the faith to know that the whitecaps of danger will not and cannot harm you! Let each of us ever remember, and apply Psalm 46, "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble!" Trouble indeed, trouble with health, trouble with

family, trouble with fellow church members, trouble with Satan's daily attacks! Let us ever remember... He is an ever-present help in TROUBLE!

As a young, struggling church, the ELCSS/S is vulnerable to Satan's attacks! He is attacking, and viciously! Be strong as you choose a theme for your convention in December 2016. Be wary of strange and devilish attacks and trickery that you dreamed would take place. Be ready for a very difficult convention. Quarrels with Satan are never easy but having and staying on track with Jesus always brings victory. Jesus never fails! God guide your choice of a faithful, dedicated, man of God to be the spiritual head of the ELCSS/S.

In Luther's day, Luther's chief complaint was... the Roman Church asked and taught its members to "do penance!" Luther was aghast! Do penance? No way, Christ has done it all. Good works are done always out of love to God and not to earn anything, especially His special favor. His Love—our Response. So then, let us depend upon the guidance and direction of the Word of God and the power of the Holy Spirit. Let us ever walk with Jesus, follow His example pure! On Christ the solid Rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand! Let us not think of our good works but of the Good Works of Christ, who has atoned for our sin, who has taken our guilt away. A fitting theme for the December convention might be, "Jesus, Jesus, Only Jesus!" Acts 5:12.

May the Lord bless all of the committees working hard to get ready for this very special convention. May God bless all of the church leaders of the Church, giving to you the courage, wisdom and understanding necessary to lead in the name of Christ. Know that the leaders of LHF and its partners are keeping you and the work you have been called to do, in our daily prayers. I will be awaiting the ELCSS/S invitation letter for visa application. May God keep you safe from harm and danger.

Allah mahabah. God is love.

NOVEMBER 25

From: John Riay

Subject: Extra-ordinary Convention

Dear Brothers in Christ

Greetings in the Lord. I am writing about upcoming ELCSS/S Extra-ordinary Convention. Brothers, I would like to say to you once again that we will not attend our convention as we have been telling you. We would like you to accommodate our opinions as the meeting is for the ELCSS/S. We suggest a few points: 1. Amend the position of assistant bishop by stipulating his duties to make this post active. I am not talking about John Jock as current assistant bishop but the post itself, whoever occupies it. 2. Endorse more dioceses. One or more than one. ELCSS/S has been one diocese for long time. If other deaneries are not ready for

dioceses, you would endorse Upper Nile as diocese. It is no longer Noah's job to create more dioceses as he calls for that. 3. We have congregations in Ethiopia as we have congregations in Sudan. But the name of our church doesn't include that church in Ethiopia. Discuss it. Things that you discuss now in our absence will benefit our church as a whole now and when peace returns.

From: Robert Rahn
To: 'John Riay';
Subject: RE: Extra-ordinary Convention

Greetings John,

Thank you for your message. Sorry you are not able to participate in the convention. Your thoughts and suggestions certainly worthy of consideration. Looking forward to hearing from Peter this week regarding the plans for the convention so that on our end Lutz and I can make plans for a January inauguration. Meanwhile here in America we celebrate the Thanksgiving Holiday weekend.

NOVEMBER 30

In messages from the leadership the officials of the ELCSS/S, dates for the extraordinary convention were announced. Careful to follow the articles of their constitution, plans for the convention were considered and discussed for at least six months. This period also allowed time for the current bishop to confess his sin. The planned convention will take place December 8-10.

From: Peter Anibati
To: Robert Rahn
Subject: Visa

Dr. Rahn,

Thanks for your message. Will be sending the letter of invite soon. Keep us and the ELCSS/S in your prayers especially for the upcoming convention.

Bishop Wilson has responded to the government that he is not willing to call the convention and he has accused the Minister of Education of taking sides with the church in Yambio. We have heard rumors that he wants to use security officers to sabotage the upcoming meeting but it seems the government is not on his side anymore. He has also refused the invitation we sent him to come for the convention. We will see what happens in the following days.

Anyhow, we have bought tickets already for those who are coming by flights to Yambio and sent funds for those who are coming by bus. I will keep you updated with the developments.

From: Bernhard Lutz
To: Peter Anibati
Subject: Extraordinary Convention

Leaders of the Church of ELCSS/S:

Greetings in Jesus! Martin Luther found great strength in reading and meditating upon the Psalms. Psalm 46 was one of Luther's favorite Psalms. "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though the waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging. Selah." Therefore the Psalm implies that as a result of faith in a living God, there will be no fear. We have reason to have hearts that fear these days in ELCSS/S. Satan is blowing a storm that threatens to get at the heart of the Lutheran Church of South Sudan. Let us then, as the Spirit guides, remove all fear, and place our trust in the living and loving Lord Jesus Christ. God bless the Extraordinary Convention with men and women who are filled with a faith that believes that God truly is our refuge and our strength!

Psalm 46 would be a good theme for the Convention that meets to discuss the present condition of ELCSS/S church leadership! It would also give God pleasing advice to a follow up after the Extrordinary Convention. V 11 closes... "The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress!" God be with all of you, clergy and laity, as you, through prayer and counsel, seek to find the best way to restore the ELCSS/S with God-pleasing leadership for the sake of all, the chosen as well as those to whom we are sent to share the Gospel. We will be praying that the Holy Spirit will fill the Extraordinary Convention with a new spirit. A spirit of oneness, forgiveness and love.

Allah mahabah. God is love.

DECEMBER 6

From: Peter Anibati
To: Robert Rahn
Subject: Updates

Dear Dr. Rahn,

Greetings to you in Jesus name on this busy day on which we are looking forward for the ELCSS/S Extra ordinary convention with hope for a bright future. It has not been easy lately... we have been moving from office to office because Wilson continues to cause problems for the church. Rev. Elinama and I were summoned two days ago to the security office and we were ordered to stop preaching and all the pastoral duties that we carry out in Yambio, but we told the officials that we are going to have a convention to solve all the problems and Wilson has been invited and a ticket is already paid for him to come.

Today, Wilson ordered the arrest of five delegates who were traveling to Yambio from Juba airport. The delegates were detained for half an hour and were released later because the security found no reason for arresting them. These delegates have arrived safely in Yambio, including the legal adviser who will preside over the convention. The legal adviser is an attorney and is currently the president of the law society of South Sudan. It will be interesting to see how he will go about this. The delegates from Malakal and Khartoum will arrive tomorrow and the convention will kick off by Thursday at 9 a.m. with a Confessional service led by Rev. Nicholas and Rev. Japhet Dachi.

I will keep you posted on the outcome of the convention. Please let me know what MAF says about the dates of your flight. Also send us the message that can be read to the delegates during the convention. Now we need more of your prayers than ever, because the devil is seriously attacking us at these last hours.

Moving forward in the Lord,
Rev. Peter Anibati Abia

GREETINGS ELCSS/S CONVENTION PARTICIPANTS 2016

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for you know that your labor is not in vain in the lord.” 1 Corinthians 15:58

Cordial greetings on the occasion of the ELCSS/S Extraordinary Convention. As I think of your agenda, my thoughts immediately go to the words of Scripture quoted above, words often heard in connection with a charge to church officers or leaders as they assume positions of leadership in a congregation. These are words of encouragement, but also words that underscore commitments to a task with the promise of the Lord’s strength.

As you have witnessed in your troubling situation, the Lord certainly requires steadfastness, especially in the face of adversity. When we face circumstances where the Word of God is trampled upon or abused by leaders in the church, the temptation is to throw up our hands in despair and disgust and give up, yet the Lord calls us to stand fast, to be immovable. It’s a call not to give up the faith or abandon our hope. Like a ship in a storm, sometimes it is best to steer directly into the face of the storm and be unmovable, remaining firmly on course.

The call of this convention is to abound in the work of the Lord, to remain in the work and the Word. Keep on laboring, working, and be assured that your work is not in vain. It is not in vain when the work is centered in the Lord. Too many people’s faith has experienced shipwreck on the rocks of the devil’s making. You, however, be steadfast, be unmovable, be abounding, be working, for your work is not in vain. Keep your eyes on the cross, gaze intently on Jesus and healing and health for the soul will be ours. God bless your abounding labor in the Lord

at this convention. Be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding, labor, and know your work is not in vain.

In the Grip of His Hand,

Dr. Robert L. Rahn

LHF Founder

DECEMBER 8

From: Peter Anibati

To: Robert Rahn

Subject: updates from the extra ordinary convention

Dear Brothers,

I am writing this short note to inform you that all our delegates arrived for the convention. The meeting started today with a confessional service lead by Rev. Nicholas and Rev. Japhet Dachi was the preacher. The first item on the agenda was the petition which was written against Wilson to resign. He was expected to answer the eight accusations which were labeled against him and to as well answer the 12 questions which the LHF sent concerning the missing money in Juba. As you know Wilson refused to come for the convention despite receiving the invitation and the air-ticket to come. So, the convention decided to remove him from the seat of the bishop. In other words, Wilson has been voted out, he is no longer the bishop for the ELCSS/S. When the vote of no confidence was conducted, there was no delegate who was against it.

The rest of day was busy with reviewing of the constitution and this will go up to tomorrow and next tomorrow will be elections for the new bishop and the general secretary. The church council at the level of the ELCSS/S will be formed, the Finance Committee, and also a treasurer will be chosen. Please pray for these important decisions which are ahead of us.

From: Robert Rahn

To: Peter Anibati

Subject: RE: updates from the Extraordinary Convention

Peter,

Your short note was most encouraging. It certainly falls into the category of 1 Cor. 15:58 that was sent as our greeting to the convention. With the decisions made, you can surely know that “your labor is never in vain in the Lord!” Blessings now on the decision you have yet to make. We were pleased that the decision relative to the bishop was unanimous.

END OF ERA

Following the discipline of Bishop Wilson, the church continued to face the challenges of its past leadership. Nevertheless, this relatively new church body was and is determined to continue with a new chapter. Following this digression, the timeline will now resume as before.

FEBRUARY 16

From: Pastor George Poulos
To: Karen Floyd
Subject: LHF materials

Hi Karen:

Thank you for your e-mail. I am looking to receive a total of 20 of the Chinese/English *Small Catechisms* when they become available to send. I'm not sure when I have not known of LHF. Over my pastorates, I have received mailings and at conventions I always stop by the literature tables sponsored by LHF.

At Gloria Dei, we have an English language school for Vietnamese who are seeking to learn English. Since we now have members who are Vietnamese and Chinese, we desire to use the resources produced by LHF to assist us in reaching those that are not in Christ with the Gospel. We have used the *Good News* magazine as well, which assisted us in introducing the Christian faith to several Chinese students. In particular, when we showed the book, *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories*, to our Vietnamese members, they in turn asked if we could receive more so they could use them to teach English and evangelize the Vietnamese students in the language school. The original book I received at our Florida-Georgia District Pastors' Conference.

Again, I thank you for your assistance and the ministry you all undertake in LHF. God is using you fabulously for His Kingdom purposes.

Warmly, in Christ,
Pastor George Poulos
Gloria Dei Lutheran Church
Davie, Florida

FEBRUARY 23

To Rudge Pereira (Sri Lanka), Brother in the Concord,

Thanks for your message and explanation of your ministry. In view of the possible taxation issue, not knowing what the "governing powers" will want to extract for their pockets, I'm testing the waters by sending you three books, two in English and one in Thai: *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* in English; *A Child's*

Garden of Bible Stories in Thai; and *Bible Stories in Pictures* [in English].

There is a reason I'm sending the two copies of *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories*. With permission from Concordia Publishing House, we have a new and improved edition that we put out. Our edition includes a few questions at the end of each chapter so that it can be used in a Sunday school type situation where there are no other materials available. The second improvement in our edition is that we have added three stories—the Ten Commandments, the Baptism of Jesus, and the Lord's Supper. We eliminated one story—the sacrifice of Isaac. It was strange to find that Baptism and the Lord's Supper were left out of a Lutheran book, but we understand that the publishers wanted to market this book to “non-Concord” people. Our mission is to teach the Lutheran faith, all of it and not exclude something that might differentiate us from “Methobaptisticals.”

It may take a few days before it ships out of our office, but be alert for the package (inscribed with your suggested phrase “PRINTED MATTER, NOT FOR SALE”). I hope they don't penalize you with a request for funds.

God bless.

R. Rahn

From: Rudge Pereira

To: Robert Rahn

Hi brother Rob,

Your suggestion is great. One thing to note in this part of the world is: Many can speak some kind of English for the sake of survival or making a quick buck. Some can even do it in German, French, Chinese, Japanese. To catch a tourist. The children of the world. How come not a single LLC guy seems to preach in English & a single LCMS missionary preach in Sinhala. The children of the light. I hope Roger J. could.

Chap. R R W F Pereira. – Navy Mission, Sri Lanka

FEBRUARY 29

From: Rev. James May; Customer Service

To: Jeff Rahn; Matthew Heise; Ted NaThalang; Robert Rahn

Subject: Lutheran Heritage Foundation - Africa

Kindly note shipment was loaded on truck: KBU048Z, departed Mombasa on February 28, and truck will be in Nairobi this morning for delivery; be on standby to receive the cargo.

In order for this shipment from China to arrive there were as many as 25 emails that went back and forth between LHF and the shippers, port authorities and taxation offices. It was a formidable task to verify that this was a shipment

with goods that were not for sale. Proper documentation had to be provided by LHF-Africa and our good assistant in the LHF-Africa office—Mr. Al Gore. Also assisting us with the proper letter of exemption was Carolyn Khaoya from the Genuine Freight Services Limited offices in Mombasa, Kenya. When the delivery was finally made there was a collective sigh of relief both in Kenya and in Michigan. This brief report certainly does not provide the reader with the time and angst involved in the process.

MARCH 15

(From the March 2016 “Word at Work” newsletter:)

At Thai eyeglass clinic, the blind now see

by Jennifer Bagnall

“For my eyes have seen Your salvation, which You have prepared in the sight of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles...” Luke 2:30-32

In the northern province of Nong Khai in Thailand, more than 800 people came to an eyeglass clinic sponsored by Lutheran Hour Ministries (LHM), hoping that the medical staff and short-term missionaries from the Church at Creston–Lutheran in Kalispell, Montana, could help them regain some of their eyesight. As the doctors and volunteers fit them for glasses, the patients’ eyes were opened not just to the world around them, but also to their need for a Savior.

“With every outreach project LHM Thailand does, including holistic projects, we find ways to share the Gospel with the people we are helping,” said Boom Denow, director of LHM Thailand. “Since many of the people were receiving eyeglasses so they could read, we wanted to share Christian written materials with them. When we learned that LHF had produced a pocket edition of Luther’s *Small Catechism* in the Thai language, it seemed like an ideal gift. The catechism gives very clear explanations of basic Christian teachings, so it is an excellent evangelistic tool,” she explained.

None of the 813 people served were Christians, Boom said. “Virtually all of them are Buddhists. For most of them, this was the first time that they had ever personally talked with a Westerner and the first time that they had heard any presentation of the Gospel.”

“There are 67 million people in Thailand and less than two percent who are Christian,” said Vicar Kyle Winter, who led the mission group from Montana. “It was pretty amazing to see afterward, when people would gather around in groups and read the catechism...just because they were so excited to have glasses and to be able to read.”

“Many Thai people don’t know who God is and have never heard about Jesus,” Boom added. “Most Thai people cannot use English well, so [they] need to have Bibles and Christian materials in the Thai language. Thai people can read

these Lutheran books privately and they can read them many times, if they don't understand the information. Each copy of these books can be shared with many people.”

If you or your church group is planning a short-term mission trip, go to www.LHFmissions.org/Publications to see what books are available in the languages of the people you'll be ministering to. LHF's books are free of charge to those who need them.

“I want to discover more!” LHF Bible storybooks share the Gospel in Vietnam

by Jennifer Bagnall

New opportunities for sharing the good news of Jesus Christ are arising in Vietnam! When LHF first translated and published Luther's *Small Catechism* in Vietnam 12 years ago, the printer – a Christian – was heavily fined by the government for unlawfully distributing printed materials.

But today, Rev. Ted NaThalang believes that things are changing and opening up in Vietnam. For the first time, LHF has been able to officially register its books with the government – meaning the books can be legally printed and distributed throughout the country.

Through funding by a grant from the national LWML, LHF's first registered book is the Vietnamese edition of *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories*, an easy-to-read collection of 60 Old and New Testament lessons. For many Vietnamese children, the Bible book is one of the few books children own, and they are precious.

“My son Danny is 8 years old,” he said. “He has already read the whole book, but he still takes it to school to read again at break time. When I asked him whether he liked it, Danny said, ‘Of course, but I am so sad and a little disappointed.’ When I asked him why, he said, ‘Because I wanna read more stories about what happened after Paul, the last story in the book.’ When I told him I would talk to the authors about writing more of these interesting stories, he shouted, ‘Yeah!’”

MARCH 16

Great news about gifts coming from Cummins, Georgia and Independence, Missouri. I'm thrilled to see the response and pray that it continues and increases. Also did a mini-presentation once again with the LIMM (Lutherans in Medical Mission) Board in St. Louis this past Saturday, especially underscoring for the new board members what LHF is all about in hopes that they take it back to their congregations while also remembering the good partnership opportunities LIMM endeavors would have with us. Matt knows well having worked with the Nickels (Tim and Rita from Kyrgyzstan days), and LHF has been well-received by LIMM board members in the past. Part of our Saturday morning meeting involved a workshop at the Peace Center on South Grand in St. Louis (by historic

Trinity/Soulard neighborhood). I met a large number of immigrants who are part of our Lutheran family there now through the efforts of Al and Carol Buckmann (Christian Friends of New Americans). The immigrant Lutherans were glad to receive my card and the brochures that I'd brought with me to share with them. I continue to be amazed at how positively folks in our congregations react to the message/work of LHF as they hear of it. It invigorates me all the more to "get the word out there."

Rev. Larry W. Rockemann
From: Leif R Camp
To: Robert Rahn; Jeff Rahn
Subject: Books etc.

Sorry that it has taken so long; repairing the warehouse took a lot longer than we expected. We have been also very busy in distributing literature, but I have not been so good at getting photos as I should be—I am sorry for that. In part because I have been swallowed up with other duties, in part because I forget my camera or forget to tell the pastors who have taken books to distribute that I need pictures. I will do better in the near future. We are planning a major "subbotnik" (volunteer day) the first Saturday after Easter to clean up, repack, and inventory what stock we have, but I already know some things we need. Therefore, I think we need to begin the process of getting some things printed already so we have them for the evangelism events we have planned for the Spring and Summer and so that texts are available that we need for the Seminary, parish seminars and so forth. After the volunteer day we should know what other books are short in supply.

We do need another run of *Freedom of A Christian* (3-5000 would be good) it would be best if we can change the type face so it is more readable—that has been a major complaint of the current version. We would also like as we talked *God's Yes and God's No* (2-3000). We desperately need Mueller's *Dogmatics*—how is that coming (500-1,000)? We are also running low on *Law and Gospel*—we have only about 100 copies left if that (1,000 would be good—especially if we have *God's Yes and God's No* we would reserve whole book for textbooks). We were also talking about a simple version of Luther's *Small Catechism* for mass distribution at evangelism events—glossy soft cover like *Freedom of a Christian* with our parish contact info a must at the end—(5,000). Luther on Romans or Galatians would be next on the list (500-1,000). And we all want Luther's postils, but we don't know if that is available.

We also talked about the idea of doing the *Augsburg Confession* as a separate booklet (like *Freedom of a Christian*) and is *Bondage of the Will* in Russian?

So, the question is what does Konstantin already have prepared and what does he need to prepare? We can start with whatever he already has. There are a couple

of other books that are out of print that I want to discuss with the missionary committee and Alexander—like *Bible Difficulties* and so forth. How much of what I have listed can the budget handle? Will there be money left over?

As concerns *Good News Journals*—any new ones would be great. After the volunteer day I will also have a list of all the journals we do not have, so if any back issues can be reprinted. I have one question on reprints. In some of the journals there are the central pages which contain comparisons with other denominations. Although these are very good for Lutheran audiences, they are a huge hinderance in our efforts to replace the false teaching in those denominations with the truth. Would it be possible to do a printing of certain numbers of the *Good News Journals* with those pages simply blank (as not to have to re-layout the whole thing—maybe put a little title at the top “for reader notes”)?

James Krikava with Richard Sovitzky were also in town and we all met with the Bishop. They have some of their own translation projects and have received from CPH a lot of permissions for rights use.

From: Konstantin
To: Leif Camp
Subject: Re: Books etc.

Leif,

Thank you for your message! The projects you mentioned are all in very different stages. e.g., we have the [layout] for the *Freedom of a Christian* totally ready for reprint, though if you think we should change the type face, it will take several days, up to a week (anyway not a problem and not a long story). *Dogmatics* is ready for about 50% but after equipment upgrade scheduled for the second quarter I hope to speed the process up strongly and finish this quite ambitious project till summer (June-July). Not sure about *God's No and God's Yes*, but most probably it could take one to three months, do not think that full version of GNGY (*Law and Gospel*) would be realistic project for this year at all, but do not see any problems to prepare Luther's *Small Catechism* and separate *Augsburg Confession* booklet during several months (1-2 months). Luther's postils hopefully will be ready till the end of the year. Anyway, thanks again for your message, I think we will discuss the details during several next days.

From: Konstantin
To: Jeff Rahn
Subject: RE: Books etc.

Jeff, thank you for your note! Concerning my trip to St. Paul, it is OK with me. Moreover I am out of books and definitely would like to pick up several bags/suitcases/packages... The only thing is I would hate to travel by bus—of course it

is cheaper but too exhausting... Delivering layouts to the printer or discussing the details of our projects with Leif can be accomplished more or less also by email, but making videos/pictures of the subbotnik and picking up the books are good enough reasons for a brief (one day) personal visit... On the other hand—it is up to Leif. If he will have time for me in his schedule... Thanks again. Glad to hear from you.

MARCH 17

From: Leif R Camp

To: Konstantin Komarov; Robert Rahn; Jeff Rahn

Subject: RE: Books etc.

Great—*Law and Gospel* can wait until next year. We do have enough for use as classroom textbooks. As soon as *Dogmatics* is ready, the better as with *God's No and God's Yes*. With *Freedom of a Christian* we really do need to change the type face and layout to make it more readable and inviting. It is very cramped, and we have had many comments on that. As we have a lot of evangelism scheduled for late April and May, we should try to do the simple *Small Catechism*, *Freedom [of a Christian]*, the *Augsburg Confession* and *God's No and God's Yes* as soon as possible. Whatever can be done the quickest would be first, second and third if you get what I mean. Mueller can wait until summer so it can be ready for next year's seminary classes, and in that light Luther on Genesis and Romans or Galatians would also be nice to have for the beginning of next academic year. Whatever is realistic.

MARCH 22

In this exchange between James May and Matthew Heise, preparations for travel to the far country of South Sudan and the challenges connected therewith are seen in the exchange below between James May and Matthew Heise.

From: James May

To: Matthew Heise

Cc: Jeff Rahn; Robert Rahn

I have only used a credit card once in Africa in ten years and had my number stolen. I always use cash. I think the seminar will require \$250 per day to feed everyone. Hotels are expensive since only UN people stay in them and they are crappy. They are about \$100 per night. They usually include “breakfast.” We can eat other meals with them. Then a taxi is needed each day to the church and back. Figure \$10 per day. To get back to Juba is going to be tricky. If we can catch a flight it is \$150. Otherwise if planes are taken (even if you bought a seat like I did last time) we will need to hire a private car at \$250, yes, unfortunately more than a plane ticket and the drive will be more than 6 hours and bumpy and a bit unsafe

but not too bad during the day. I will take care of you in Kenya, so no money needed there unless you want to go out to eat one night. All other meals will be at the mission center/construction site.

MARCH 24

From: Joe & Kris Belongia
To: Robert Rahn
Subject: Fw: Holy Week Greetings

Rev. Rahn...What do your recipients do with these emails that you send us during Easter and Christmas??? I send them onward to fellow church members, friends, neighbors and relatives. It is so nice getting responses back. But the best people I like sending these messages to are the ones I suspect to not have Christ at the top of their life. Please keep them coming and God's blessings to you.

From: Dr. Jobst Schöne
To: Robert Rahn
Subject: Re: Holy Week Greetings

Dear Brother and Friend:

Thank you so much for your Easter greetings. We look forward to the beautiful services we will celebrate in these days (in which I'll have the privilege to preach three times: on Good Friday, in the Easternight Service, and on Easter Sunday) and will remember you in our prayers. May our risen Lord fill your heart with joy and peace in these troubled days and restless world.

If I would be a bit younger than I am approaching the 85 years of age this year, but still in rather good health, thanks to our Creator I would like so much to engage in a teaching job in Sudan. But I am afraid it's too late now. Blessing and greetings from Berlin.

Yours in Christ, +Jobst Schoene, bishop retired

APRIL 1

The following messages pertaining to Italian, Punjabi, and Chinese were all received on the same day. It demonstrates how projects develop. Each of them comes from a different source and are put into consideration as to the need determined.

From: Albert Colver
To: Matthew Heise
Subject: Fwd: Mission planting in Italy?

Dear Matt,

Please see below. There is a gentleman who wants to translate the Lutheran

Confessions into Italian. I thought you might be interested. I gave him your email address but if you are interested, I think you should contact him directly. Thanks.

Begin forwarded message:

From: Albert B Collver

Subject: Re: Mission planting in Italy?

Eastertide Greetings in the Name of Jesus!

Thank you for writing The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Presently, Italy is not designated a mission area of the Missouri Synod nor does the Missouri Synod have any personnel in Italy; however, you should speak to the Eurasia Regional Director, Rev. Jim Krikava (copied), regarding the capacity and ability of the Office of International Mission in Europe to carry out work in Italy. He may be able to provide you with assistance or offer helpful suggestions for you.

Unfortunately, there is not a confessional Lutheran church in Italy. The Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Italy supports the ordination of women and same-sex unions. When the executive committee of the International Lutheran Council visited Rome recently, we discussed the possibility of establishing a Lutheran congregation in Rome. Most recently, this suggestion was brought to the International Lutheran Council's World Conference and was met with great interest. Thus far, we have not made formal plans, but the plant likely would be carried out by one of our European members with financial assistance from the ILC. However, we do not have a good lay of the land in Italy and would welcome input as to where might be more fruitful. If you know of information that could be helpful, we would welcome it.

If you are interested in translating Confessional Lutheran documents into Italian, the best group to speak with is the Lutheran Heritage Foundation. They have translated the Lutheran Confessions and other Lutheran works into many languages. Presently, they do not offer any documents in Italian, but they may be interested to begin such work if they know of an interest and if a translator is available. The best person to talk with regarding working with Lutheran Heritage Foundation is Rev. Matthew Heise. Both the ILC and LHF may be interested in commemorating 2017 in some way that features Italian.

I hope this is helpful. Blessings in Christ—

Rev. Albert B. Collver, Ph.D.

Director of Church Relations—Assistant to the President

Executive Secretary for the International Lutheran Council

From: J.N Cherubin
To: Robert
Subject: *Small Catechism* in Hindi

Dear Pastor Robert,

Greetings from India. I coordinate the translation and publishing works in India for Lutheran Heritage Foundation. Couple of years ago, you were in touch with LHF for catechism in Punjabi language for Rev. Daniel's congregations. I just thought of informing you that LHF has published *Small Catechism* in Hindi language. All Punjabis speak Hindi and if you could find out from Pastor Gary, POBLO whether these books would be of help to them in their ministry in Punjab, I can send the books as per requirement. Please let me know. I am copying this message to the LHF leadership in Michigan.

In Christ,
J.N.Cherubin – Country Coordinator for India

From: Jeff Rahn
To: Ted NaThalang
Subject: FW: Chinese Project

Ted,

Spoke with a retired WELS pastor this afternoon in Round Rock, Texas, who would like 20 copies of the Simplified *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories*. Take a look at the information and if necessary, we can arrange to speak with him further when you visit the office in a few weeks.

APRIL 5

From: Larry Rockemann
Subject: Another Great Day at an LHF Mission Sunday

Gallatin, Tennessee (northeast Nashville area) was the site of an LHF Mission Sunday (April 3). The pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church—such a faithful and fine pastor!—had done an excellent job of preparing God's people there for the day. In addition to Pastor Shaw, there was at least one other person who knew of LHF there in the congregation. Pastor Shaw is most supportive—and vocal—about our work at LHF. Excellent worship! The pastor allowed me to do a little 5-minute “overview” before the worship service (to hit those folks who would not be coming to Bible class). After the service (and before the door offering for LHF), Pastor Shaw talked very positively about the work of LHF and encouraged his members to consider donations/gifts. Before finishing his little talk, he turned to me and assured me that Trinity would seek to put LHF into their annual budget as an ongoing mission.

Good Bible class—I showed both our video and our current PowerPoint presentation. Lots of good questions and comments. Several folks following the Bible class handed me envelopes with checks and also indicated that they signed up to receive our regular newsletter—always a good sign! Though a small congregation, this is a very mission-minded congregation, shepherded by a pastor who spent some years as a missionary in Guatemala.

APRIL 6

From: Mark Frusti

Subject: New Finnish Hymnals etc.

Greetings in Jesus our Risen Lord,

I saw your article about Finnish hymnals distributed to churches in Finland. We are going to visit relatives this summer around Vaasa and I would like to bring a few hymnals to give away. Is it possible to order these through LHF? Also, are any of the publications available, basic ones like #27 Worship and Full Assurance of Faith, #12 Your Word is Truth, #14 The Gift of Prayer or others? Most of all are there any sound translations of the Bible available, not these new ones by Biblica? I was looking online and was surprised at the cost. Maybe the demand is not so great.

Can you give me contact info such as email for Rev. Juhana Pohjola or Rev. Risto Soramies? My Finnish is very limited but I would like to know more about the Evangelical Lutheran Mission Diocese of Finland and perhaps would like to visit. Thank-you for your ministry in the Word.

Blessings and peace, yours in Jesus Christ,

Rev. Mark Frusti

Pastor at Faith Lutheran Church – Carpentersville, Illinois

APRIL 11

(Gleaning from the March/April “Word at Work” newsletter)

The edition announces the arrival of the French edition *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* and mission teams planning trips to Haiti are encouraged to request copies of this resource.

South Korea reports that the LCK is completing the translation of the *Book of Concord* under the direction of Professor Jun Hyun Kim. In this same edition one of the headlines read: “New Hymnals for Lutherans in Finland.” Rev. Juhana Pohjola, dean of the Evangelical Lutheran Mission Diocese of Finland, stated: “If you really want to know what a church actually teaches, sing their hymns and go through their prayers. The hymnal is the heartbeat of the Church.”

Since the official church in Finland has had a bad case of liberal influence (especially regarding women’s ordination and gay marriage), “many good existing

hymns were being diluted in their spiritual content,” said Rev. Risto Soramies, bishop of the ELMDE. “Our hymnal was a conscious effort to gather new good hymns, rescue some old, classical ones and translate or even retranslate good hymns from different languages.”

“These hymns make it concrete that the Church Militant and the Church Triumphant are one,” said Rev. Pohjola. “We have the same faith and same hope that our fathers and mothers have had in past generations. We rejoice with the same hymns of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ!”

The issue concluded with letters from satisfied users of *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* in Burmese, the *Small Catechism* in Arabic and the *Child's Garden* in Vietnamese and Chinese.

APRIL 11

Aniak *Small Catechism* arrives: After waiting for months for the delivery of the Aniak catechism from printing in China, Rev. Rahn announced their arrival in New York. Contact was made with all those who earlier requested copies that they were now available and should submit their requests for some of the 800 copies that are in the shipment. There is no charge for the copies but a free will offering envelope will be provided for gifts. The shipment also includes a limited number of Dinka catechisms, and a portion of the shipment is going to Nairobi to be carried to South Sudan.

From: Craig Cooper

Subject: Re: Aniak Catechisms

Pastor Rahn,

Rev. John Bakou distributed 30 Aniak *Small Catechisms* to the Aniak in Austin, Minnesota on Saturday, April 2. They were so grateful.

Subject: Re: Aniak Catechisms

Pastor Rahn,

The Aniak here in Sauk Rapids received the 120 *Small Catechisms* with great joy!! They will be distributed here in Minnesota. They contributed \$100 today to cover the shipping from Michigan to Minnesota. This was contribution was made on your website. Blessings on your most important ministry!!

Craig Cooper, DCO

Trinity Lutheran Church

Sauk Rapids, Minnesota

During this same time, Rev. Heise and Rev. James May made a trip to Bor Town, South Sudan to distribute copies of the Dinka catechism to a large group

of Dinka Lutherans and to conduct a seminar on the catechism. Rev. Heise also spoke to the group about becoming a part of the ELCSS/S.

APRIL 11

Rev. Jacob Gillard, LCMS pastor, serves with the World Prayer League of Minnesota and wrote about his survey trip to South Sudan.

From: Jake Gillard

Subject: Gillard—Mission—Prayer Blast: Home Safe

We have heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all of God's people. For this reason we never stop thanking God for you and always remember you in our prayers (Ephesians 1:15-16, GOD'S WORD).

In our last week in South Sudan, we felt like we were holding on by the skin of our teeth. Jake was recovering from malaria. Amelia had swollen lymph nodes and a rash. Michelle had a stomach bug. The political and economic climate continued to languish. A strong storm flooded the porch of our house and damaged the roof of our neighbor's house. The refrigerator was still broken. It was harder to sleep at night and cope in the day. In the midst of strife, we were eager for the Easter joy just around the corner. Thanks to your many prayers everyone has recovered, and we are now safe at home in Minnesota. Jake has resumed his work in the home office of the World Mission Prayer League. The girls are continuing with homeschool and have resumed equestrian team and music lessons. Michelle continues to manage the home front and is seeing the Holy Spirit bless her Indian friends.

We have mixed emotions as we walk away from South Sudan and the many new friends who were gracious to receive us. We were asked dozens of times to return so it seems that we had an impact on some level. It is always difficult to leave once you become aware of just how great the need is. Many claim to be Christian, but few understand the precious Good News that we are saved by grace through faith. This is at a time when many missionaries are fleeing South Sudan due to ongoing civil war. The greatest opportunities are in the area of education, theological training, and medical missions—especially eye care. It was our distinct privilege to blaze the trail. The way is open for others to follow. Please pray for Kingdom workers who will do so! We prayed for safety, health, opportunities, and a positive experience. God answered all these prayers and so many more. Every single prayer—from small to large—was answered in the past three months. It was amazing to see God work. We even sold our car to the perfect family at just the right time.

THANK YOU for partnering with us in this important work for the Kingdom of God in South Sudan. If we have learned one thing it is that His Kingdom

is even more pronounced in the midst of instability and chaos. We have a saying in East Africa: If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together. God has been glorified in our journey together, so we praise God & thank you!

Your Missionaries: Jake, Michelle, Amelia (11), and Evangeline (9)

From: Rev. Dr. Vyacheslav Horpynchuk

To: Jeff Rahn

Subject: March report

Dear Jeff,

I hope and pray you are doing fine. Here we have real spring (and continued war with Russia in the east). Meanwhile we prepare *People's Bible: Isaiah II* for printing and began mailing *Luther's Works, Volume 4*, to pastors and congregations.

Next week, God willing, I am going to participate in the International Conference devoted to the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in the Ostroh National Academy (University) in the western Ukraine. I am scheduled to deliver an essay there and present LHF books to the University in Ostroh.

Attached is March report. Please let me know whether you have any questions, suggestions, or comments. Have a blessed week-end and next week!

APRIL 13

From: EAW Weber Sr.

Subject: Re: Sermons in South Africa

Dear Jeff,

Thanks for sending me a copy of your message to Peter and Christoph. I thank you personally for your competent support with the bookkeeping and the transfer of the funds, etc., also thanking your father, Matthew Heise, Jim Fandrey, the women's leagues, Jen Bagnall, and everyone who of LHF ever came in contact with me for decades of wonderful working together in the service of the Lord sending the sermons, and publishing genuine Lutheran Theology and hopefully still another few years if the Lord wills, not forgetting the gracious contribution thanking the Lord for three anniversaries in the life of your honoured father to enable LHF to publish the *Book of Concord* in Setswana now already a few years ago, also the contact with Annsi Simojoki and his successor and now with Karin's and my sons for the photocopying and sending the sermons in Zulu and Tswana for each Sunday and Church festival.

The rest amount of R 740 from the account of the Setswana Translation Project plus R 1,000 will be transferred to our daughter's, Elisabeth, account as soon as we have contact with our cell phone again to do the transfer.

With sadness we learned of Dr. Weber's death shortly after this. For a number of years we published his sermons in the Zulu and Tswana languages and sent them to pastors around Africa. We continued to work with his son, who in 2018 became the director of the Wittenberg Project.

APRIL 15

From: Dr. Richard Beinert

Subject: Holy Week Greetings

Easter Greetings Brother Robert!

Just a quick note to let you know that the shipment of Anuak catechisms has finally arrived safe & sound in Winnipeg. We will now begin planning for a special service of thanksgiving to God for this gift within our local Anuak community.

Thank you so much for your generosity. We do plan to have a dedication service for the catechisms next Sunday within both our English as well as an Anuak church service. I will definitely make sure that there are some pictures taken to share. I have also left a copy of the catechism with our LCC Nation Church office and will be distributing one copy to each of our two Canadian Seminaries for them to have available within their libraries and Mission Studies Centers.

Rev. Dr. Richard A. Beinert, pastor

Immanuel Lutheran Church – Winnipeg, Manitoba

APRIL 18

From: Larry Rockemann

Subject: California Update

LWML CNH District Convention–Visalia (April 15-17)

Lots of people at this LWML District Convention. Total registered (including guests) at the Saturday (pre-project proposal voting) were 229, with 90 LWML ladies listed as “eligible to vote.” From the visits to our LHF exhibit and the conversations there, I would estimate that about half the ladies knew something of LHF's work. However, most delightful were my conversations with Patti Ross, the LWML president (national). The first time she came to our exhibit was just minutes after the exhibit room opened. She stopped and talked with me for 20 minutes... very, very well-versed about the work of LHF and most supportive! She couldn't say enough good things about us, and she encouraged us in the work we're doing and on continued networking with the LWML. She stopped by several more times and actually ended up sending some folks to our exhibit so that they could learn more about LHF! I'm wondering how we might make more use of her support/encouragement. I wish there would be some way we could get coverage in the LWML Quarterly with a big article, complete with pictures.

LHF Mission Sunday at Peace Lutheran Church, Fresno, California

I was once again so very pleased with the pastor's preparation for my visit there. Peace is a healthy, medium-sized congregation in the Fresno area. I think that there are three LCMS congregations in Fresno. I received a nice intro before the service and a great write-up in the bulletin. Everything was ready for our exhibit in the narthex, Bible study area, etc. Good attendance at Bible class with a lot of good questions/conversation. Even though Peace is home to one of the largest Hmong congregations in California, the members of the Anglo congregation did not know about the work of LHF. However, especially the Bible class folks commented that their ongoing support of LHF was yet another way they might be able to support their Hmong brothers/sisters in faith. It's very evident that both congregations love and support each other! By the way, the Hmong congregation was gathering by about 11:45 and I sat in and listened to the youth choir (about 20 young people!). They were awesome—such beautiful voices. Though I couldn't understand a word of the hymns, their singing was so beautiful. Several of the Hmong folks made sure I had a hymnal opened to the right hymn as the choir sang.

APRIL 19

The LHF Independent Regional Promotion Representatives gathered with members of the staff to review mission activity and the procedures involved in requesting materials for scheduled events.

Rev. Matthew Heise, Ms. Gail Schettenhelm, Mrs. Karen Floyd, Mrs. Marlene Herzog, Mrs. Jen Bagnall, Rev. Ted NaThalang, Dr. Robert Rahn, Mr. Jeff Rahn, Mrs. Lisa Mancini, and Mrs. Linda Leinhos gave various presentations. Rev. Larry Rockemann and Dr. Wallace Schulz were excused due to other commitments.

APRIL 21

Herb Gore, LHF accountant in Nairobi, Kenya wrote to inform us that Rev. Japhet Dachi, dean of the Sudan seminary had to have several surgeries that were somewhat costly. Out of concern for his overall health, LHF provided the hospital and medical costs assuring him of prayers and concern.

From: Herbert Gore Lutherans in Africa-Kenya

To: Jeff Rahn

Dachi went for a follow up on his operation as he was not feeling completely fit. The doctor found out that there was a problem with the place that he had been operated on in Sudan and that another operation is needed as per attached. The operation will cost \$3,400.

Dachi,

We are glad to hear that you are recovering and will continue to pray for your healing and strengthening. I am sending \$3,700 to the Kenya account to cover the medical procedure that you underwent. I will also include \$300 for your budget to cover the other expenses for an even \$4,000. Please understand that it is unlikely that LHF will be able to provide this kind of financial support in the future. I would encourage you to take necessary measures to save for future emergencies that may arise so that you can also contribute toward the expenses.

In Christ,

Jeff Rahn – LHF Director of Operations

APRIL 25

From: Marlene Herzog

To: Jen Bagnall; Matthew Heise; Robert Rahn; Jeff Rahn; Linda Leinhos

Subject: RE: Council of Lutheran Women meeting

I am on the Board of Directors for Greater Detroit and of course Historic Trinity, Detroit, is now my home church so that's a "marriage made in heaven." Another woman was contacted a few months ago to be our speaker who works with Family of God, but the connection hasn't happened—yet. I will continue to follow this new request. Jen did a great job getting to their heart and she complimented them on their mission to support seminary students financially!

From: Jen Bagnall

Subject: Council of Lutheran Women meeting

Though the Council of Lutheran Women (CLW) meeting was long this morning, it was well worth the time to go. A big thanks to Marlene for suggesting our membership in the CLW! Sixty women signed in for the meeting, so it was a nice sized group. We were able to speak to the group about the LHF mission for a few minutes toward the end of the business meeting, which proved to be fruitful. A few notes:

I had the opportunity to meet Barb Collins, who was re-elected CLW president. She's also on the ballot for president of the Michigan District LWML, so this could be a good contact to have.

Willie Marie Henry was also there, and I met her. We had a nice conversation about LHF, and she asked whether we have any Spanish-language materials they could distribute at a big VBS (Vacation Bible School) program her church helps to put on in Pontiac. I told her that we had the Spanish *Bible with Small Catechism*, and that by next summer, we should have the Spanish *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories*.

I also talked with Ann Escandon, who is a Thrivent rep. She had never heard

of LHF before and is excited about getting involved with LHF. I told her I'd get in touch about possible Thrivent sponsorship/projects, but she also asked whether she could be added to the volunteer stuffers list. I told her we'd send her an announcement/invitation to the next mailing. Linda, could you add her to your list?

Lucie Witte and Patti Jacques separately approached me and asked whether LHF produces any English materials they could use for a big VBS they help put on in Detroit. I told her that we really didn't have anything that would be appropriate for children (yet—hopefully *God's Word for You* in the future), but we do have the “River of Life” VBS program. They really don't have much of a budget, so I explained that it would be a really good fit for them since the materials are all reproducible. I told them that given the circumstances, LHF would be willing to donate the \$125 cost of the program. They've already planned this summer's theme, but they'll look into “River of Life” for next summer. I figured that LHF might get a good newsletter article out of that, as well as a possible article for *Michigan in Touch*.

When the business portion of the meeting was over, the woman sitting in front of Marlene and me (Linda Murdock) turned around and said, “I'm on the board at MOST Ministries, and I don't know why we don't have LHF materials at MOST!” I talked with her about the possibility of including LHF materials in mission team leader packets. Now that they will be transitioning to a new executive director, this could be a good time to start fresh with MOST. Linda said that she'd be happy to speak about LHF to other board members and staff, including sending an email introducing LHF and our materials to other board members and MOST staff.

The members of the LWML Greater Detroit Zone requested Jennifer Bagnall for their meeting to be held at Historic Trinity, Detroit, for their next meeting.

From: J.N Cherubin

To: Matthew Heise

Subject: Lutheran Churches in North India

Dear Pastor Matt,

Warm Greetings from India. We are experiencing a terrible summer with punishing heat waves due to which many people died. Thought I can update a little on the scenario here.

Hindi *Small Catechism* books were received by the Lutheran churches and denominations in North India. These are all our new contacts and some of them have never seen a *Small Catechism with Explanation*. I have given their names below and all of them are located in North India: 1. Jeypore Evangelical Lutheran Church (JELC) 2. Assam Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELCITHS) 3.

Evangelical Lutheran Churches in MP (ELCIMP) 4. Manipur Lutheran Church (MLC). 5. Delhi Evangelical Lutheran Church (DELCLC).

MARCH 29-APRIL 17

Africa Trip Report– *Rev. Dr. Dinku Bato*

- March 29-April 4: Outskirts of Nairobi, Kenya
- April 4-8: Bor Town, South Sudan
- April 8-14: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
- April 14-17: Tbilisi, Georgia

March 31: I arrived from the States on the evening of March 30, so that I could participate in the March 31 Annual Meeting of LHF-Africa. As you may already know, LHF-Detroit provides funding for the work of LHF-Africa.

One of the topics we began to broach at the meeting was where Lutherans in Africa (LIA) ends and LHF-Africa begins. James May will come to our office on July 7 with Pastor Robert Green, president of LIA, and discuss with us how we can work together and clarify the roles of both organizations. Dr. Anssi Simojoki requested that a new chairman be found for LHF Africa. He, of course, would continue to serve at present, but is trying to reduce his activities as he grows older and his health is not quite as robust.

In separate conversations, Pastor Sarambuye informed me that there are 54 Lutheran congregations in Rwanda. He is working on a liturgy book because the churches tend to have unstructured worship. When I asked if the leadership wanted this kind of book, he hemmed and hawed a little bit, but said that people would follow it if it was produced and accepted. Bishop Victor of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) told me that his diocese in northwestern DRC had about 20 congregations, but that there were about 200 overall in the DRC. He is interested in our Lingala resources as this is the operating language in the DRC, as well as French, which resources they would happily receive.

Furthermore, I also had a good conversation with Bishop Mwaiapopo of Tanzania. Some of you may recall there was a request to pay Janet Malisa for five years of distributing our books/*Good News Journals* from a container in Tanzania. My predecessor, James Fandrey, had to unfortunately end the program and this information was relayed to Tanzania. However, apparently Mrs. Malisa continued to distribute the materials and last year Jeff Rahn received a bill for five years of services (2010-2015)! I apologized to the bishop for the misunderstanding but informed him that we couldn't pay retroactively for five years of work when we had received no reports from her and were not aware that Mrs. Malisa was still distributing our books. It is not as if Mrs. Malisa was without work, because she continued her work as a church secretary and was getting paid for that work.

The bishop was very kind and understood my point, though, so I looked for

a compromise. I asked him to have her give a report on what resources remain in their custody, and we could certainly pay her a fee for that report. Then we could discuss if we would continue the program in the future. (Bishop Mwaiapopo is now working in a new mission diocese in the ELCT). It appears that Mrs. Malisa is working there also (the Lake Tanganyika Diocese on the border of Burundi, the DRC and Zambia). There are 20 congregations with four new mission plants in the diocese. So, we shall see what we hear. James May thought there was a 50/50 chance that he would respond to this request. So far, I haven't heard anything. James is also ready to conduct three seminars in Tanzania. It would probably be good for me to visit Tanzania next year, given the large number of Lutherans there and the opportunity for LHF work.

Jane Nkonge, the general secretary and a former pastor of the ELCK who resigned from pastoral ministry once she understood biblical theology more clearly, mentioned that it would be helpful for an LHF USA board member to attend next year's general meeting.

April 2-3: I had a long conversation with our main translator for LHF-Africa office, Naftali Igendia (63 years old). He will be retiring in two years' time, so we need to begin to make plans for his successor, Pastor George Ondieki. George has a B.Ed. and a B.Th., and now is slated to begin a two-year master's degree program for translating work. We would pay his tuition and then he would work with Igendia in 2018 after [his] May graduation [and] until the end of the year. Igendia would then retire and George would be the translator, although this would not really be full-time. Given George's skills, the ELCK would like him to continue his pastoral service, too. We would need to have a notary draft an agreement with George so that he would be obliged to provide services for us after we pay for his education.

April 4: I also met with Anyuak believer, Desleni. He came to the LHF office in Nairobi to get *Small Catechisms* for Anuaks in Ruiru, about 20 km from Nairobi. He and an evangelist I met last year, Omot, will be emigrating to the USA in a few weeks. They will live in Austin, Minnesota, where Desleni's sister lives. An LCMS congregation has reached out to Anuaks and we have sent some *Small Catechisms* there. It looks like they will have a good spiritual home.

April 5: I met William, a Maasai tribal member who works on the Lutherans In Africa, a compound outside of Nairobi. He joined us in our Bible studies, and I gave him my card as he may be a contact for future Masai translations. I overnighted in the new administration office, which is being used temporarily as sleeping quarters. The plans for the purchased acres are extensive. James May and LIA hope to build a library, student housing (among other buildings), as well as a home for a missionary from Australia who will relocate with his family

in December 2016. The Mays would then have their home built on the site. An architect from the USA will develop the site as he works on a volunteer basis for several years. LHF has been asked to consider funding the library or a teaching building. The plans include having students who will live there and study, working the land for their stipends instead of simply being given a free stipend. This center would be a place where our books will be used and students trained to teach them throughout Africa.

April 6-8: James May and I traveled to Juba from Nairobi, and then took a special MAF plane to BorTown from Juba (about a 40-minute flight). We were met by Dinka Lutherans, who took the 2,000 *Small Catechisms* that we carted on the plane to the church. A large contingent of the 275 students of a Christian school met us and sang a song of welcome. We began distributing the catechisms to leaders in the church. It seemed apparent that most had difficulty in reading. Pastor Nathaniel Bol-Nyok, our main contact, mentioned that this was probably the first book many had received in their lives! They were enthusiastic about learning, however. I covered some introductory remarks about the historical background of the catechism and Luther's intended use of it, while James May did the bulk of the teaching, focusing on the Ten Commandments and the creed. He agreed to return and spend more time teaching the catechism to the people. We discussed the possibility of translating the *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* into Dinka. Since Pastor Bol-Nyok does most of the translating, he would like to have two additional laptops so others could help him with translations. They would not keep the laptops but use them only for professional translating work. He is also working on creating a liturgy for the Dinka Divine Service.

This town had been the site of a rebel massacre two years ago, and so our Dinka Lutherans are survivors of a horrible civil war that has plagued South Sudan since its independence from the more heavily Islamic north (the Sudan) in 2011. Pastor Bol-Nyok had spent most of his 52 years in the Anglican Church, but with the increasing liberalization (advocacy of homosexuality, abortion) in their church, he went over to the Lutherans. He is eager to teach his people more about Lutheranism and has received some support from LCMS congregations in Arkansas and Alabama. I should emphasize, however, that the pastors are not paid in this church. Pastor Bol-Nyok alternates for three months in Kenya, where his children live and study, and three months in Bor Town. While in Bor Town, he lives humbly in a small room next to the church.

April 8-13: I traveled to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and met on April 9 with the translating team of LHF-Ethiopia. Pastor Dereje Tilahun has directed our work in Ethiopia for 12 years now. Currently his team is translating (1) Luther's *Small Catechism with Explanation* [beginning the translation, in Oromo]; (2) *Getting into the Theology of Concord* is in the editing stage, in Amharic]; (3) *A Child's*

Garden of Bible Stories, Amharic, is at the printer's, and is in the translation stage in the Oromo language. (The western area of Ethiopia worships primarily in Oromo, so it is an important language). (4) *Sharing the Faith with Your Muslim Friends* is in the translation stage in Amharic. ; (5) *Evangelism and Church Planting* is being edited in Amharic], two books by Dr. Bernie Lutz. They also translated *A Summary of Christian Doctrine* by Koehler. It was supported by the Swedish Scriptoria Mission). LHF-Ethiopia has a display of the books and *Good News Journals* translated from the past 12 years in their office. I spoke about the work of LHF worldwide, and after hearing of the progress on current translations, thanked them from all of us for their hard work.

There is the desire to sponsor a one-day youth conference. LHF-Ethiopia would like to explain revival from a Lutheran perspective, because many youths are becoming enamored with Pentecostalism and leaving the church. So the proposed seminar would use our books and speak to the youth about the scriptural foundation of our faith as opposed to emotions. It would probably cost about \$4,000 with 400 youth invited from surrounding cities. I said that I thought 200 might be more manageable and doable, finance-wise, especially as they were looking to do it in May.

Kebede Yigezu does not translate for us but is a confessional teacher who studied in the graduate program at Concordia Seminary. He is the head of the Lutheran Church of Ethiopia, a small but confessional church. Kebede told us there are 200,000 Chinese in Ethiopia, and he had requested a bilingual Mandarin *Small Catechism* from our Ted NaThalang!

April 10: On Sunday I attended Dereje Tilahun's Lutheran church in Addis Ababa, often referred to as the "mother church" of Mekane Yesus. It has been in existence for 115 years, while Mekane Yesus only goes back to 1949. I met two new LCMS missionaries with their families, Rev. Eric Stinnett and Rev. Mark Rabe. I gave them my card and told them to let me know if they had any need for books in the future. They will be teaching at the Mekane Yesus Seminary [at] the Bachelor of Divinity level. Rev. Stinnett's contacts in the States have already asked us about our Amharic books! I also met one of our LHF-Ethiopia board members, Peter Mario. A longtime member of the church, he urged me to help them keep a Lutheran identity in Ethiopia. In a fascinating example of Ethiopia's blended history, Peter is half Ethiopian, half Italian! I met his brother, Paulo, also a longtime member of the church.

After the service, we went to a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ethiopia where our books are kept onsite in a warehouse. There are still many books there, despite Dereje's best efforts at distribution. Addis Ababa and Ethiopia's roads make Detroit and Michigan roads look good! Dereje has a small car, and so he proposed getting a bigger vehicle so he could manage week-

ly distributions within a 100 km radius of Addis Ababa. As Mekane Yesus has 56 Bible schools and 13 seminaries scattered across the country, if Dereje gave each school five of each book, that would add up to approximately 350 books (not counting congregations, of course!). Unfortunately, though, the prices for four-wheel drive vehicles in Ethiopia are extraordinarily high. We actually priced one at \$88,000!!! The average price seems to be about \$40,000. I confirmed this with the Kaisers, Lutheran Bible Translators (LBT) based in Ethiopia, and good friends of mine and the Rahns. They were members of St. Peter Lutheran-Macomb, less than a mile from LHF's office!. I told Dereje that while I thought that such a vehicle could and would be useful, it wouldn't fit our budget constraints. However, I would recommend this as a useful project for bequests we might receive in the future.

April 11: I visited the youth director for [the] Mekane Yesus Church, Tegahun Assefa, on the Mekane Yesus Seminary campus. We spoke about the proposed conference for youth, but primarily about how the *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* would be distributed. Tsegahun assured me that there will be youth gatherings in dioceses across the country, especially later in the year. So he can help distribute in those instances. I also met with Prof. Will Schumacher from Concordia Seminary and also my former professor on campus. He is teaching the M.Div. students until June, providing assistance for OIM. He says that our books will be helpful and that the students seem to be attentive and interested. Lastly, I saw my old classmate, Prof. Bulti Fayassan, as we were leaving. It is good to see Bulti teaching at Mekane Yesus, as I know he received sound Lutheran teaching at Concordia Seminary with me.

I also visited the Lutheran school of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Ethiopia, where our books are stored. They have 475 students encompassing ten grades. About 22 teachers cover all of the classes. They would be among the recipients of our Amharic *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories*, which is now being printed in Bangkok. Despite it being a non-state school, religion classes are only allowed two days a week! And the government is even thinking about cutting religion classes entirely out of all schools. (Currently, state schools cannot teach religion. Unlike the secular reasons cited in the USA, in Ethiopia the fear is of an increasingly radical Islam which comprises 30% of the population! The government, while very favorable to Christianity, believes it cannot allow religious freedom in the schools because this would mean that they would have to allow Islam. So, our books will be even more necessary in the future.) I visited the second-grade class who sang a beautiful song for me about Jesus healing the lame man.

Dereje asked if we could write him an invitation letter for a visit to the USA. His mother-in-law lives in northern Virginia, and I thought we could also have him come up to our office. While we could not pay for his flight to America, I

did say that we could pay to bring him up to the LHF office in Michigan. I also thought I could meet him in northern Virginia. My old boss on the mission field, Rev. Dr. Brent Smith, is the mission director for the Southeast District. Brent has been requesting our books because there is a large number of Ethiopians in his district, many who have colloquized into the LCMS! Dereje, in fact, taught several of them in the past! I thought it might be a good idea for us to hold a one-day meeting where we would share LHF's work in Ethiopia. It would potentially create a new mission partner and also keep us apprised of the location of Ethiopian Lutherans in the LCMS. Then I could fly up to Michigan with Dereje to meet with our office staff.

April 12: I spent the day attending the seminar held for Somali believers in Addis Ababa. It was held at the complex we rent for Mohamed Gurhan, our Somali LHF translator these many years. It is a spartan but spacious compound with many rooms for visitors and the conducting of seminars. There were about ten Somalis going over the catechism with Rev. James May and Rev. Anssi Simojoki. As I took a picture of them holding their catechisms, I wanted to take it from the back, thinking it could be dangerous to photograph them from the front. But they ALL said, "No, take it from the front!" And so I did.

As I listened to the Somalis and watched them read and try to find their place in the Bible, I realized that they are at a very basic stage right now. Mohamed reiterated that in a conversation with me. So, before we advance further and translate newer books, the basic books need to be reprinted (*Small Catechism*, *Good News about Jesus*, and *Understanding Christianity*, by former LCMS missionaries, John and Cathy Duitsman). We will be reprinting about 1,000 copies of each of these titles. I believe that our focus should be primarily on the "introduction" phase translating, publishing, distributing, and introducing, so in my opinion, we should assist with seminars. But it should be mentioned that Mohamed is working on a more complete hymnal, adding new hymns to the small hymnal we helped print for him.

We also attempted to establish parameters between the Somali work of LHF and the Mission Diocese in Finland. Dr. Simojoki and the Mission Diocese will be focused upon church planting efforts while we will focus upon traditional LHF concerns: translating, publishing, distributing, and introducing books that are Bible-based, Christ-centered, and Reformation-driven. It was important to encourage Mohamed and assure him of our support. He, as you might know, has a death sentence (fatwa) hanging over him, issued by a Somali imam for proclaiming the Gospel. He fully expects to be martyred in the future, so I prayed with him and encouraged him. He has two websites where he answers questions about the faith for Somalis. He mentioned he gets three to four requests each month in North America for books. I told him to relay these to us and we would

be happy to fulfill the orders. As a further illustration of Mohamed's courage, as if any is needed, he recently crossed the border into historic Somaliland (formerly British Somalia and currently an autonomous region within Somalia!).

Thanks very much for your prayers! The Lord is good! It was a fruitful journey and I see the great potential of African publishing and mission work for LHF!

MAY 9

I had the privilege to host Rev. Nicholas Salifu, pastor/missionary/educator in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ghana. He was in the U.S. to attend graduation ceremonies at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri, where he would receive his doctorate. His dissertation was on the problem of the retention of young adults in the church.

Rev. Salifu served in the northern part of Ghana where he opened the area to Lutheranism. Ghana is represented by some 46 different languages with English as the language of government and education. Local dialects are still the avenue of conversation and business. The primary languages of northern Ghana are Kusaal, Kumba, and Bimoba. Rev. Salifu has established 13 congregations in which Kusaal is spoken, 15 congregations in which Bimoba is spoken, and 25 congregations in which Kumba is spoken. These congregations represent total memberships of 3,000, 2,000, and 5,000 respectively. These people are served by a total of 21 pastors. There were four men studying for the ministry in Accra, where the headquarters of the church is located. Rev. Kofi Fynn served as the president.

Pastors in Ghana receive no stipends and attempt to feed themselves by small plots of corn, onions, and yams. Families can produce enough corn for an entire year's feeding. A farmer can generate income of around \$150 per year and all farming is manual. There may be a few tractors in the south but not in the north. The teachers in the Lutheran school receive \$50 per month from the government and teachers in public schools receive \$300 per month.

MAY 13

Jen Bagnall and Rev. Heise met with Myadagmaa Nergusaikhan, known to most as Pastor Sainaa. Sainaa is a Lutheran pastor in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia whom Matt Heise met about seven years ago. They both taught in a Lutheran Bible school in northern Mongolia in the city of Darhan. Sainaa improved his English at the University of Missouri-St. Louis from January to May of 2016 and came to our office with St. Luke's Lutheran, Ann Arbor, Michigan parishioners David and Pat Carlson. Wallace Schulz and Matt Heise hoped that Sainaa would assist with future translation work to help give Mongolian Lutherans a solid Biblical foundation.

From: Robert Rahn

Subject: Wire

Dr. Nelson Unwene is the former president of the Lutheran Church of Nigeria and on this date, he reports on the completion of a project. He indicates how difficult the work is in a country of great decadence and political and religious instability. As we read these kinds of reports, we are more inclined to be thankful for the conditions we have in our work in America, although there is much we complain about relative to the current direction of our beloved land. We are thankful for the prayers and support of many people who make our work so much easier than what is faced in a place like Nigeria.

I have made one trip to Nigeria and it is one never to be forgotten, especially arriving in the Logos airport and not knowing if anyone would find me in the sea of people. I later learned that I was in an area considered to be one of the most corrupt in the world. As we attempted to establish a presence in this area, working with Rev. Charles Wokoma, we found out that it was almost impossible to get anything accomplished because of the customary expectations of bribes and payoffs, which we refused to provide. We eventually disbanded our attempt to build a translation office. We eventually engaged Dr. Unwene to work out of his home and we paid him a stipend with the agreement that he would teach at the seminary so that his conservative voice would continue to be represented.

MAY 16

From: Peter Anibati

To: Robert Rahn

Subject: Bakery

Dear Dr. Rahn,

Greetings from Yambio. It's a public holiday here and all offices are closed. May 16 is celebrated every year by the government as a day on which the liberation struggle against the Khartoum regime began...

We have received from Jeff an inquiry about the bakery funds, but we are waiting until tomorrow when the offices, banks will be open to confirm. However, I talked to Pascal Kungbowia today to start clearing the site for the bakery. This work will kick off tomorrow.

On another note, there are cries all over for stipends especially from our brothers in Malakal and Gambella who live in camps since their homes were destroyed by the war. Many depend on this support to provide daily bread for their families. It's very unfortunate that many have to suffer because of Bishop Rule's actions. We are aware that the stipends were bound to end, but I would like to request that since it was not intended for this year, please let the LHF consider the condition of our pastors. We have seen the messages from Rev. Matt about the effort being

made to keep stipends coming until the end of the year but we don't know when to anticipate the stipends. For Bishop Rule, he has the Juba funds at his disposal while many of our pastors and their families go hungry... Please talk to the LHF board on our behalf.

Before the Roberts arrive in Yambio, it would be good to have the seminar funds so that we can finalize the arrangements and purchase the necessary items needed for the seminars. Also note that the budget is strictly for the seminars, but there will be extra cost for the instructors, and we intend to cover that from the operations of the church which normally comes with the stipends. The assumption was that the issues in the ELCSS/S would be resolved before the seminars and the LHF board would lift the ban on the funds so that the approved budget for this year can start coming. As things stand, I don't know what will happen. Can you raise this with LHF board? The instructors must be taken care of when they are in South Sudan; the seminar funds will cover part of the budget but what happens on days when there will be no seminar? Also Rev. Dachi is coming who needs a full board at the guest house.

From: Jeff Rahn

To: Peter Anibati; Nicholas Kumbo Louis; Pascal Kungbowia

Subject: Bakery Project Funds Transfer

Peter, Nicholas, and Pascal,

This afternoon we transferred \$7,500 to the account, representing the remaining restricted grant funds we previously received for the bus/taxi project. Please confirm receipt of this amount upon arrival. The granting organization has approved the use of this amount for the bakery project since it is also an income generating project. No further funds will be available for the bakery project and any further improvements/expansion will need to come from the revenue generated by the project. We will need pictures and regular progress/financial reports so we can report back to the entity that provided the grant. Our first report is due in the coming weeks. We pray that this amount will be used to generate income for the ELCSS/S. Please let us know if you have any questions.

MAY 18

Held an exchange with Rev. Simon Gatluak about the special June 15 convention to determine the future service of the bishop of the church, Rev. Noah Wilson Rule. Simon lived in the Gambella refugee camp, having been driven from his home and church in the Upper Nile Region of South Sudan. He indicated that it would be too dangerous for them to attend the convention in Yambio. It obviously had something to do with the ongoing tribal conflicts that had to be worked out between the factions with the government's intervention. This was

very frustrating for LHF leadership and we could only imagine how frustrating it was for the Lutherans of South Sudan. We have tried to accommodate the pastors by bringing training to the Gambella region to keep them at the level of their classmates who attended classes at CLIHM in Yambo, South Sudan.

MAY 21

From: Robert Roberts

Subject: Gambella

Current statistics for Upper Nile Deanery including refugee camps, Nuer and Shalluk, mostly Nuer: 12,000 communicants; 25 ordained pastors, spottily trained; 45 congregations; 90 evangelists, mostly untrained, lead worship and preach in the absence of the pastor; 900 preaching points, mostly very tiny, one or two families, visited by pastor and/or evangelist. They once had a Bible school, but the land became valuable and was sold by the national church/bishop. The three vicars are now in charge of congregations in South Sudan, their families still in refugee camps. They preach and lead worship, but they are not allowed to celebrate Sacraments, bless marriages, or confirm. Generally, only pastors teach confirmation classes—five months a year, one year for adults, five for children 10-15. The camps are changing the culture, providing education for girls.

MAY 23-27

From May 23 to May 27, Rev. Robert Roberts taught a seminar in Yambio on hymn translation. He had them look at how the psalms were sung and how hymns were based on Bible texts. He had the nine pastors in attendance look at specific hymns from the hymnbook. These hymns will one day become part of a Nuer hymnbook. A variety of assignments during the seminar gave the pastors a taste of the process of translation and/or writing hymns.

MAY 25-28

International Student Ministry Conference in Belleville, Illinois and St. Louis Visits

Report by Rev. Matt Heise

Lutheran Hour Ministries (LHM) offices - I arrived on May 25 (Wednesday) and drove straight to LHM headquarters. Had a good meeting with Doug Rutt and Eric Gates at the LHM office. Jeff called in on Skype for the meeting.

With regard to the Spanish *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories*, Doug will contact Nilo Figur, LHM director for South America, about potential numbers and needs and possible book covers. Jeff mentioned that we would look again to print the Spanish *Bible with Small Catechism* in 2017, so please give us some numbers

of needs. Also, if there are any corrections/book cover changes that need to be made. Again, Doug will contact Nilo. As there are more Lutherans in Argentina than all other countries of Latin America, Doug felt that getting books to them first would be most beneficial.

Concerning Cristian Rautenberg's questions about adding "the sign of the cross" to the catechism's Morning and Evening Prayers, Doug wondered if the original Argentinian catechism did not include it, as that would have been the book used in the Bible/catechism. He will check on that. It is no problem to add it to the next edition in 2017. A standalone enchiridion could also be printed. Chile wants its own cover for the catechism, but they would probably be ok with whatever we do since we're paying.

Updates: Walti Ralli is now bi-vocational in Zurich, working a regular job and serving the church, too. Doug has a good impression of Santiago Keinbaum, who is now on vicarage in Lincoln, Nebraska... We have talked to Santiago about translating the *Small Catechism* into Catalan, the language of the Barcelona region. Doug is fairly certain there is literally no Protestant literature in this language!

With regard to Arabic materials, Fadi Khairallah, our Arabic translator, is quite busy until June. Eric thinks an enchiridion as a handout would be a good idea. Fadi can look into these things (size, parameters) as well as the cover for the Arabic *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories*. Eric has made several visits to Egypt and is looking at broadcasting with SAT 7, a Protestant station in Cairo. The Egyptians would be interested in an *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories*, as would the Lebanese. Eric heard that putting halos around Jesus' head would be helpful because Orthodox Egyptians and Lebanese would resonate with it and it would be easier to share with Muslims. The Egyptian Bible Society is strong in Egypt as well.

Fadi will soon be returning to Cameroon but will not be going to the area where Daniel About Touka is doing the Gbaya hymnal.

Uganda is popping up on the radar again, since 60% of its population is 15 and under. Maybe send some Swahili *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* there?

KFUO - On May 27 I did radio interviews for "Faith and Family" (one hour) and taped "His Time"... with Andy Bates for Friday morning (half hour). I also did four radio commercials for LHF. Went to the introduction dinner of the International Student Ministries (ISM) Conference. I met with Kou Seying and John Loum, but as it was vacation time between semesters, the campus was mostly deserted. I did not connect with Jeff Thormodson, as he went to Minnesota. We were hoping to talk about the Sudanese mission societies in America.

ISM Conference (Belleville, IL) - On May 28, the ISM Conference ran for

the entire day and there was a small reception in the evening. There were approximately 25-30 participants from the various ISM ministries in the LCMS. LHF was the only other RSO in attendance, so it was a great opportunity for us to get our message across. I was allowed to address the gathering and introduced LHF and our work. Several had heard of us, but all were pleased we came and were interested in further contact with us. Overall, the ISM Equipping Conference was a good experience. Following the adage that 90% of success is just showing up, it was good to “show up!” Several mentioned that they would send donations to us. I think it was good to have the resources sheet, because I was able to ask participants to peruse the list and check us out online. No requests for Russian materials, but some for Hindi, Arabic. Everyone went for the Bernie Lutz book, *Sharing Your Faith with Muslims*. The five copies were gone in a heartbeat!

JUNE 1

The May/June “Word at Work” newsletter carried several articles on how LHF books are used to introduce people to Lutheranism and strengthen faith.

Many Lutheran youth in Thailand are living among Buddhist friends and family, making it difficult for them to keep their faith. Rev. Ted NaThalang reported on a gathering of 60 teens in the Concordia Lutheran Church in Thailand (CLCT). The group came together for fun, fellowship, and study of Scripture and Luther’s *Small Catechism*. The theme for the gathering was “Stand Firm.”

Rev. Mohamed Gurhan, a former Muslim, is determined to establish the first Lutheran churches in Somalia. In addition to translating books like the *Small Catechism* and *A Child’s Garden of Bible Stories* into the Somali language, Gurhan established a new Lutheran center in the Ethiopian city of Addis Ababa. There, Somalis can travel in person to study the catechism, worship, and be baptized.

Members of the Dinka tribe of South Sudan, located in the Bor area, and part of the Episcopal Church are embracing Lutheran doctrine and receiving instruction under the leadership of Rev. Bol Nyok. The Dinka catechism has been translated for their use.

Mrs. Elaine Wolters, wife of Rev. Mel Wolters, wrote a book entitled *A Peek into the Parsonage*, containing the memoirs of a pastor’s wife. As orders poured in, Elaine and Mel took the generous step of deciding to send their profits to the LHF.

JUNE 5

Rev. Robert and Eileen Roberts wrote from Yambio, South Sudan where they were commissioned to lead seminars for pastors, church leaders, and deaconesses. Eileen wrote:

“So, we didn’t go to Ezo after all. Interesting story behind that. We had planned

to go to Ezo but the National Security Agency would not allow us to travel there. Wau does seem very unlikely, but lots of people go back and forth to Ezo all the time. So instead we will have a couple of seminars in Yambio while we wait for things to settle. The first should be lay people and evangelists with catechetical review as the main topic. The second week is set for pastors and vicars with the topic being hymn translation. We will probably try to get a lot of new hymns from the *Lutheran Service Book* into their heads, too.

“Games are definitely being played over here. Unrest continues in the country between various leaders, and it sometimes develops into fighting, but we feel totally safe with Peter and Nicholas. Rob Lutz came yesterday, earlier than he had planned. Very good to see him again. His plane actually crash-landed. The pilot landed in about the middle of the runway and therefore couldn’t stop in time, crossing a road and ending up in a garden. No injuries—to God be the glory for that. We do appreciate the prayers.”

JUNE 18

Eileen Roberts wrote: “We finished the second seminar this week. It ran for four days as Monday was a travel day. Bob worked through his materials with the pastors (and vicars) on hymn translation. I did a crash course on music theory, playing a keyboard (one finger to find a tune), and playing a recorder. We also tried to learn some psalm tones and the *Nunc Dimittis* so they can sing it with the rest of the liturgy that they use in Yambio from *Lutheran Worship*. Nobody really managed to learn how to read notes, but they did get over their fear of touching a keyboard.”

JUNE 26

From: Robert Roberts

Subject: Youth seminar/workshop

No trip to Ezo. Pastor Thomas traveled back to Tambura on Tuesday and roads weren’t really passable on Monday due to heavy rains all morning. His group was held up near the road going off to Ezo. He did not have anything taken (maybe was wearing his collar?), but the others did. No one was hurt—all allowed to continue. Rumors abounded that the soldiers in Yambio were going to shoot up the market because they haven’t been paid and they need supplies also. Nothing happened but the basic thought was that, with too many armed people moving, we should not be traveling, so a youth/young adult two-day workshop was organized for Friday and Saturday. We had a total of 19 different participants. We will do another workshop for women on Monday and Tuesday. These workshops are catechetical review and a Bible study on Law and Gospel. I have also been working with the English choir, teaching them some new songs. That will contin-

ue this week also until we leave. We have also heard that a very big tree was put across the road going to Ezo, conclusion being that it is good we were not there, trying to return. Wau is now in the hands of the “armed youth,” not just bows and arrows but high-powered guns. So, interesting times and lots of prayer for this country. People were worried about Rev. Philmissio who was returning to Ezo. They have finally heard that he got there safely.

Torrential downpours really cut church attendance today. The noise on the roof was so great that even through Rev. Celestine moved to the congregation and shouted, we really couldn't hear his sermon even though he was five feet away.

JULY 2

From: Mohamed Gurhan

Subject: My Jigjiga visit

Dear brothers/sisters,

Everyone acknowledged that the church was growing and there was an opportunity to spread the Gospel among the Somalis in Ethiopia. As they requested a few times before during my previous visits, they were all in agreement what their most sought needs were: a place to meet for prayer and worship, a pastor, Christian literature, Bible study courses, and a mini bus to shuttle the believers. They also raised the need to create jobs for the jobless believers and asked me to seek financial support from abroad. During our discussion one of them criticized me strongly, accusing me of enjoying peace in Addis Ababa and not doing much to help the congregation in Jigjiga become established and grow.

A meeting place was one of their greatest needs. I suggested if they can use my property in Jigjiga, which was inhabited for free by some of my distant relatives, as a church center. Three of them accepted my offer but one objected to it for security reasons. He said the premises were surrounded by Somali Muslims and is not appropriate for an underground church and suggested instead we rent a house in one of the two sections of the city inhabited mainly by the non-Somali ethnic Ethiopian Christians. At the end of our discussions, they accepted to use my property temporarily until funds to rent a more secure place is availed, with the conditions that all the Muslims should move out and a protection wall be built around the premises.

After the dinner, we agreed to invite 12 of the believers and to meet on Sunday morning for service at my brother's house. Then we went together to my hotel room and I gave them as a gift copies of Luther's *Small Catechism*, *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories*, and *Good News About Jesus*.

The Sunday of June 19, at 11 a.m., the invited 12 Somali believers gathered together at my brother's living room. After the service, we shared a lunch prepared by my brother's family. During the lunch, my brother announced that there will

be a one-week catechism seminar as soon as a safe venue is available.

Sunday evening, I met three new converts—one male and two young females, who came in the afternoon from Hargeisa, Somaliland to be taught and baptized. They were in contact with my brother for more than six months who then told them to wait in Hargeisa until my next visit to Jigjiga when he will call them to meet me. Though they were in a hurry to be baptized and to return to their country and small businesses, I informed them to be baptized they must first learn, at least for a week, to understand the fundamental teachings of Christian faith. They accepted and we agreed that they come for three hours of catechism classes every evening from Monday, June 20. After a week of teaching, I baptized them in the evening of Monday, June 27. After their baptism, I paid Eth. Birr 2,200 (about US\$ 105) to each of them for their sustenance during the seminar and for their travel expenses and the next day they returned to Hargeisa.

Monday morning, June 20, I went to my property to inform the residents to evacuate the buildings as soon as possible. Four of the six families living there accepted my request and promised to vacate the building within two weeks. The other two families protested, claiming that they neither have another place to live nor the money to rent one and demanded that if they have to move out, I should first give them some money to rent other houses. Later when I investigated, I learned that their claims were genuine and decided to give them each Eth. Birr 2,000 (about US\$ 100) for their new house rent. Since then, four of the six families moved out of the property.

Though financially I was not able to build a protection wall of hollow blocks around the premises, Friday, last week, shortly after we started to fence the property with logs and corrugated iron sheets, one of my neighbors, a fanatic mullah who more than a decade ago grabbed the southern portion of my then property, came with a club threatening to beat us if we don't stop the fence. I called a nearby police post and asked for intervention. Shortly two officers from the police post arrived to find the mullah harassing us with his mace and arrested him. They also advised us to stop fencing the property and first consult with the city council's land department. The land department officials told me that they will settle the dispute of my property border with the mullah after the Eidul Fidrid (after the Ramadan).

Sunday morning, June 26, we had a service participated by ten invited believers. There were another two uninvited new believers whom my brother asked to come on Monday. They returned Monday evening, and after having a short interview of about 20 minutes with each of them, we accepted their request of being taught and baptized and started catechism class the same evening. I will continue teaching them until their baptism on July 15.

I will return to Addis Ababa on July 16 and will fly to Holland on July 19 to spend two weeks with my children there.

JULY 3

From: Anssi Simojoki

Subject: Re: My Jigjiga visit

Dear Brother Mohamed,

Thanks for your clear and detailed report! It is very useful as we try to develop our efforts in Lutheran Somali Mission. I hope to deliver my proper answer and comments sometime later. I only want to point at the criticism you mention in your report. Many Western mission efforts have stumbled on the confusion of expectations. While not being insensitive to people's sufferings, we must teach that God is responsible for our bodily needs while we are responsible for preaching and teaching the Word of God. With that man's attitude, mission work will soon deteriorate to maintaining easy income to some people who should find their daily bread with the normal means of working. Western Kenya has been a showcase of falling away from the Gospel and people's natural responsibilities by feeding them with Western money. Once the flow of money stops, most structures will tumble down. Western Kenya is at places a graveyard of well-intended projects that have replaced the Gospel and directed people's attention from the Gospel to easy income. Easy income also gives birth to closed elites that share among themselves mission funds and foreign support as has happened in the ELCK and the Sudan. Therefore, keep your work clean from man's natural greed or else everything will be lost.

In Christ, Dr. Anssi Simojoki

JULY 5

From: Bernhard Lutz

To: Nicholas Louis; Robert Rahn

Subject: RE: The Meeting!

Louis:

Greetings in Jesus! Brother, please have Wilson [the former bishop] send a letter of invite immediately. I assume that you, Peter, Dachi, and Bisi agree that a session be held in Khartoum. If you do not feel that way, let us ignore Khartoum and work out the best schedule possible for ELCSS/S. I am at your disposal. I will do what you feel is needed. Let me know. Soon. I will have two courses ready to teach for each session, Hermeneutics and Advanced Christian Stewardship. Both courses will be bound and in book form teaching CLIHM students. Let me know what CLIHM needs me to bring with me next month.

My ticket is now written for leaving USA August 12 and arriving Addis Ababa on August 13. You can make the rest of the plans. I have to be in Addis Ababa on Saturday, September 10 to meet Elly, my wife, who will be teaching in Bishoftu for Kebede. I will be teaching Advanced Christian Stewardship and Hermeneu-

tics there, as well as in South Sudan. Let me know if there are any questions. Again, you make the plans, I will try to do my best to serve the ELCSS/S. To God be the glory!

JULY 7

From: Larry Rockemann

Subject: Cedar Falls Higher Things (HT) Skype with Rev. Hugo Gevers

Great connect yesterday afternoon (10:30 @ night!) with Hugo Gevers in Leipzig. Having already completed one of these Skype presentations, he was noticeably more relaxed and really seemed to have fun with the young people. Lots and lots of questions from the young folks—they were very engaged in what he had to say and his ministry there among the immigrants. People hung out in the room with me after the presentation for almost a half hour, talking about his work there and about the work of LHF.

For this second HT conference, we were put into a much, much larger room for this Skype connect—far more seating than the HT conference in Nashville where we had kids sitting on the floor, leaning against the walls, etc. This room had seating for about 100... yet... we had fewer than we had at the first conference. We had over 50 at the Nashville conference and only a little over 30 at this one. The conference schedule had us booked for only one time (3:30-4:30). Oh well... somehow, they got things mixed up.

JULY 10

Dear Dr. Bernie,

Greetings from Yambio. We (Dachi, Nicholas, Bisi, Rob, Bernard, & Peter) had our faculty meeting for CLIHM on Friday and one the issues discussed was the seminars that you are coming to hold. We agreed that the venue will be Gambella and Yambio. It's almost impossible to go to Khartoum with church mission and in Wau there is fighting going on there. Probably you have also heard about the recent fighting in Juba. Because of these problems you will conduct the seminars in two places. We proposed the below schedule: Gambella seminar August 15-26; Yambio Seminar August 29-Sept 9.

We will have representatives come from the different deaneries of the ELCSS/S to Yambio for the seminar. In that regard, I will be sending a budget tomorrow, which Nicholas and I have to finalize. For the Gambella seminar Dr. Rahn can share with you how much the Roberts spent for their seminar, and that would probably give an idea of how much is needed. If there is funding, two of us would like to join you for teaching in Gambella. If you have questions, please ask.

Blessings as you prepare to come+

Rev. Peter Anibati Abia

JULY 14

Discussion with Rev. James May, director of Lutherans in Africa, centered over a shipment of books for the library at the Lutheran School of Theology located near Nairobi. He directed LHF to contact Jason Stephens in Houston, Texas who was planning to ship a container and our books could be included.

From: Robert Rahn
To: Jason Stephens; James May
Cc: Jeff Rahn
Subject: RE: Books for pastors

Dear Jason,

Nice to meet you. Are you a member of Memorial or another congregation? The reason I ask is that I know a few people in that congregation, having preached there several times and having an LHF board member in that congregation.

I have started to do some investigation into prices for getting our supply of books and other things to you for inclusion in the container going to Nairobi. I was pricing U-Haul, Budget, and Pack Rat. I would also check into shipping by freight truck. No doubt there isn't a cheap route. My thought would be to drive the load down if that is the cheapest, preach somewhere in the area, and then return, thus making the best use of my time. Do you have a ballpark date as to when you'd like to get that container "on the rails and ship?"

I'm planning to contribute my own personal library to the cause even though it would be with some reluctance, giving up books I think I might still use, but one has to get a little realistic at the age of 80. And we have collected numerous other books, Bibles, hymnals, choir robes, banners, church paraments, and the like. It would be a heavy load with all the books. If you have any questions, recommendations, advice, let me know.

JULY 22

From: Larry Rockemann
Subject: Dedicatory Statement for *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* in Mongolian

Matt [Heise],

Good to talk with you today, especially to share with you the good news from Carolyn Hansen regarding the funding for the Mongolian translation of *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories*. As you may recall from prior emails and my work with the Shockey family, Carolyn is Russ and Cathy's daughter. The two checks forthcoming from her/the family will enable the completion of *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories*.

As I mentioned to you, I provided a “dedicatory statement” that would be placed in the opening pages of the book. Carolyn and family have emended it slightly (“Russell and Catherine”). There will certainly be a number of people in the capital city of Mongolia that will remember Russ and Cathy fondly as they were impacted with the love and word of Christ during the many visits that the Shockey’s made through the years.

JULY 24

From: John Jock Riay

To: Robert Rahn

Subject: RE: Appreciation

Rev. Dr. Rahn,

Greetings in the Lord. You ask about travel back to Yambio. It is a good question. I know that you might not understand the situation in South Sudan unless you live in South Sudan. The main cause of the war was for the regime to eliminate the entire Nuer ethnic group in South Sudan. If you are a Nuer, you can’t cross what the government calls a red line, that is, unless you remain with the government since the beginning of the war. Those who fled to neighboring countries can’t travel across South Sudan. The war will not stop as long as Kiir is in power. Insecurity will continue under his government until his last day in power and the main target is Nuer even though murdering spread to other ethnic groups in South Sudan. So, it is still unsafe for us to travel to a government controlled state. That is the hurdle. Let that emergency convention take place to remove that bishop because as time goes, the situation can change at any time. If you ask any pastor in Gambella, he can tell you the same thing. After the fighting in Juba on July 8, the situation remains tense not only in Juba but throughout South Sudan.

Yes, I am still in Kenya. When you mentioned the ordination of the graduates in both Yambio and Gambella, I sent you an email asking to let me attend the ordination in Gambella. But I received no response yet. I would like to conduct that ordination with Rev. Bernie if you help me to reach Gambella.

JULY 21-AUGUST 8

The process began with some feelings of nostalgia. My theological library was inventoried, and four boxes were filled with books from my office shelves to initiate the project. These books and many others collected over the past several years were destined for the Nairobi, Kenya area where Rev. James May is building a conference center for Bible training that would eventually become a seminary by 2025 or so. Rev. May assured that these books were going to be a tremendous asset for students and pastors.

The project began on July 21 with the packing of my personal library. On

July 23, 45 boxes were brought from the storage shed that contained theological books from various sources: *Lutheran Worship* hymnals, NIV pew Bibles, one large mouse and four little ones. As the jack of all trades on the LHF staff, I interspersed the packing of books with some tree trimming of some low-hanging tree branches. It's just another cost-saving measure taken by a volunteer staff.

During the week of July 25, much time was spent packing. Amid the undertaking, a disturbing thought came to me one night: "What if each box had to have the contents inventoried?" A frantic call to a customs officer in Nairobi confirmed the regulation. I observed the one pallet already packed with approximately 1,240 pounds of boxed books and shared my lament of starting over with Jason Stephens, the shipper and member of Our Savior Lutheran Church. He calmed my spirit by informing me that I should send the packed boxes and he would gather volunteers to unpack them, inventory them, and reseal the boxes. It was a reminder that I should have put out a call for volunteers as well. On the weekend of August 5, the packing was complete, and over 100 boxes were placed on three pallets. Each box was weighed, and the combined weight, including nearly the 600 volumes from my personal library, totaled nearly 4,500 pounds. Saturday, August 6, was cleanup day. On August 8, the specifics were reported to the freight company and permission was granted to shrink wrap each pallet in preparation for the truck's arrival. The boxes were eventually shipped to Houston where Jason Stephens and Rev. Larry White loaded them into a container partially filled with building supplies and tools for building. Jason is going to spend two years on-site in Nairobi as a volunteer building project supervisor for the Lutheran School of Theology (LST).

In addition to the books and building items, we included clergy vestments, choir gowns, paraments, banners, Sunday school materials, and clothing. Reporting the activity on Facebook resulted in requests for theological books from all over the world. LHF continues to gather books and other items and will summon volunteers when the next packing party should occur.

I proposed Rev. Heise encourage the LHF board to consider providing funds for the building we would call the LHF-Africa Library Translation and Distribution Center. It would be there that our translators would have offices in which to do their work and an area where some of the books could be stored, awaiting distribution seminars.

AUGUST 5

From: Peter Anibati
Subject: Bakery

Dear Dr. Rahn,

Greetings from Yambio South Sudan. I am pleased to inform you that the set-

up for the bakery & restaurant has been successfully accomplished. The facility is now functional with the necessary tables and chairs. Please extend our sincere gratitude to Concordia Ministries which provided the funding. At the end of this month I will be able to inform you about the income that will be generated. I had requested Rev. Dachi to dedicate the facility and I think he did a good job! Once again, thanks for your effort in establishing the bakery for the ELCSS/S.

From: Peter Anibati
To: Robert Rahn
Subject: Meeting

Dear Dr. Rahn,

I would like to share with you some resolutions of our meeting in Yambio with the church council. It's very unfortunate that Wilson and his supporters in Juba continue to ignore the truth of the matter. The recent email by the general secretary blaming us in Yambio is very discouraging, but we decided not to respond because we thought we would be responding to someone who does not know the genesis of the ELCSS/S. I don't know if you are aware that the general secretary is not a Lutheran... He has not attended any Lutheran college or studied basic Lutheran theology that can qualify him to be a Lutheran pastor. So, Wilson just allowed him in and promoted [him] to that position for his own agenda, which he is now implementing.

In our meeting, it was agreed that 1) Dr. Bernie should ordain the vicars when he's in Gambella and Yambio, 2) No orders will be taken from the impostor bishop as per now, 3) Legal procedures [are] to be taken to unify the accounts of the church so that the next rent is not paid into Juba account, 4) General secretary must write a letter of apology for his recent email in which he has belittled the leaders in Yambio and [accused] the LHF of trying to split the church and 5) a committee of five people to go and inform the relevant government authorities in Yambio about Wilson's behavior so that they can understand the truth.

I will send you the contact info of the person who is in charge of the UN agency renting the property in Juba. I suggest that you contact him as the one who sponsored the purchase of the property in Juba for the church. I think they need to be made to understand that there is a problem because the funds they have been paying have not been helping the church but [a] few individuals only. They must only understand that the bishop Wilson and his friends in Juba do not own the property in Juba, but the church which Wilson has cheated for all these years.

We are busy now trying to affect the above resolutions and will inform you accordingly.

Trusting the Lord alone, Rev. Peter Anibati Abia

AUGUST 9

From: Robert Rahn
To: James May, Anssi Simojoki
Subject: Question

Brothers,

We have some reaction to the naming of the center [at the LIA compound]. If Anssi is correct on the past negative associations with the term “training center” should that be avoided, and his suggestion taken—Nairobi School of Theology as the moniker and under it “Translation and Teaching Mission?” You guys will have to figure it out and eventually choose the name you feel fits best.

As I was writing an article about books being shipped to your center, I stumbled a couple times because I wasn’t sure what your center is called. I checked your web page and found references to: training center, evangelists receive basic training, pastors receive continuing education, mission center. Is there something official?

From: Rev. James May
Subject: Re: Question

Yeah, a little confusing as we haven’t thought about the name. I still have Anssi’s plans here, I think from 2000 or 2004 where he called it “Luther Academy” which would be good since people understand academies in Kenya, but the problem is that name was taken. I don’t want to use “Lutheran Training Center” because that is what the LCMS uses. I am copying Anssi in case he wants to put a name on it. In the long run, we do plan to work towards accreditation and the name might change then when it is an accredited university, but we are not there yet. It will probably take ten years. The school will offer a two-year course for evangelists and then an additional two years for those who are qualified to continue on to pastor training. Lutheran Theological Training Center?

I also copied Jason Stephens so he can update the website if we settle on a name. There will also be a primary school since students will be highly encouraged to come with their families. We may offer courses for deaconesses, but I am not high on that. I would prefer to offer training for Sunday school teachers.

So how about a library, seminar room, and distribution center with translation offices for the Lutheran Theological Training Center? You can call it the LHF library, training, and translation building. Does that work? The name doesn’t matter to me, but we do need a library, seminar room, and space for translation and distribution. We can start on it ASAP.

Pastor Green or Rossow, do you have any suggestions? How does “Lutheran Theological Training Center” sound?

From: James May
Subject: Re: Question

Lutheran School of Theology it is. LST for short. Jason and Tim, let's try to remain consistent from now on both on website and on brochures.

From: Matthew Heise
To: William Utech
Subject: Mohamed Gurhan

Hello, Professor Utech,

This is Matt Heise from the Lutheran Heritage Foundation (and your old student). In my office in Macomb, Michigan this morning, we are meeting with our LHF colleague in Ethiopia, Mohamed Gurhan. Mohamed is a Somali Lutheran who is visiting Minneapolis (August 5-25). He was invited by the Somali Christian Fellowship to lead them in reconciliation. (Many of the Somalis know him since he baptized them in Somalia and Ethiopia).

They are now contemplating inviting him to move to Minneapolis and do outreach to Somalis in Minnesota and the US. I don't know what your schedule is like, but would it possible for him to meet with you? Mohamed is an earnest believer who converted from Islam and can proclaim the Gospel in a winning way. It would be wonderful if he could connect with the leadership of Minnesota South.

From: William Utech
To: Matthew Heise
Subject: Re: Mohamed Gurhan

Hello Matt:

What a surprise and joy to hear from you! I would love to connect with Mohamed Gurhan. I am out of town August 18-21 and have a couple of all-day-long meetings the following week, but first thing in the morning or after 2 pm on Monday the 22nd, or all day the 25th is open right now. Please let me know what would work best.

Thanks and blessings!

Rev. Dr. William Utech – Assistant to the President for Missions
Minnesota South District LCMS

AUGUST 25

Good morning:

I had a great visit with Mohamed and three members of the Somali Christian Tingle) and a Somali woman (Saida Mohamud) from Toronto who also, like Mohamed, wants to move to the Twin Cities and do mission work. Mohamed

and Saida will (according to an email sent to me) need the following... To find a church or churches which can sponsor Mohamed A. Gurhan from the Netherlands and Sa'ed Abukar from Canada. They need one-year contract (support) and residence permit to stay in the United States. They also need housing and household goods. The community needs a venue in or near Minneapolis to open a multi-purpose center. The center will be used for prayer and worship, for teaching new converts and evangelizing, and for serving the Muslim community in the area.

So, Matt, I am hoping you can help me... Since you have history with Mohamed could you please write a letter of reference for him that I can share with potential sponsoring congregations? I will need to build a case for our pastors and churches to do something they've never done before, and such a reference from you and Lutheran Heritage Foundation will help.

Thanks for your consideration, and blessings on all you are doing!

In Him,

Rev. Dr. William Utech – Assistant to the President for Missions
Minnesota South District – LCMS

SEPTEMBER 3

Subject: Ordination Greetings

From: Robert Rahn

To: Peter Rev. Anibati

Peter,

Perhaps our message can be read during the time of greetings. We regret very much not being able to be with you. I am giving some thought to coming in November for a visit of encouragement.

Dear Brothers in the Ministry, Members of the ELCSS/S and Friends,

“I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, Who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the Word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths. By you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of a Pastor, fulfill your ministry.” 2 Timothy 4:1-5

On behalf of Rev. Matthew Heise, LHF executive director, Mr. Jeff Rahn, asst. executive director, and myself, we greet you warmly on this solemn occasion of your ordination into the holy ministry, qualifying you to be proclaimers of the Word, administering the sacraments, visiting the sick, and ministering to the dy-

ing. It certainly is a solemn duty to which you are Called and a responsibility you will not be able to fulfill on your own. You do, however, have the promises of God that He will be with you and guide you in all your ways. You also today will hear the assurance of the church members that they will support you with their prayers and with their financial support.

I'm sorry that I cannot be with you for this event, but we are pleased to have Dr. Bernie Lutz representing the Lutheran Heritage Foundation and participating with you as you are ordained. The above word from St. Paul to the young pastor, Timothy, is but a small segment of some important instructions he provides to pastors throughout both of his letters to Timothy. I urge you to read these two letters Paul wrote to Timothy in the next days and receive strong and pertinent advice and counsel for your service to the Lord of the Church.

On this day of ordination, you will be promising to continue doing what you have already been doing—preaching, teaching, and reaching. You are doing this during some turbulent times for the ELCSS/S, but we realize that the leadership we need is that which comes from the Lord Himself and through His holy Word. Our strength comes from Him Who reveals Himself in the Word. It is true that we are often disappointed in human leadership, but whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed. May the Lord bless your ministry to the people under your care. To Christ alone be all honor, glory and praise for the great things He has done.

Even though absent in body, we are with you in spirit and congratulate you on this significant occasion. With your families, with your congregations, and with the entire ELCSS/S, we at Lutheran Heritage Foundation celebrate your achievements.

To God be all glory.

Dr. Robert L. Rahn – CLIHM Program Director

LHF Founder/Ambassador

From: Nicholas Kumbo Louis

To: Robert Rahn

Subject: Re: Ordination Greetings

Dear Dr. Rahn

Thank you for this words of encouragement and the efforts that have made to make this happen. We used a lot of resources and energies in order to train these vicars to become pastors to help the church and we can't just leave them like that while people need their services. Therefore, it's our pleasure to see these young men entering into the public ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ, something that could have been done since last year, but "Pharaoh" refused. Now the church is going to have manpower for the great task of preaching God's Word and administering the sacraments. Thanks be to God. But we are still appealing to the office of

the LHF for financial support so that we can use it to bring some representatives of the deaneries into one place and get a final solution for this chronic problem of the bishop. And if you are coming in November that will be great.

SEPTEMBER 5

Items from the September/October issue of the “Word at Work” newsletter:

In this issue, LHF announced a new project for youth groups. The project was called *God’s Word for You*: an original Bible story book specifically for teens illustrated in the popular manga style. In many countries of Southeast Asia, Bible translations aren’t easy for young people to read and understand. We needed a book that was between the child-level of *A Child’s Garden of Bible Stories* and a teen edition that would serve as a bridge between that and the Bible itself. Once completed, thousands of copies of *God’s Word for You* will be distributed throughout countries like Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia, Laos, and Cambodia. Other areas of the world would also benefit from this volume.

Another feature centered on the country of Papua New Guinea (PNG) where Rev. Matt Heise, Rev. Larry Matro, and Mrs. Matro traveled to the Irylea Lutheran Church located in the central highlands. On one Sunday morning 400 people packed the church to see a Lutheran Bible storybook written in their own language for the first time. PNG’s churches were brimming with children, but lacking resources for them, pastors and leaders struggled to teach their young parishioners about Jesus and His love for them. Over the past 60 years, conditions improved in this country. Though many still live in thatched-roofed homes with no electricity or running water, they have been blessed with faithful Lutheran missionaries (including my classmates, Dr. Robert Holst and Rev. Harvey Kath, and early pioneers, Dr. Willard Burce and Dr. Ron Rall). They have brought the Good News to PNG’s 7.6 million people. Gutnius (Good News) Lutheran Church, an LCMS partner church, has over 400 congregations. Another Lutheran group in PNG has thousands of congregations. Due to the great need, LHF printed 9,000 copies of the Tok Pisin version of *A Child’s Garden of Bible Stories* in April of 2016 to equip the 15,000 elementary and high school students attending PNG’s Lutheran schools. As the books were being distributed in the service, the kids couldn’t wait; eagerly receiving their books, they immediately opened them and began to read. The plan was to continue translating books, not only in the Tok Pisin language, but also in Enga, spoken by a quarter million people.

One other article was about the Lutheran youth of Bawku, Ghana who paraded through the streets to the palace of the paramount chief of the Kusasi tribe—a man who happens to be an idol worshipper. Dr. Nicholas Salifu, a Lutheran pastor and LHF project coordinator, told us that they went to greet “the big man,” as this is a tradition. In his presence they sang and danced. He was impressed and

gave the youth a monetary gift. The chief has the sword, but we have the Word! Study of the Word is an important part of Ghana's Evangelical Lutheran Youth Fellowship, attended by over 700 young Lutherans aged 10-35. The summer convention included a Bible quiz, doctrinal quiz, debate, soccer competition, Bible studies, and house-to-house evangelism. Rev. Salifu shared that all the youth have studied the *Small Catechism* (where the questions for the doctrinal quiz came from). Rev. Salifu was guiding the translation of catechisms and Bible storybooks in Komba, Twi, and Bimoba—languages which are commonly spoken by the youth and adults of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ghana.

SEPTEMBER 12

From: Rev. Herbert Schumm, IRPR—Northern Indiana

Subject: Activity Report – St. Peter Lutheran Church, Vincennes, Indiana

On September 11, 2016 St. Peter Lutheran Church, Vincennes, Indiana, Pastor Nathan Rastl, hosted Lutheran Heritage Foundation. St. Peter is a small congregation located in the countryside about five miles south of Vincennes. I presented the work of LHF during adult Bible class, I preached at their morning service, and I gave a brief presentation of LHF's ministry after a noon luncheon. Attendance: 15-20 at Bible class; about 75 people at Divine Service; 25-30 at the luncheon. Members were encouraged to contribute to a door offering as they left church. Pastor Rastl was present for all activities and introduced me each time. At the luncheon he announced that \$250 was received from the door offering. Two other individuals offered checks payable to LHF after the luncheon, but I asked that they be given to Pr. Rastl instead. He will have the treasurer forward all gifts. LHF flyers with envelopes were distributed in the service bulletins. Three yellow [registration] cards [with names for the LHF mailing list] were completed [and] I will mail [them] to LHF in Macomb, Michigan.

SEPTEMBER 13

From an eblast sent by the International Lutheran Council:

Malagasy Lutheran Church Elects New Presiding Bishop

On September 13, 2016, the Malagasy Lutheran Church (Fiangonana Loterana Malagasy – FLM) elected Rev. Dr. David Rakotonirina as the presiding bishop/president of the church body. Dr. Rakotonirina was elected on the fourth ballot receiving 242 votes, while Rev. Lotera Fabien, dean of the Higher Institute of Lutheran Theology (SALT) in Fianarantsoa received 223 votes. The Malagasy Lutheran Church's general assembly began on September 5, 2016 and concluded on September 14, 2016. Prior to the election, Rev. Dr. David Rakotonirina served since 2012 as the bishop/president of the Antananarivo Synod in the Malagasy Lutheran Church. Before that, from 2006-2010, Dr. Rakotonirina served

as the director of Seminary Teolojikam-Paritany Luterana Atsimoniavoko. In February 2016, Dr. Rakotonirina received a doctorate of divinity (D.D.) from Niagara Lutheran Theological Institute (NLTI). Dr. Rakotonirina is also studying at Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Indiana (a seminary of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod) where he expects to receive a doctorate upon the completion of his dissertation. The Malagasy Lutheran Church (FLM) has between three and four million members. It was founded by Norwegian Missionaries in 1866.

From: Robert Rahn

Subject: RE: Rakotonirina update

It comes full circle!! When we visited Madagascar, Rev. David Rakatonirina bemoaned the fact that he was removed from the big congregation he was serving and exiled to a little seminary out in the boondocks. I told him he should succumb to the liberal antics and do translation work, release books and materials, and go around distributing and introducing the books and materials to keep in front of the pastors, and eventually they would elect him bishop in view of the fact that he had already been elected president of the pastor's conference. He became a distribution agent for our LHF books and materials, maintaining a relationship with the pastors, and now he is bishop. I wonder if he remembers our conversations and counsel.

SEPTEMBER 15

From: Rev. August Fricke

To: Matthew Heise, Ted NaThalang

Dear Matthew,

Greetings from Australia. I am the President of AFA (Asia Focus Australia). I am sorry I could not make it to the meetings. But I am in touch with Pastor Michael Lockwood and some of our other friends. Incidentally, together with your email, an email arrived from Rev. Peter Anibati from the Lutheran Church in South Sudan. I know you have a strong connection there also. I also know most of the LHF people associated with the work in Southeast Asia. Pastor Puje from Mongolia is visiting us in Queensland in October. Are you helping over there as well?

In terms of Bhutan, please come back to me. It's raw and in the early stages there and I would like to talk to our key person there first. What specifically could LHF offer? I will be in Asia again in early November.

From: Matthew Heise

To: August Fricke

Hello, Pastor August,

Dieter was kind enough to give me the August 2016 edition of FIRE. You certainly have some marvelous mission work going on in Southeast Asia!

Do you know Peter Anibati? He does good work for us in South Sudan under difficult circumstances.

I have taught at Pastor Puje's Lutheran Bible school in northern Mongolia for several years. So that is where he will be in October? He has just translated *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* for LHF, and I am hoping to visit him in November and distribute some of the books. For Bhutan, we could offer developing a program for translations of the *Small Catechism* and children's Bible story books, if you need them. But we will wait for your advice on this.

I imagine you know Ted NaThalang, our Southeast Asia representative?

Thank you for your letter and insights, August!

From: Peter Anibati

To: Matthew Heise; Robert Rahn; Jeff Rahn;

Subject: Extraordinary Convention

Dear brothers in the Lord,

Greetings from Yambio, the headquarters of the ELCSS/S in the name of Jesus our Lord and Savior. We rejoice greatly that the Lord has added 16 more workers into His vineyard the ELCSS/S. Three pastors were ordained in Gambella, Ethiopia, and on September 4, eight vicars were ordained into the Holy Ministry in Yambio, and two of the suspended pastors, Rev. Mariano Joseph and Alison Zebedayo, were restored to their pastoral duties, and three evangelists were commissioned. Despite the difficulties that the church is undergoing, there is also some good news that in the midst of all this mess the church is moving forward.

It's worth mentioning that many of the government ministers, honorable members, and advisers attended the occasion despite Rev. Wilson's attempt to have them disrupt the church's activities in Yambio. They all showed solidarity with the church and promised never to interfere with the church programs, and in addition, they said that they have instructed all the security organizations to stick to the government policy! Therefore, we thank God for having such God-fearing men and women in the government of Gbudue State and we pray that God would inculcate the same spirit in all our leaders of South Sudan.

After the ordination ceremony, all the pastors, together with the church elders who came for the occasion, sat down and came up with a way forward to solve the problem in the ELCSS/S. The meeting resolved to have a mini convention at the end of October, the Reformation week, but later the date was changed

to the first week of November to fit the schedule of our important guests from overseas. Shortly we will send the invitation letter with the exact dates. Secondly, an interim committee was formed from the five deaneries of the ELCSS/S and the members are the deans. These five deans were mandated to be running the affairs of the ELCSS/S until the convention. Thirdly, an organizing committee was formed to plan and budget for the convention.

Continue to pray for the ELCSS/S.

SEPTEMBER 26

From: Bernhard Lutz

To: Robert Rahn; Matthew Heise

Subject: A Brief Overview, August 12 to September 25, 2016

Overall report:

It was a joy to serve the Lord in a very unique way this year. Thank you. Unique because the tasks that were required were varied and so different, and also Elly and I were able to do a unit together in Bishoftu, Ethiopia.

The work in Gambella, South Sudan, and Ethiopia is going very well. Presently, good leadership is willing to organize and use strategies that are shared and consequently are bringing great successes to the Lord's Church. The dean of the Upper Nile Deanery is doing a very fine job. He is honest, hard-working, and a good team man, Dean Simon Gatluak... The nucleus of pastoral leaders is strong, able, and willing to take on this new task. The leadership of the Ethiopian Lutheran Church (ELC) is fantastic, and under the hand of Dr. Kebede Yeguzu, a talented and gifted leader. The ELC is small, but viable and growing. It is very biblical and Gospel-centered.

We found all three geographic areas that the LHF assigned to us – Gambella, ELCSS/S, and Ethiopia – were moving in a positive and God-pleasing direction under positive Christ-centered leadership.

The Gambella Seminar

The refugee camp has become a positive haven for preaching the Gospel! Dean Simon has invested his life to assist and to help develop a truly Christian church body in the Gambella area of Ethiopia. He spends long hours assisting pastors and evangelists to do the work faithfully and well. The two-week seminar went very well. A group of 30 men and women gathered for six hours each day under some shady trees as hermeneutics and advanced Christian stewardship classes were taught. The church is off by itself in a developing area of the city of Gambella. Not an ideal location for a developing a new church.

Two men were ordained and three men were consecrated and commissioned for work as pastors of the ELCSS/S. On the day of ordination, I was privileged

to baptize 15 children. The day of ordination was very special for the members of the ELCSS/S as it was a service long prayed for by members of that church body. The acting bishop had neglected and refused to implement the God-given charge to ordain qualified and equipped men and so the leaders of the ELCSS/S confidently assumed responsibility for this joyful and meaningful service. At first, I refused to be the officiant as per our conversation on the telephone on August the 14. You, Dr. Rahn, and I had just completed the call when Dean Simon knocked on my hotel door to insist that I perform this duty on August 21. Having knowledge of the *Book of Concord* on ordination, I humbly accepted his prayerful request, boldly and confidently because this special service needed to be completed, knowing it was God's good and gracious will since the bishop of the ELCSS/S had grossly neglected his duties as God's servant.

Because of the Lord's blessings and good leadership, the ELCSS/S mission in Gambella is making great headway in building the church as a part of the Upper Nile Deanery. When the time comes for the Nuer to return to their homeland in the Malakal area, a strong church will remain to proclaim the Gospel. We find here God's blessings greatly witnessed through the great and severe persecution and poverty these people were forced to endure.

The Yambio Seminar

Travel to and from the ELCSS/S headquarters in Yambio is not easy, and it was not a simple challenge for me either. I traveled early, cutting the two-week seminar into a one-week-one-day seminar at Gambeto Addiss, then to Entebbe, Uganda. Then to Kajjansi, and the MAF service to Yambio. I arrived at Kajjansi at 2 a.m. and was up at 4:30 a.m. to meet the MAF boarding request. All went well. Arrive Yambio at noon on August 23. Confusion, no one came to pick me up right away! Dachi and Peter had assumed pick up charge and neither came! On the way to the LGH (Lutheran Guest House) I was asked to put on my clergy clothes and meet with the Governor of WES (West Equatorial State)! The governor was in Juba for meetings, but the deputy governor was in and he would see us. It was a long meeting discussing Bishop Wilson's false accusations that the church was wrongly handling his official work as bishop of the ELCSS/S.

The governor's office heard our report and was favorable towards the extraordinary convention plans in November. It was late PM now and on the way to LGH, Rev. Peter asked me to develop a confession and absolution service for the next morning, Wednesday, August 24! No sleep for two days and [now] this! I fell asleep with pencil in hand about 9 p.m. The confessional service went well, but no wine for Holy Communion, so we did not celebrate the Lord's Supper. After the service, while getting ready for the teaching, Rev. Elinama Bisi asked me to do a presentation service on reconciliation between the government and the rebels of WES on Thursday morning.

In the meanwhile, Bishop Wilson was sending several official letters from his office to the government of WES charging all of the leaders with conspiracy and derelict of duty. The Education Minister Honorable Pia Phillip requested a meeting with his office at the LGH on Thursday p.m. Bishop Wilson had not labeled Dachi and me as rebels! The Honorable Minister was patient and attentive to the charges. He asked for a constitution of the ELCSS/S and requested that the leaders follow the constitution to the letter. He was considerate, helpful, and very Christian in his comments to the leaders of the ELCSS/S.

All the government officials were patient and very helpful, supporting the plans to call for an extraordinary convention to deal with the election of a new bishop. Bishop Wilson's pleas for government support were met with a negative response. The bishop was desperate in his attempts to regain control of the church that he was now quickly losing any respect or love as the faithful of the ELCSS/S were guided by the Holy Spirit to take serious action through a special convention.

Rev. Nicholas had been in Uganda with his wife and family, as they were forced to leave the area because of the rebel chaos in the Yambio area. I took him aside and told him, "Nicholas, everyone here thinks that you are in the pocket of the bishop. If you want to gain the respect of the church and its people, you alone will have to show where your feelings are at this time. You are either with the bishop or with the ELCSS/S leadership. It is up to YOU!" He understood, took the advice, and was received as an equal by Peter, Dachi, Elinama, and Andreas Bernard. Personally, I believe that Rev. Nicolas is a faithful pastor and was caught between the bishop who was to be in control and those who rejected the bishop because of his outright neglect and failure to serve the Lord and His Church as an elected bishop.

It is said that the bishop paid voters of the Upper Nile Deanery to vote for his election as bishop but even then, he did not have the votes to be elected, but the attorney being used by the convention convinced the voters at the convention that Wilson had enough votes to become the bishop of the ELCSS/S.

The seminar went along very well, despite the many things that tended to detract and cause schedule problems. It was tiring and exhaustive at times, and the bed felt very welcome each night! I was impressed by the faithfulness of the leadership of the ELCSS/S. They were strong, prayerful, and patient in dealing with each of the issues that would arise. The thing that impressed me most was their new confidence [in] what they were doing was God-pleasing. They appreciated so much the support and prayers of the LHF and LCMS. Not just the money that comes each month, but the prayers and the advice that comes with the partnership that is so strong in the Lord! It was my joy and privilege to be on the scene as these young Christian warriors faced so many battles in the name of Jesus.

The Sunday of ordination went very well. The leaders took full responsibility for every part of the service. They asked for advice, and then went ahead with the plans. It went very well! Even the banners were done by a committee and Bernie didn't have to cut letters for the banner! Amazing. Eight students from CLIHM were recommended for ordination. One student was suspended for the time being, dealing with a marriage problem. Besides these CLIHM students, there were three evangelists who were commissioned by Rev. Elinama and two pastors who were reinstated as active pastors. The service was long, well attended, about 800 people were [worshiping] that beautiful Sunday. The meal was excellent. The day was very special for the members of the ELCSS/S. A new day had arrived! God was in charge, not Bishop Wilson.

The bishop sent out letters to all churches that the ordinations were to be rejected and condemned as false and that the newly ordained were not to be accepted as Lutheran pastors. The problem is this: the bishop has lost all respect and even though he will send Rev. Emmanuel of Juba to ask the congregations not to accept the newly ordained, most congregations will ignore the bishop's request! All the ordained are confident that [there] are congregations will accept them as their shepherd and leader.

I was to depart September 6, but MAF cancelled their flight. I was able to purchase a first-class seat, the only seat available on Kushi Air to Nairobi and then Addis. I was really up tight as I had to meet Elly's flight on Saturday, September 10. I made it to Addis on the 8th, went to Bishoftu and organized our room for the next two weeks. Elly missed a flight out of Frankfurt and came in early Sunday morning, September 11! But I was there to meet her, although her suitcases did not arrive. One suitcase went to Copenhagen and the other to Cape Town, South Africa. All her medicines were in the luggage! Fortunately, three days later the case with the meds arrived from Copenhagen; however, the one from Cape Town arrived the day we left Ethiopia!

Bishoftu, Ethiopia

Dr. Kebede is a man with a dream! He works long and hard to make his dream come true! He is blessed with a beautiful wife, Genet, and a wonderful family. His marriage is strong, sound, and filled with love! The living conditions were a bit tough and challenging, like bathroom visits in the dark of the night! The bed was small, but all in all, the church leaders seminars went very well. There were 30 registered for the three courses: The Importance of Christian Education in the Home, Hermeneutics, and Advanced Christian Stewardship. Elly took the first segment and I followed with the next two. The schedule was well planned and organized, but the schedule did vary from time to time. Instead of starting at 8 a.m., it was more like 8:30 a.m. Then I was asked to do a homily on the Bible readings each morning!

Dr. Kebede was pleased with the three courses and he will continue the courses with further study and special assignments. A number of students were working on Master of Theology degrees, but most were working towards a Bachelor of Theology degree. It was a very, very busy week, but we were able to complete the courses on Saturday, September 17. We left Addis on September 19 for Frankfurt, Germany and a visit with Lutz relatives in the Fulda, Germany area. We boarded passage for Minneapolis on Saturday the 24th, arriving 7 p.m., without one suitcase, the one that went to Cape Town, South Africa!

The financial situation for the ELC (Ethiopian Lutheran Church) is critical. WELS has determined to restrict funds to only a few selected mission activities and there is a \$30,000 loan due in November of this year. A special letter will explain the financial problem. He has asked that Elly and I try to find some road or way to assist the ELC over his huge obstacle. The ELC treasures the LHF, its support, and its work very highly.

Summary Comments

The government of South Sudan has encouraged the ELCSS/S to proceed with electing a new replacement bishop but using the constitutional guidelines of the church. The ordination services were both awesome and Spirit-filled. No doubt, the bishop is causing problems, many problems, even cancelling signatories at the KCB bank in Yambio. Rather foolish, since the money comes from LHF. New signatories were named and the LHF acted quickly [and] professionally in every way. A special meeting was held on Monday PM to discuss the need for a special convention. About 40 people were present at this meeting. An Interim Committee and a Convention Committee were named to deal with the November convention. Candidates' names will be selected and plans for the convention will be determined and promoted among ELCSS/S church members. This committee requests the presence of Dr. Robert Rahn and other leaders from Africa to attend this convention. The convention dates will be determined by when Dr. Rahn can attend this important meeting of the ELCSS/S. I called the Rev. Dr. Rahn and he was available November 13, 2016.

The ELCSS/S members have made many efforts to reconcile the differences that have arisen between the leadership of the bishop and the needs of the church. They have used emails, letters, telephone calls, but the bishop has refused to deal with the situation and refused to call a June convention which the LHF would finance.

The reasons given for the election of a new bishop are many. But the lack of leadership, lack of honesty, lack of faithfulness to the Word, his quick temper, his refusal to listen, his lack of personal discipline, considering himself above reproach, and quarrelsome tendencies are some of the reasons given for the replacement of a new bishop.

Finally, as I reflect on the past five weeks, I have had so many special highlights. Even though expenses were high, the work done was fantastic, and only by God's gracious hand! The ordinations at Gambella and Yambio were exciting and Spirit-filled. The three men colloquized at Gambella brought tears to my eyes; Michael, James, and Gabriel. Plus, the challenge of preaching at both the Gambella and Yambio ordination services! Baptizing 15 children was also exciting and a joy! Meeting with the Governor's office as well as with the Minister of Education and National Security Head was helpful. Writing and delivering a confessional service for the ELCSS/S was a challenge, as was delivering a special reconciliation message for the government and rebels in Yambio. Leading the seminars for LHF was a challenge and a privilege. Thanks. To God be the glory.

SEPTEMBER 29

From: Nicholas Salifu

To: Matthew Heise

Subject: Chiefs receive *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories*

After our successful youth convention, a delegation was sent to thank the paramount chief of the area for his support. Although he was away, several sub-chiefs were in his palace to receive us. I sent one *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* to be given to the paramount. Having read a few stories, all the sub-chiefs asked for copies. I immediately sent a young man to bring the few reserved copies to be given to the sub-chiefs. They were proud to have a book written in their language. By this I will be glad if LHF prints 3,000 copies of *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* for us. The need is great!

OCTOBER 3

Jeff Rahn wrote to ELCSS/S leadership:

Greetings,

I have tried resending the \$1,700 wire after several phone calls with our bank. This time I used the instructions we had on file for the church account which only referenced Kenya Chartered Bank in Nairobi. With previous transfers we did not reference a Juba or Yambio bank but only the bank in Kenya. I also listed the names on the account as Peter Anibati Abia and Rob Lutz. I did have phone calls from our bank yesterday requesting full names of the beneficiaries, address in South Sudan, and purpose of the wire. I am still not seeing the wire as released from our account so it may still be under review. Will let you know if I learn anything further.

OCTOBER 11

Dear Peter,

I am back from an extended trip to the Western part of the U.S. and am now getting ready to head for Wisconsin and then at the end of the month to Minnesota and Indiana. It would be important to get your update on plans for upcoming events. I know that you have provided an invitation for being present in November and I am getting ready to deal with that.

Will the extraordinary convention be held the weekend of October 28? It would be good for you to act without the LHF presence at the convention so that we are not accused of fabricating and directing the election of a new bishop. I have talked to Bernie Lutz, and as soon as I confirm your plans, we will make plans to be present on November 13 for the consecration of the new bishop. Is there a bishop you will invite to do the actual ceremony of induction into office? Please respond as soon as you can as our planning will have to begin almost immediately. We have a meeting this afternoon to discuss this matter further.

In Him, R. Rahn

OCTOBER 12

From: Anssi Simojoki

To: Michael Gurhan; Risto Soramies

Subject: Ordination

Dear Brother Mohamed,

The plan is right now as follows: our departure from Helsinki, December 5 on Turkish Airlines, arrival at Bole, December 6, 01 hrs. Bishop Soramies will leave for Helsinki on December 15, 01.55 hrs. My departure will be on December 19, 01.55 hours.

As for the examination, a bishop cannot ordain any candidate without examining him concerning his faith, theological knowledge, and personal life. You are not expected to master the Biblical languages, Hebrew and Greek. Instead, you will be examined concerning your familiarity with the Lutheran doctrine as exposed in the *Book of Concord*. Particular emphasis will be given to the *Augsburg Confession* and Luther's *Small Catechism*. The examination will not be extremely severe, yet it will be serious. The purpose of the examination is to make sure that you are a competent teacher of the pure doctrine and a reliable preacher of the same. Your Christians over there and the Christians supporting you must be able to trust your competence.

In your prayers you can approach God asking for all the spiritual gifts you need in your historic ministry. Be also assured that God is not reluctant to answer your prayers and to our bidding prayers concerning the same. God knows what your Christians need from you. Therefore, He called you to your ministry. Be blessed!

Dear Brother Mohamed,

I hope that this my email finds you well. I have the information that a sum of €3,000 has been sent to you by the Mission Diocese. It should take you forward, for the time being at least. December is coming closer. Therefore, I write to you concerning practicalities.

We are two who will come to Ethiopia, Bishop Risto and myself. The initial proposed dates concerning your ordination: examination December 8, ordination December 11. We are planning to arrive in Addis Dec. 5/December 6. Bishop Soramies is planning to fly back to Finland on December 15. He is ready to participate in teaching for a couple of days after your ordination. I can stay longer if teaching requires.

Am I right that Addis and Jijiga are above the malaria zone in Ethiopia? If not, can you find out whether a malaria medicine called “Coartem” (made in China) is available?

I will send a copy of this e-mail to the Revd. Matthew Heise and the Revd. James May in the hope that LHF and LIA would be represented in your ordination. What about EELC and Mekane Yesus?

If you feel temptations and despair, take it as a sign that your coming ordination will inflict serious damage on the Hell.

OCTOBER 21

Jeff endeavored to expedite travel for Rev. Dereje Tilahun from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia to Detroit, Michigan. It took two attempts to apply for a visa before he was successful, and the delay resulted in some frantic last-minute plans. After Dereje flew to Detroit to drop off books, we would connect after his evening flight to Minnesota. The Detroit flight was scheduled because of the extra luggage he was carrying, and that it was cheaper to fly to Detroit than Minneapolis. We aimed to have him travel with me to Iowa after I preached at a Reformation/Mission Festival in Hutchinson, Minnesota. His schedule was finally confirmed on October 24.

OCTOBER 24

We received a call from Rev. Robert Roberts in Chico, California who informed us of a major gift being designated for LHF. This gift was the result of associations that were built many years ago when both of us were on the staff at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana. Rev. Roberts, prior to entering the ministry as a second career student, had worked in the public relations department of the State of California during the governorship of Ronald Reagan. While at the seminary, we had a relationship with a group in California known as the International Lutheran Fellowship, a group who promoted confes-

sional Lutheranism. We got to know the laymen involved. Now after a period of 31 years, all the principal members are deceased and the widow of the leader of the group wanted to disburse the funds left in the treasury. She consulted with Rev. Roberts before the remaining funds in the ILF account were divided between LHF and Concordia Seminary. The story is cited as further evidence that the roots of the LHF go back to many such associations that have been built over the 55 years of my ministry. It more importantly underscores the effectiveness of the Word at work in the lives of Christian laypeople supporting the ministry of groups perpetuating truth.

OCTOBER 25

Mohamed Gurhan sent a report to Dr. Simojoki and LHF about the strides he had made toward his goal to officially start the Somali Lutheran Church. As a committed Lutheran with a background in the LHF Nairobi complex, he is in high demand where former Muslims from Somalia have settled. When their desire is to become part of this Lutheran church, Gurhan finds himself pulled to the most challenging places to serve and expand the Lutheran presence. LHF and the Mission Province Church of Finland provide Gurhan with financial and prayerful support. This is his report:

From: M. Gurhan
To: Anssi Simojoki
Cc: Matthew Heise
Subject: My USA visit

Dear Daktari Simojoki,

I am very fine and hope and pray that you too are doing well. While I was in Jijiga I received two emails on July 7 and 13 from the organizers of the annual Somali Christians conferences in North America and Europe respectively. Separately, the organizers asked me for help in reconciling and bringing together the Somali believers in their continent and to coordinate their conference programs. As I had no plans, at that time, to attend either conference, I wrote to both organizers in Minnesota and Norway that I will pray about their request and will respond after July 19 when I visit the Netherlands. On July 22, after prayer and discussions with the groups on both sides of the Atlantic, I acknowledged the more problems facing the recently established North American Somali Christian Community (NASCC) and decided to travel to Minnesota. Soon I started contacting and inviting to the conference all those believers in North America for whom I had their contacts.

Few days later, I received an airline ticket and landed Minneapolis on August 5, two days earlier the conference starting date, to prepare the programs. The con-

ference took place in a camp near Minneapolis from August 8-11. Three out of the five elders of the NASCC were my former catechism class students in Africa—one from my 1997 fellowship in Jijiga and two baptized and supported by yourself in 2005 at LHF-Africa center in Karen. One of the latter, Ahmed Hashi, a taxi driver in Minneapolis, whom you helped rescue his family from persecution in Mogadishu, repeatedly requested me to pass his gratitude to you and wished you all the best. About two-thirds of the participants were either baptized, confirmed, or sometimes attended Sunday mass at LHF center in Karen. They were all happy to receive me and many of them asked me about you.

The first two days before the conference and two days afterwards, I emphasized on reconciliation and resolving the conflicts between the elders and the believers' community as a whole, listening and discussing, in person or on the phone, to the complaints of each and every one of them, sometimes for hours. However, my reconciliation efforts ended successfully, leading the believers to harmony and mutual understanding of each other.

They asked for my assistance in establishing a center for the community in Minneapolis, particularly in how to find a suitable venue and management; in how and where to seek financial support for the center; in which preliminary activities, apart from a weekly prayer and Bible study fellowship, to start with; and which Christian denomination to affiliate with. At the end, they entreated that I should either relocate to Minnesota and take over the leadership of the NASCC or visit them at least twice a year for teaching and guidance and assured me that they will cover my travel and other related expenses during my future visits.

On August 22, with the help of Rev. Matthew Heise, I connected the elders of the Somali Christian community to Rev. Dr. William Utech, the assistant to the president for missions of LCMS' Minnesota South District. The district leaders are considering to provide a venue for center and other assistance to the Somali community in Minnesota. We will talk more about the Somali Christians in North America and my visit to Minnesota in December when you come to Ethiopia.

OCTOBER 26

Rev. Bernard Lutz sent a message of encouragement to the leaders and people of the ELCSS/S pertaining to the Reformation.

From: Bernhard Lutz

To: Peter Anibati ELCSS/S

Subject: Thank God for Martin Luther!

Rev. Peter, Pastors, Evangelists, and Members of ELCSS/S:

Greetings in Jesus! Why is it that Dr. Luther is able to find so many more wonderful, helpful, blessed teachings in a Bible passage than so many of us,

who are students of the Bible? For instance, I read Psalm 46 and say boy this is a powerful Psalm. Luther reads and studies it and then writes a whole hymn on Psalm 46! What a blessing the Christian Church received through the work of one man, Dr. Luther! As Reformation Day comes, shame on all those Christians who fail to thank God for His great work of bringing the Law and the Gospel in a correct focus, and for stressing the blessings of the Gospel. Thank God for Martin Luther.

May the Triune God be with the ELCSS/S and its leaders as you focus on hosting a convention and may God bless the committees as they work on the schedule for the convention. And God bless Wilson as he returns to the ELCSS/S synod headquarters located at Yambio and attempts to reestablish his integrity, honesty, and humility as the spiritual leader for Christ's Church. As we all pray, "Thy will be done." Luther writes, quoting Matt 7:6, "Do not throw the Gospel before the swine and dogs." and "Anyone who has the Gospel correctly must certainly agree with us and be one with us, insofar as we are already sure that what we have is the true Gospel and the pearls." We cannot accept dishonesty, godless pride.

May the Holy Spirit guide each of us as we all uncover our wrongs, forgive one another, and with God's help, set a new plan of action with a Spirit-blessed vision for the ELCSS/S and its future. Certainly we must "walk in step with the Spirit!" Gal 5:25. We cannot walk, dare not walk, any longer in the slimy pit that has involved and captivated the ELCSS/S and so many of us for the past five years.

What joy filled my heart as so many fine, qualified, dedicated young men were ordained and now newly installed in the ministry of the ELCSS/S. May the Holy Spirit bless each new pastor with a strong, growing faith, as they "tend the flock" that they are now responsible for as an under-shepherd of Christ. I truly felt a thankful calm and a wonderful peace while serving with you in Yambio this past September.

May the spirit of the Reformation be a powerful healing salve for the wounds that are now present. May His love surround each of us as we faithfully obey His Word and share the message of the Risen Christ!

Allah mahabah. God is love... Arabic.

NOVEMBER 1

From: Rev. James May

To: Jeff Rahn

Cc: Robert Kaumba; Matthew Heise

Subject: Re: Partnership in Translation of different books.

I confirm that we have received the entire Bemba catechism in handwritten format. It was completed by Rev. Smart Nkuzwe. We will now type it in, and we

propose to have a review seminar in Zambia in the coming year, also for the Tonga catechism. This is how we brought the Lunda catechism to completion. It does pose a challenge, and translation is new to many of these faithful pastors, but they are trying hard and doing a good job.

NOVEMBER 6

Mr. Dereje Tilahun, who serves as the LHF translation director for Ethiopia, and was in the U.S. for training, was introduced before each of the St. John Lutheran-Fraser church services and spoke briefly during Bible class about the Mekane Yesus Church. Having a missionary present was meaningful since LHF is traditionally the mission of the month for November at St. John. The timing of his visit was also significant for another reason. The LHF would celebrate its 24th anniversary on November 10 and would thus enter into its 25th year, the same year in which we would also celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. During that year, a Farsi edition of Luther's *Small Catechism* would also be released in Germany where hundreds of Iranians and Afghans were joining the Lutheran church and needed this resource in a language they could understand. In a way, this reenacted what Luther did when he translated and published the Bible in German—the language of the people. The release of the Farsi *Small Catechism* had little impact on Lutheran news around the 500th. It should, however, be classified as one of the premier events leading up to the celebration and certainly should warrant coverage here as part of LHF history.

NOVEMBER 7

From: Robert Rahn

To: Jacob Elinama

Subject: RE: Update

Dear Friends in Christ,

It was good to get a report from you relative to the fluid situation in which you find yourselves as leaders of the ELCSS/S. It is good to keep working towards the goal of a special convention, and unless there is repentance, the election of new leadership for the ELCSS/S. Should the convention be held in early December with the resultant election of a new bishop, I would recommend that plans be made to have the inaugural/installation event on January 8 so that Bernie and I have time to obtain visas and flights. You should also be thinking of inviting a current bishop to participate, be it Thomas Asiago of Kenya or Risto Soramies from Finland. Last time it was the Nigeria bishop, but it seems to me that travel would be difficult to arrange for him out of Nigeria. Just some preliminary thoughts as you await some information from the Minister of Education and Religious Affairs.

NOVEMBER 10

The LHF was ushered into its 25th year, the completion of which would spur a special celebration coinciding with the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. In the meantime, we would plan how and when the special 25th would be observed.

Report on a Rural & Small-Town Ministry Conference

This year I noted that there were far more lay people in attendance, and they were the ones who seemed more ready to stop at the exhibits to look and to learn. I had great interactions with a number of lay folks with several follow-ups asking for a card, etc. to take to their pastor for the possibility of an LHF Mission Sunday in their congregation. I offered “yellow cards” for folks to sign up if they wanted more info/newsletters/etc. from LHF and got not one taker... A total of 95 pastors/lay people were in attendance. — Rev. Larry W. Rockemann

NOVEMBER 11

Rev. Tom Batsky, IRPR for western Michigan, reported on a special Reformation circuit rally that was held in Stevensville, Michigan. The resultant offering was designated for the Vietnamese *Book of Concord* Project which had been adopted by the circuit with great success.

From: Thomas Batsky

To: Matthew Heise; Robert Rahn; Jen Bagnall

Subject: Vietnam *Book of Concord* update

A special afternoon circuit Reformation service was held Oct. 30. The offering was designated for our circuit Vietnam *Book of Concord* project. Nine of our ten circuit congregations held door offerings that morning for this project as well. A combined total of \$1,141 was received just from the afternoon circuit service and morning door offering at Christ Lutheran, Stevensville. That check was mailed out to you earlier this week from Christ Lutheran Church. Door offerings collected that morning from the other eight circuit congregations have been/will be mailed shortly.

I will be conducting a chapel service next Wednesday at Trinity Lutheran School, Berrien Springs to kick off their school's Vietnam *Book of Concord* emphasis. Trinity Lutheran School, St. Joseph, & Christ Lutheran School, Stevensville will center their Vietnam *Book of Concord* emphasis around National Lutheran Schools Week next spring. The offering for the circuit National Lutheran Schools Week chapel service has been designated for our project as well. It is my prayer that these efforts will be blessed by the Lord to the extent that our goal of \$18,000 would be realized next spring, nearly six months ahead of our Reformation Sunday 2017 date.

NOVEMBER 15

This trip report was meant to be more than just a report, but a message of encouragement to those serving as LHF IRPRs, commending them for the great job they are doing to make LHF known.

From: Robert Rahn

To: IRPRs & staff

Greetings,

It's taken a while to do all the follow up as a result of this trip, a very good and blessed one with responses still coming. There were 26 follow up letters I devised and sent out.

Going out I carried two special proposals with me, plus a report for another special donor. Major gifts, by God's grace, are anticipated as a result of these visits if past giving remains the pattern. The proposals being presented actually amounted to \$161,000 and other anticipated gifts could be in the range of some \$200,000. The expected gifts indicate why the trips to Minnesota and Iowa are important for LHF. One could actually spend two weeks visiting the special friends who have been supporting LHF for these 24 years.

I had with me on the Minnesota/Indiana trip Dereje Tilahun, our Ethiopian director. He is a translation specialist. He has taken all the theological courses to be ordained but chooses to work in the field of translation for LHF, the Ethiopian Bible Society, Wycliffe, and Lutheran Bible Translators. On the trip he spent spare time (little of it) translating the book of Psalms as his Bible Society assignment. They are doing another edition of the Amharic Bible with a vocabulary geared to the common man. He brought with him a number of copies of *Getting into the Theology of Concord* that was just released as the official study guide for the *Book of Concord* published last year. It will be used in pastor conferences around the country. We are presently trying to work out the many details of getting *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* from Bangkok to Addis Ababa. Some questions about tariffs, dock fees, and permission for Christian literature. Some of these rules were introduced only this past year. Henceforth we will publish all books in Ethiopia. Up to now our printer was unable to handle color. His shop is now being upgraded and he is capable. Interesting that the printer's name is Haile Selassie.

One of the reasons we brought Dereje over was that he could visit his mother-in-law, sister, and other relatives living in Virginia. But the real motive was for him to be with me for one of my visits with the donor who paid for the entire printing of the *Book of Concord* in Amharic. The other reason was so that he could scope out the Lutheran Ethiopians on the East Coast. He met with some of them, even preached on this past Sunday in an Ethiopian congregation and was

in touch with a number of other pastors serving the Ethiopian congregation. He has informed the folks of the availability of Amharic materials from LHF. We will also receive the names of all contacts. Our goal is to find out how many books are needed and then do a print-on-demand for the specific number. Mission accomplished with the help from Dereje.

Before he left here, we went to Ann Arbor for a full day of activity. First, a tri-circuit meeting at the Michigan District Office where we were listed on the program for 35 minutes. It lasted an hour and a half because of the interest on the part of some 25 pastors. The afternoon circuit meeting was smaller but still much interest demonstrated. In the evening, there was a faith and culture class opened to the campus at which Dereje spoke on various topics, including the work of LHF in their culture. We took advantage of Rev. Heise being gone and housed Dereje in his apartment. Thanks to IRPR Bob Marshall for lining up these events and doing the follow up on preaching possibilities.

Speaking of Matt, he presently is on his tour of four congregations in Germany and distributing the Farsi catechism. We will be anxious for his full report when he returns next week. I have spoken about this, as you should, that this will be one of the most significant events of all events in terms of the 500th. I would say that what is far more important than the restoration of buildings and opening of nice places for folks to visit is the providing of the restoration and foundation of human souls through the Farsi catechism for those Iranians and Afghanis who are filling the Lutheran churches of Germany. We hope you will read of it in Lutheran publications and that it will be included in speeches of LCMS dignitaries. This will certainly be important fodder for your presentations. I'm sure Jen will be able to provide pictures for your PowerPoints when Matt returns, hopefully with a great treasury of pictures. This is truly exciting stuff for all of us. Watch for his full report on the webpage and I will encourage him to send you a report on this historic visit to Germany.

We are pleased with the overall effort you reps are putting forth and it will surely show when the final audit for the year is taken. What a blessing you are to us in our global mission. Looks like we will be adding several new men to our IRPR cadre: one in Montana, maybe one in Indiana. We are hoping that we can give Bernie Lutz another helper for parts of Minnesota. Bernie has a regular group of congregations that are in the Sudan support category.

It's interesting that the former congregations of most of you men are strong supporters of LHF. Don't forget that aspect as you think of your service to us. You have done a great service by the influence you have given to those congregations you have served. It's an important aspect of your service to the global effort of LHF. Just keep that connection strong.

Keep praying for the ELCSS/S as they continue to deal with their prob-

lems. They are hosting a special convention in early December to elect a new bishop as the former was really an imposter and stole money that really belonged to the church. U.N. rent from church property got into the wrong hands in a significant amount and we are hoping after the convention that this is dealt with. It is sufficient funding to operate their seminary, for instance. They also need to elect a new general secretary and treasurer. Thank God that none of our funds were pilfered. Bernie Lutz and I have tentative plans to go to Sudan in January for the induction/installation of the new bishop. Once they have settled their issues, we will determine when the new seminary class will get underway.

We are now moving into the budgeting process, a time when Jeff begins to gather information from all world stations planning work for next year. Maybe you were not aware of it but the board has named Jeff as assistant executive director to help in the face of a lot of travel by our Executive Director Matt. To stay on top of all manifestations of the LHF work is a gigantic task.

We would like to place an IRPR in the three districts of Illinois. Ted and Walter Otten have given help in these areas, but we would love to have more help. You can make recommendations. Also, representation in South Wisconsin, Nebraska, West Texas, Florida, California, Northwest, and other areas. We keep looking.

Maybe some of the information above can be placed into your quiver and be helpful to you. May the Lord continue to bless our labors for Him and early wishes for a blessed Thanksgiving and Advent.

NOVEMBER 17

The LHF added another IRPR to its fold. After some misgivings about requirements in signing a contract as an independent contractor, Rev. Ray Larson decided he could overlook the one contract item because he felt the LHF mission superseded the concern. Thus, Rev. Larson of Stevensville, Montana became the 12th member of this important group of mission partners.

From: Raymond Larson

To: Robert Rahn

Subject: Address

O.K., let's give it a try. I have signed the document and will get it in the mail tomorrow. Thanks for the explanation and encouragement, Bob. Because of the time of the year, and the relatively short time of our stay, I imagine there will be little time to set up a presentation between now and January. Still, there are a couple congregations I will contact and see if there might be a Sunday I can present to them. I will let you know. I am sure there will be more questions, but this should give us a start. I am ready to learn. Send me anything you think I need to know. More later.

From: Raymond Larson
To: Robert Rahn
Subject: Re: Address

Greatly appreciate your willingness to overlook the legalese paragraph and come aboard. Haven't yet had any problems and confident we won't as we go along in this IRPR program. We are most pleased to have "you among us!" You are already in the know of things in this regard. We know that December is not a month when guest preachers are in high demand except maybe for the Sunday after Christmas, like the Sunday after Easter when everyone wants to get a Sunday off and be gone. We prefer to have LHF Sundays when the preacher is there but do take "fill-in Sundays if they can be LHF Sundays."

NOVEMBER 18

Now in these next messages I would like to switch gears and share some correspondence that stems from people who served us in places like Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, South Africa, South Sudan, and Uganda. Rev. Robert Roberts volunteer-teaches on the foreign field of Ethiopia and South Sudan. We have many such volunteers who teach basic theology courses. Rev. Robert and Eileen Roberts are both degree-holding volunteers, and like many others, their help goes beyond what they may have done in a classroom, even if that classroom was in the open under a tree. The Robertses are doing what they can to provide further education in an area with limited educational opportunities and little or no literature. There is much more that could be said about these brave souls willing to encounter flies, scorpions, snakes, and the heat of the day. I'm only using this correspondence to highlight what the Robertses and others have done for LHF as volunteer educators over the past 25 years.

The people addressed here are three vicars who graduated from CLIHM in Yambio, South Sudan. They were forced to flee from their homes when conflict arose and ended up in a Gambella refugee camp with around a quarter of a million other refugees. While there, they still served and started a Lutheran church. LHF provided several seminars for them and other pastors and lay leaders.

From: Robert Roberts
To: Robert Rahn; Jeff Rahn
Subject: Questions about funds to use in Gambella, Ethiopia

I am including the message from Rev. Simon below along with my original correspondence with him. Because we printed our handouts for the workshops in May in Gambella at a local business center there, we had several discussions about costs and what the Gambella pastors might be able to do and/or finance and how they move money around. Sometimes someone has a cow in South Su-

dan that can be sold, and they share the money around. Other times, if someone like a relative might visit from the states, money can be sent to the relative and then brought in. Since... paying jobs are generally unavailable in Ethiopia, cash isn't always easy to come by, especially if they are trying to print multiple copies.

What I was wondering is if money in small amounts like \$50 or \$75 can be run through Dereje to help offset their costs. However, I don't want Dereje to have to run to Bishoftu all the time to get it there, and I don't know if how you run budgets and money transfers would allow for this. As you can see below, I was careful not to tell Rev. Simon that I would send him money, but from the hours spent talking about this kind of thing last May, I think he gets the subtext. We would, of course, have to find trustworthy couriers, but so far, our experience has been pretty good with pastors we have worked with there. Given the level of our donations this year, we have no need of this being tax deductible on our part. I suppose another question could be what it would cost in Addis. We are not talking making books like the Nuer picture catechism, but something more like a term paper—ten pages stapled together.

Again, my main reason for sending them these materials is to help them figure out how to get the catechism and Bible stories into logical, teachable units. They really do not have much, if any, training on this, and certainly no printed materials. Any advice or ideas will be appreciated. — Robert & Eileen

Robert and Eileen Roberts wrote:

Dear Rev. Simon,

Greetings in Jesus' name. We are very glad to hear that Dereje was able to contact you and that you have arrangements for getting the simple English catechisms. We are hoping to hear from him soon about the possible costs of printing the Nuer picture catechisms. I will be writing to Rev. Rahn at LHF to see if he has heard anything yet.

I am also planning to email some material. Maybe it will take a couple weeks for me to prepare, that perhaps will help teach the younger children as young as three or four up until seven years. It will follow the church year, Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, and so on, and will have an outline including a story for the particular Sunday, a memory verse or two, and a hymn for the season. I will try to pick hymns that teach good doctrine. Perhaps some of the pastors will want to practice translating the English into Nuer and making a suitable melody so that you can sing the hymn. Then, if we are able to visit next year, we, together with the pastors, can look at some of the translations and hear about how they work.

Are you able to print the materials I am sending you by email so that you can see if they are useful? Do the business centers have electricity to print? How expensive are the costs when you want to make copies for some of the pastors to look at?

Praying always for you and the work among the Nuer as well as all the many peoples of the ELCSS/S that God will bring peace both physically and spiritually. God keep you safe in all that you do.

From: Simon Gatluak

To: Robert Roberts

Subject: Re: catechisms and new memory verses

Dear friends in the Lord,

We are very grateful for your concern about the church in Upper Nile and the entire church of South Sudan. We get the books because of you and we pray that God will open the door for catechism to be printed in Addis so that we can have very simple way of getting the books. Our people are willing to learn but there are no materials they can use and they need to hear God's Word from people who have good knowledge and have a good understanding from the Bible but no one is coming.

We pray that God who brought you that time will bring you again. We know God will bring lasting peace to the people of South Sudan. We are ready to translate the hymns into the Nuer and hopefully become a book that we will use in the church. We can print the ten pages of memory verses for the teaching and I show to other pastors they really need copies and use it in their congregations. There are business centers in Gambella where we can make copies for every pastor.

On this date LHF also received a report detailing progress on the bakery, which would then be submitted to the foundation that provided the grant. The initial grant was given to repair two buses that had formerly served as medical vans and convert them into taxis. One of the buses was found to be irreparable and the ELCSS/S requested to use the grant to build an expanded bakery. Once the request was approved, local leaders became innovative and built a combination bakery/restaurant on the Yambio church property. Peter Anibati Abia reported the enterprise was profitable and the proceeds would be used for what they considered the most urgent church needs. This should be recognized as one of the first successful ELCSS/S projects.

From: Peter Anibati

To: Robert Rahn

Subject: Re: bakery report

Dear Dr. Rahn,

The bakery has been doing well as you can see from the records I have submitted. I have only attached the pages indicating the total income per month, expenses, and how much is carried forward. As you know, most of the grant money

was used to set up the bakery and the restaurant, but the capital invested into the business was small but I am glad the business is progressing. Most of the income we received has been used to improve on the bakery and purchase some equipment which was missing. Few weeks ago, I posted some structures that we have erected at the bakery; perhaps you might want [to] share those pictures with the foundation that provided the grant. At the end of September, total income was 70,218 SSP and the expenses were 31,326 SSP and 38,892 was carried forward. At the end of October, total income was 62,982 SSP, expenses was 24,251 SSP and the balance carried forward for that month was 38,731 SSP. From this I can say the bakery is a success and it is my prayer that it grows. (\$1 is equal to around \$100 Sudanese pounds SSP).

It's my hope that at least by December, the bakery will be able to pay some bonus to the ELCSS/S staff for Christmas celebration. I do not mean the bakery will be able to pay the whole ELCSS/S stipends but at least the bakery will be able to contribute something to the ELCSS/S stipends. Please extend our gratitude to the foundation for giving us this grant. I will write more on some of the thoughts/plans I have for the bakery later.

From: Robert Rahn
To: Peter Anibati
Subject: RE: bakery report

Dear Peter,

Thank you for the bakery report. It is refreshing to receive this positive information indicating that the bakery/restaurant is creating some income for the use by the church. It is our prayer that it will continue to flourish and produce revenue. Please continue to keep us posted.

That takes me back to the repaired bus. What has happened with the bus? Is it still available for runs to the airport and for other functions? I know it had the broken windshield, but what about its running condition? It would be good to keep that in a running condition lest we be guilty of wasteful spending.

How are plans coming for the convention? I suppose you are patiently waiting for the end of November, which was the posted deadline given by the Minister of Religious Affairs, the date by which the bishop was to have responded. I may begin my process of obtaining a visa for January in the next days, assuming that a new bishop will be elected and that there will be an inauguration/installation January 15 or 22. The 22nd happens to be my birthday, but it is not a high holy day unless there is a bishop consecrated.

Here we are preparing for the National Day of Thanksgiving, which will take place on Thursday, so the office will be closed Thursday and Friday for the holiday. Thanks again for the positive report on the bakery. We thank God for the progress.

NOVEMBER 28

I exchanged messages with Rev. Bol, president of the South Sudan Evangelical Lutheran Church (SSELC). In this exchange we were trying to encourage a unity among the two Lutheran church bodies of South Sudan. The initial strides toward fellowship or amalgamation failed due to the lack of interest shown by Bishop Rule, causing Bol's group to go their own way. It was possible that this conversation could lead to the beginning of closer ties between the two church bodies.

From: South Sudan Evangelical Lutheran Church

To: Robert Rahn

Subject: Greetings and Inquiry

Dear Robert,

Greetings in Christ name. It has been a while without hearing from each other. So how are you doing? Any news about the church in Yambio, especially how Bishop Rule and his pastors are moving on? Any reconciliation made between Bishop Rule and his pastors?

Things are moving on well with SSELC, though the current economic crisis in South Sudan is causing problems in all aspects of life. Our church is growing well in South Sudan and in the refugee camps in northern Uganda.

Pastor Bol

Dear Brother Bol,

A blessed Advent! So good to hear from you and to know of your desire to stay in contact. I'm including Peter and Nicholas as I desire them to be in contact with you so that the Lutheran churches in South Sudan/Sudan will be in harmony and possible partnership down the road.

In regard to the current situation in the ELCSS/S, I can report that there has been no reconciliation on the part of the bishop as he has not confessed his wrongdoings. Therefore, the church is moving ahead with an extraordinary convention to be held in the early part of December when it will be determined if it will be necessary to elect a new bishop. The church is receiving some guidance from government officials to make sure all is done in decency and in order, following the church constitution in the matter.

It might be good to have you or a representative of the church to come to the convention and bring greetings as fellow confessing Lutherans in the country. Perhaps the officials of the ELCSS/S may consider this and relate to you. "How good it is when brothers dwell together in Christian unity." The plans are that Bernie Lutz and I would be present for the inauguration of a new bishop if elected. We are proposing this to take place in January. Perhaps you would be invited

to that event as well.

God bless your Advent celebration. He is coming soon!!

R. Rahn

From: South Sudan Evangelical Lutheran Church

To: Robert Rahn

Subject: Re: Greetings and Inquiry

Thank you very much Rahn for this comprehensive report and for trying to connect us (SSELC) with our brothers and sisters in the ELCSS/S. It has been our desire in the SSELC to work together in a way with our brothers in Yambio, but our brother who is Bishop Rule disowned and dispelled us, calling us a break-away Anglican group and that has discouraged us so much. After unsuccessful several attempt to approach him with an intention of working together, we just decided to operate alone because there was nothing else we could do to turn that situation around for the better, as we could not crash his gate and offend him in the name of unwelcome working together. So we have no problem to have contact with our brothers and sisters there in Yambio to harmonize relationship between the confessing Lutheran Churches in South Sudan as you put it.

Pastor Bol

NOVEMBER 29

LHF has provided Rev. Richard Ondicho Otiso, a missionary friend serving in a Finnish mission society, support through books and unused Sunday school materials. Earlier, I mentioned that there has been little Sunday school material available for Lutherans in Finland, and Richard was astounded at the materials available for the children of the LCMS in the USA. His remarks indicate a persistent decline of Lutheranism in Finland, but the new church body LHF helped establish, the Mission Province Lutheran Church, is growing.

From: Richard Ondicho

To: Robert Rahn

Subject: Thus far

Dear Rev. Dr. Rahn,

Advent greetings from Finland in the mighty name of our Lord and our King Jesus Christ. It has been a while since we communicated last. I thank you for the books and [Sunday school] materials that you sent to me too; they are put into good use. The work started three months ago and this far we have moved on. Here in our International Divine Service we have an average attendance of 60 people per Sunday. It is by God's grace that we have moved on. I see the signs of the Holy Spirit working in our new ministry. At Sunday school my wife teaches

there and attendance there has been average 20 children and imagine out of the twenty only a third are baptized and so now is the time to organize and baptize them mostly them during this Advent season. It was indeed funny that some of them children have never attended church anywhere and so they wondered to see the cross and even sing Christian songs. Most of these kids comes from parents who have moved to Finland at least 10-15 years but have not time to attend church as they are struggling with western busy lives. Most of them are cleaners or nurses who have odd working schedules hence kids have never been to church. I think this brings more challenge to re-evangelize their parents.

Secondly, I have been struggling to teach a *Small Catechism* to Muslims here. Two of them are from Ethiopia whom I have been having five to ten hours a week. One of the sharpest is [of] Somali origin. I am looking forward to baptize him and the other person next Sunday, April 12, 2016. Amongst other challenges that I have is having an Arabic catechism because two of them don't understand English all that well. So now, I teach them through an interpreter. Last week I had five good hours with one man called Ahmed who thought that we Christians have three gods (Trinity) paradox. After five hour's discussions he told me that he believed after understanding and so he demanded baptism instantly. I can't complain of too much teaching with Muslims but rather I give all the glory to God for this chance.

Now somebody donated 30 Arabic Bibles which is a great help, but we urgently need *Small Catechisms* in Arabic if LHF has ever translated any.

Now one of the many blessed chances that God granted me is to meet with LHF Executive Director Rev. Matthew Heise. I was so humbled to meet this humble man of God. I had almost one-hour personal discussions and it was a very wonderful experience. Rev. Matthew spoke highly of you and the work that you have been doing and what you are doing right now. We agreed to get more materials for my work here and I so much looking forward to seeing this happen in the near future.

I thank you for the great support that you have given me during the past ten years and I look forward to keep on communicating with you.

NOVEMBER 29

In preparation for LHF's 25th year and the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, the Foundation began to discuss a major project. The Ingrian Lutheran Church of Russia had requested a repeat of what was done with the CPH's *Lutheran Study Bible*, translating all items except the text of the Bible itself. The focus would be on the notes, maps, introductions, etc. The first edition of the *Lutheran Study Bible* was based on the NIV, rather than the ESV translation. In the absence of a complete Lutheran commentary series, the product of this endeavor

could be used as a basic Bible commentary.

Dear Matt, et al.,

By now you have received the proposed project for the Ingrian *Lutheran Study Bible*—\$4,700 for the preparation and delivery from Minsk and then \$31,000 or \$41,000 depending on if we get 3,000 or 5,000 copies. The bishop is also really hoping this project might get done, so much so that he thought of writing President Harrison to see if he might get the LCMS to give some money toward the project since if we can get started; hopefully we would have the project in time for the 500th year anniversary celebrations here. It is, of course, a huge project. We could also try to find some other sources—maybe some other sponsors from Finland. What do you think about all this?

Blessings, Leif Camp

From: Matthew Heise

To: Leif R Camp

Cc: Jeff Rahn; Konstantin; Robert Rahn

Subject: Re: Study Bible

Hi Leif,

I thought that Misha Ivanov said originally that they could find people to do the layout work as volunteers? I see now they want to contract that out to Printcorp in Belarus. That would probably get the work done quicker, but we will need to find some big sponsors for all of this. It doesn't appear that LCMS World Mission will kick any money into this project, if I read James Krikava's letter accurately. It would be an appropriate project not only for Reformation 2017 but also for the LHF 25th anniversary next year. After all, it all began in Russia back in 1992...

I think we might be able to find some appropriate wording to honor Ingria as the church will be the main distributor, but I think it is only proper that LHF, especially if we find the lion's portion of the project, should be mentioned prominently. Perhaps something along the lines of... "in conjunction with the Lutheran Church of Ingria, LHF has produced this text." I'm sure we could work out some appropriate wording satisfy everyone.

NOVEMBER 30

The following messages show the progression of a project from translation, to publishing, to use in the field. These messages also demonstrate how pastors can adapt to minister to various groups in their neighborhoods. LHF and I are delighted that more of this is going on in Lutheran evangelistic circles.

From: Cameron Jones
To: Jeff Rahn
Subject: RE: Mission Project Information

Jeff,

Thank you for this summary. I apologize for not being more specific in my request. I'd like to learn about the people in Afghanistan. What challenges do they face in light of persecution, the culture, and government? How has God's Word been active among these people? What resources do they currently have; how does the *Lutheran Book of Prayer* meet their current spiritual needs? Do we have missionaries/church planters in the field and what are their needs? What other prayers can we lift up on their behalf? These may be well covered in bulletin board materials or electronic resources already prepared by LHF. I'd like to look at these and prayerfully consider donating to this ministry.

From: Jeff Rahn
To: Cameron Jones
Subject: RE: Mission Project Information

Cameron,

Thanks for your message and interest in this prayer book project. We are planning to reprint this booklet which is being used around the world to reach out to refugee/immigrant populations who speak this language [that is, Dari]. The text is currently being updated and we anticipate printing in early 2017. This [*Catechism and Prayerbook*] is a book for basic Christian teaching and daily prayer to those who live in the Islamic world. The book also includes the three early Church creeds (confessions). It has a prayer for every morning and evening of the week and prayers for various professions and prayers in different life situations. Everything is referenced to the Bible and the book has over 650 Scripture references. This book of prayer is intended for daily usage by fathers, mothers, and children so that they would find comfort in Christ and to grow in godliness. If you are looking to adopt this project for a church/group, we may be able to provide additional pictures and bulletin board materials.

From: Jeff Rahn
To: Cameron Jones
Subject: RE: Mission Project Information

Cameron, our executive director is currently traveling across Europe and met with the people involved with this project last week. Copies are being used in Germany, Finland, Denmark, and Sweden to name a few locations. In the coming days he will be distributing copies of the Farsi *Small Catechism with Explanation*

at several locations in Germany. We are also investigating printing this booklet in Germany for use among the influx of refugees arriving from Syria and Iran.

I am glad to hear that you are also using this booklet.

From: Matthew Heise

To: Jeff Rahn

Subject: RE: Mission Project Information

Hello, Cameron,

Jeff has shared with me your correspondence while I have traveled the past month throughout Europe. I don't know as much about Afghanistan, although I do know that some of these believers were secret Christians in their homeland. Most of those coming into the Lutheran Church have come from a Hazara background, so they speak Farsi. Nonetheless, Dari would probably be more useful. The book that we will update was put together by Harri Lammi, a 20-year veteran missionary to Afghanistan, along with Wahid, his Afghan editor in the Netherlands. There are great possibilities for outreach in Germany; Hamburg alone numbers about 15,000 Afghan refugees. There are at least 50 and now probably more Afghans in Gottfried Marten's large congregation (Trinity Lutheran) in Berlin. I was able to distribute our Farsi catechisms on November 20 to about 350 Iranians and Afghans. Similarly, there are Afghans attending Trinity Lutheran in Leipzig. Missionary Hugo Gevers, who serves there, also took me to a house group (about 15) in Borna (30 kms south of Leipzig). There, most of the participants are Afghan. One young man peppered Hugo with probing questions about the faith.

Harri designed the book with Afghans in mind. He has 64 prayers in the book and 20 topics addressed, including issues related to "merit" and what is obligatory in Christianity. Faith alone, of course! So it is a good reminder that we are not saved by our works. Right now, they have very little available in their language. Since many Afghans are not quite literate, a Bible story book might be useful. We are thinking about this. Given their Sufi-inspired, mystic faith, Harri believes Johann Gerhardt's *Sacred Mystery of the Faith* [*Sacred Meditations*] might be a useful translation in the future. There are no missionaries from the LCMS that work with them, although I understand that recent Concordia Seminary-St. Louis (CSL) graduate, Jordan Tomesch, is coming to Germany any day now and will work in Hamburg. So it is possible he may work with some Afghans.

Tarja is a Finnish Lutheran missionary who helps translate and teach Afghan children and adults. She worked with Harri in Afghanistan and speaks and reads Dari well. They need prayers that relate to the persecution they are undergoing as they live in refugee centers in Europe. Muslims who convert to Christianity are often attacked by Muslims in the camps, as they admonish them that one "can-

not” convert from Islam! I find the bravery of these former Muslims astounding.

Compounding the problem is the fact that Germany realizes it opened the doors to immigration too widely and is now deporting many, regardless of the danger to converts to Christianity. It is heartbreaking to hear atheist Bundesamt officials telling former Muslims that they don’t understand Christianity when these Muslims proclaim it to be a living faith in a real Jesus. These atheistic Germans respond that Christianity is only a cultural appendage to becoming a German citizen and have now frequently been rejecting such cases for permanent asylum. And still, and still... The Holy Spirit works through God’s Word.

Hope this wasn’t too long and that it answered some of your questions. Now that I’m back in the States, please feel free to email me, Cameron. Do you read Dari? We hope to have this prayer book printed by February 2017.

From: Cameron Jones

To: Matthew Heise; Jeff Rahn

Subject: RE: Mission Project Information

Pastor Heise,

Thank you for such a personal and thorough reply. My connection to the Muslim community is a local family here in Baltimore, Maryland that has expressed interest in Christianity. The family is in the U.S. for treatment for one of the daughters at Johns Hopkins and will be here for another 10–11 months. We developed a friendship through my dog—an ambassador of sorts, which became a daily therapy for the autistic child. Realizing a language barrier, we began meeting weekly for class: I would learn Arabic and in turn, teach English. These classes would last a couple hours. After the second visit I was surprised by an overt inquiry about what Christians believed (to God be glory!). We spent the next eight hours talking.

The lessons continued for a couple months: an hour or two on language, followed by several more on Islam/Christianity. I too began learning her beliefs through reading the Qur’an and a variety of other sources comparing/contrasting the religions. Through LHF, I provided the Arabic translation of Luther’s *Small Catechism* and purchased an Arabic Bible from CPH. My friend asked to come to church one evening, and during our drive there, shared that she read the entire *Small Catechism* overnight. She has only attended once, but our church still lifts her and her family up in prayer.

While my Arabic is poor at best, and I have no exposure to Farsi or Dari, I can see how the Lord may use me in His service to the Muslim community. I have made friends with many more who are here for various reasons, and as I grow and learn, I feel He is equipping me for His plans—to what capacity and to what end, my trust is in the Lord. I will pray about this mission project from LHF and the

needs of our brothers and sisters in Christ. As the Lord provides, I will consider this outreach for sponsorship.

In Christ,
Cameron

DECEMBER 1

Below is a sample of a proposal prepared for a potential donor. This one promotes funding a devotional book in the Farsi language.

DAILY DEVOTIONALS FOR IRANIAN REFUGEES

One Thing is Needed - Hans Erik Nissen

The massive immigration to Europe from Central Asia and the Middle East has caused upheaval at all levels of European society. People are rightly afraid of the potential for terrorists to hide among these immigrants, but there is another story to this phenomenon that has not been told. Many of these Muslims are seeking the true God, and are being found by Him, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

Given that Iranians and Afghans are now coming into Lutheran churches in northern Europe in large numbers, there is a pressing need for devotional material in the language of Farsi. Some of these individuals encountered Christianity in their native countries, while others have come to faith in Europe. They are “new Christians” and as such, need encouragement from God’s Word in a devotional format. The late Hans Erik Nissen was a Danish Lutheran pastor and Bible teacher whose daily devotions have been translated into Romanian. In particular, Lutheran churches in Germany (Berlin, Leipzig, Braunschweig, Chemnitz, Borna) would use these books, as would churches in Denmark, Norway, Finland, and Sweden.

<i>Project Details:</i>	Number of books to print	6,000
	Price per book	<u>\$1.50</u>
	Total cost:	\$9,000

DECEMBER 3

(From the December 2016 “Word at Work” newsletter:)

Seeing God’s Plan

by Jennifer Bagnall

Sometimes it’s hard to see God’s plan. Young Mary never imagined she would be pregnant before she was married. Certainly as her labor pains began, neither she nor Joseph planned on Mary having to give birth to the Savior of the Nations in a lowly stable.

God's plans are often not our own.

Like Mary and Joseph, 32-year-old David is learning how to fully rely on God. Until last year, David lived in Iran where he made a good living as a flight attendant. Like 99.4 percent of Iranians, David identified as a Muslim – until he found a Bible.

“It was so good!” David exclaimed. “I could feel the difference between Muslims and Christians in the Bible. The Quran always talked about killing; Jesus never talked about killing. He said to turn the other cheek.” As David’s faith grew, he found other Christians hiding in Iran. But fearing for their lives, they had to study Scripture in secret. “In Iran, if they find out you are a Christian, you will die,” he stated bluntly. “In the Quran, if you are Muslim and convert to anything else, you have to die. They would also cause problems for your family.”

Not long after David’s conversion, a friend at the airline where he worked gave him a warning. “Be careful,” he said. “You are in danger.” Heeding his friend’s words, David decided to take a drastic step: he would join the thousands of other refugees seeking a new life in the West. As a college graduate with a degree in English, he hoped to make it to Great Britain, the United States, or Canada.

Those plans didn’t materialize.

David wasn’t able to make it to any of those countries. Instead he ended up in Leipzig, Germany, where he has lived for the past year, sharing a small room with two other men in government refugee housing. He’s having trouble passing the test to show his mastery of the German language, which is required in order to get a job. “Everything is just... hard,” David sighed heavily, tears beginning to build. “I miss my family. I have no job. I wonder, what will happen to me?” But God does not abandon His children! Just as God loved and protected Mary and Joseph, He is taking care of David.

God leads David to a new church and to new life

“When I decided to leave Iran, I tried to move to England because I was so sure that Germany wasn’t the best choice for me,” remembered David. “I don’t know Germany. I don’t know the language.

“Then, in our first camp, I met another Christian Iranian and we talked about why we came here. He told me, ‘There is a church in Leipzig, and their pastor knows Persian (Farsi) and English.’ I said, ‘Really?! In Germany? So I went to take a look at that church.’”

“That church” was Trinity Lutheran Church, where Rev. Hugo Gevers has baptized more new believers in the past year than he has in the previous nine years combined. Almost all of those baptized have been Iranians and Afghans seeking political asylum.

“Our roads have been flooded with refugees, just as our churches have,” said

Rev. Gevers. Five years ago, most of Trinity's pews stood empty on Sunday mornings. But now, "our church is packed – packed with refugees speaking a different language. It is quite a challenge for the locals. How do you teach people about our faith when they don't know the language at all? It's a big, big problem."

A problem with a solution

Lutheran pastors wanting to share the Good News now have a new way to communicate with Iranian immigrants throughout Germany, Europe and the rest of the world: Luther's *Small Catechism with Explanation*, translated and published by the Lutheran Heritage Foundation in the Farsi language.

In November, LHF executive director Rev. Matthew Heise spent a week helping distribute the Farsi catechism to Lutheran churches ministering to thousands of Iranians in cities like Berlin, Hamburg and Leipzig.

"The catechism – especially in our context with the refugees – really relates to the core of what it means to be a Christian," said Rev. Gevers. "This kind of question-and-answer teaching might not be an ideal approach if you speak the same language; for example, you might share the faith through stories or other ways of teaching. But if you have a language barrier, a pastor needs to be able to gauge the level of knowledge, even though he doesn't know his parishioner's language. He can do this with the *Small Catechism*, because if they don't know the answer, it's easy to see they haven't studied the material."

Sowing the seed

Of course, whether the refugees are sincere in their faith or simply trying to attain political asylum is a question that often arises.

"We know that there are some who are spying on us," said Rev. Gevers. "But we cannot allow this distrust to influence the way we work with them. We are not trusting in human strength, but in God's message – which is what changes the heart. So if he is a spy or a staunch Muslim, then he needs the message just as much as I do."

The cover of the Farsi *Small Catechism* reflects this philosophy.

"The illustration shows a man sowing the seed," Rev. Gevers explained. "It's very fitting to the situation, because we are sowing and sowing and sowing. But God is making the seed grow. So it is with this catechism. We are sowing the seeds of Biblical teaching."

DECEMBER 6-8

LHF held a staff meeting to ascertain the status of various projects and to consider proposed projects for 2017. In addition to Rev. Heise reporting on European projects, Rev. Rahn reported on African projects and Rev. Ted NaThalang, our Southeast Asia director, spent nearly two days going over all the projects under his supervision.

LHF's donors saw a nice long list of some 850 titles that had been printed to date (see the current list on LHF's website), but there were then and are now significant logistics issues addressed behind the scenes. Complying with new customs regulations, new regulations on importing religious materials, new tariffs, and making sure shipments are insured are all part of the preparations involved in getting books into hands around the world. Rev. Ted NaThalang, for example, who speaks several Asian languages, spends a lot of time in the middle of the night on Skype calls directing our personnel in the Bangkok LHF office. One can hardly begin to explain and detail all the behind the scenes between Ted and Jeff Rahn to maintain a correct record of all the projects.

Jennifer Bagnall and Anna Bagnall, public relations coordinator and website manager respectively, spent time in the staff meeting discussing the communications plans for 2017, including brochures, newsletters, displays, and the new webpage under construction with plans to go live in late 2017.

The group also discussed plans for the celebration of LHF's 25th anniversary and how it might dovetail the celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. Activities were scheduled for November 10-12 at the World Mission Headquarters. A guest list would be prepared that would include several key international people to mingle with the domestic LHF family, including staff and IRPRs. I anticipated that our special international guests might also make appearances at local congregations.

Another topic under consideration was the expansion of LHF's IRPR team. Rev. Dave Hudak, who was familiar to Rev. Larry Rockeman, Rev. Matt Heise, and me was deemed a good choice and we wondered whether Rev. Hudak might be available after his retirement and move to Arkansas. During the meeting, we called to ascertain his interest beyond the support he had previously expressed. Following a positive conversation, preparations to bring him on board began. With Rev. Hudak as the latest addition, there would be 13 IRPRs, and LHF would continue to recruit in other areas of the U.S. lacking representation.

DECEMBER 8

One of the areas where LHF made tremendous progress in the past 24 years was in working with the LWML on the national, regional, and local levels. Marlene Herzog, serving as the LHF-LWML liaison, made tremendous strides in organizing an effort to maintain close contact with this group of mission-minded people. Marlene prepared a notebook for each of the 40 LWML districts showing all activity with these groups, especially in the last three years. Not only was the information stored in her personal office notebooks, but this information was also stored in our computer system. Information included the names of leaders, convention dates, and copies of grant requests submitted on the zonal and na-

tional levels. Marlene's work was our first coordinated effort to maintain a link to all these groups. There are many with which to maintain connections—in Michigan alone, there are 31 LCMS zone groups. The more in-person exposure LHF has with individual members, the more apt we are to see a gift come in at Christmas time, for instance, from local organizations.

DECEMBER 9

Abjar Bahkou was a Syrian Orthodox priest who converted to Lutheranism. He teaches Arabic Studies at Baylor University in Texas. What follows is a testimony from Megan, a student in his class.

From: Megan

To: Abjar Bahkou

Subject: Student Endorsement of Books

When I first came to Baylor as a freshman, I was a fairly convinced evangelical who knew nothing about the Lutheran church. This changed when I began taking Arabic with you, where Christianity would occasionally make its way into our class discussions. There I heard you speak with an understanding of the faith that was deeply sacramental, which intrigued me deeply. I had previously had somewhat of an interest in Roman Catholicism but had never allowed myself to consider it seriously because of the issue of justification. So, I was fascinated to discover the Lutheran understanding of the faith that got justification right but also had so much of the ancient catholic faith that I found myself drawn to. Once you had sparked my interest, I began to research the Lutheran church for myself, and was amazed to discover not only that Lutheranism is faithful to the Scriptures and consistent with the beliefs of the ancient church, but also that its understanding of the sacraments is a source of objective assurance not found in my own emotional experiences. I can know for sure that Jesus is for me. Long story short, I was convinced, and I became a Lutheran this past September.

My move over to the LCMS coincided quite nicely with the Arabic class I took last semester. Being a senior, I had the opportunity to take an independent study reading course with you where we spent the entire semester reading your book, *Life with God*, in Arabic. Since one of the reasons I decided to study Arabic was so that I could speak to my Muslim friends about the Gospel, it was wonderful to spend the past few months immersed in a book that approaches the Christian faith from a Lutheran viewpoint but also has the worldview of Arabic speakers in mind. Drawing from the *Small Catechism* and the church fathers, this book has a wonderfully unique perspective and has been beneficial to me in more ways than one. I have not only learned a useful set of vocabulary that I can utilize in my future conversations with my Muslim friends, but I have also grown spiritu-

ally as I learn more about what the sacramental understanding of the faith means. We plan to continue our independent study next semester, where I am looking forward to learning even more.

DECEMBER 10

From: Peter Anibati

To: Robert Rahn; Jeff Rahn; Matthew Heise

Subject: updates from the ELCSS/S Extraordinary Convention

Dear brothers in the Lord,

I take this opportunity to inform you about the outcome of the extraordinary convention which has just ended today with elections. The following have been charged with the responsibility of leading the ELCSS/S: 1) Rev. Peter Anibati Abia, bishop elect (from Western Equatoria Deanery) 2) Rev. Simon Gatluak, ass. bishop (from Greater Upper Nile Deanery) 3) Rev. Thomas Gaaniko, general secretary (from Bahr El Ghazal, Wau Deanery) 4) Rev. Ogiki Benjamin, asst. general secretary (from Central and Eastern Equatoria Deanery). Also, the church council was elected from the five deaneries of the ELCSS/S as well as a finance committee. I will be sending a full report later.

God bless+

Rev. Peter Anibati Abia

From: Robert Rahn

To: Peter Anibati

Subject: RE: updates from the ELCSS/S Extraordinary Convention

Dear Bishop Elect Anibati,

Congratulations on your election as the bishop-elect. We receive this news with great joy and anticipation for the church to once again move forward with competent leadership. The Lord bless you from on high and give you wisdom and understanding with humility to lead His body, the ELCSS/S. At the same time, we congratulate and wish God's blessings on all those elected to leadership positions. Yours will be a challenging task. Will January 22nd be an acceptable date for your induction? We look forward to the report forthcoming on all details of the convention.

In the Name of our Advent King,

R. Rahn

From: Bernhard Lutz
To: Peter Anibati
Subject: The Election Result

Coworkers: Greetings in Jesus!

I was touched with the results of the extraordinary convention to elect a new bishop. May God bless all of us, each and every one of us, and may we give thanks to God for leaders who are willing to serve, for the LHF for its eagerness to partner with the South Sudan church, for the pastors and men and women who have come to faith. **Congratulations Peter. You are bishop-elect.** You did not seek this office; the Spirit has led you to willingly serve as a candidate. The votes are in, the votes have been cast. You prayerfully have been chosen to serve God and His church in South Sudan and around the world. May Joshua 24:15 be your daily prayer... AS FOR ME AND MY HOUSE WE WILL SERVE THE LORD! To you Simon, to you Thomas, to you Ogiki... you have a special charge. Be faithful, be humble, be supportive of the bishop, work as a team. To all of us who are on the outside, may God keep us faithful to His Word and may the ELCSS/S move forward, walking in step with the Spirit!

The new leadership is now being called upon to lead the ELCSS/S out of these difficult days. There is much organizing to do. There are areas of church leadership that is deplorable, we need to do a lot of repair work. The seminary, the education system, the stewardship and evangelism departments, and so many areas need help. God is giving us an opportunity to learn from the past and to face the future with a vision strategy that will please God and be a blessing to His Church.

Today, I am humbled, deeply moved to join with all of you to thank God for the success of the extraordinary convention. Thank all of you who have labored so hard and so long. Dachi, Elinama, and so many other church workers! God bless you!

Allah mahabah! God is love in Arabic.

Merry Christmas! A blessed 2017!!

Dr. Lutz

DECEMBER 11

LHF seeks new avenues to widen the distribution of books. At times it is a slow process, but we occasionally have a breakthrough like this one in Tanzania, one of the world's largest populations of Lutherans.

Rev. James May writes:

Hi Matt and Jeff,

Just wanted to let you know that I met with Per Jerup today in Nairobi. It was a really good meeting and I think he could be a great resource to get more things

distributed in Tanzania. They have four bookshops at the moment and last year they distributed 1.5 million books and tracts, up from 200,000 in 2013 when Per started. They sell their items at cost so that they can be reprinted after stocks are exhausted. He recognized the same problem that I see. With a church the size of the ELCT (Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania), we can't get everyone a copy of the catechism or other books because there are 7 million members of the church and it still grows, plus there are other countries and other work to do.

He also is aware that printing in Nairobi is MUCH more expensive than in Tanzania. Further yet, they do not have import taxes on religious books in Tanzania, which used to be the case in Nairobi but was changed. So the next time we print catechisms they could be sent directly to Tanzania and distributed to their shops and some to Nairobi.

Per will leave to Denmark on Thursday and won't return until February 22 but I will go there in March to see how their organization is set up and see how we can model it in Nairobi. One of the biggest problems is instilling strict inventory and business structures. If you remember, the ELCT printed 500,000 Swahili hymnals back in 2010. LHF gave over \$30,000 for that project and we didn't get any hymnals and we even had to buy copies. I think maybe they sent a couple to Michigan. Anyway, each diocese got some 20,000 copies which they sold and the money was supposed to go back to the head office. They were sold at \$5 a copy times 500,000 copies. All the money is gone and there are no more copies. Soma Biblia bought the last 30,000 copies and sold them but kept the money. They were willing to reprint for the ELCT but the head office insisted on getting 100,000 copies which Soma Biblia refused to do. Well, two years later the ELCT is coming around and will allow Soma Biblia to help them if they write an official letter and request to help the ELCT. Yes, it is that ridiculous. Difference is, Soma Biblia is successful and growing and all other church projects in Tanzania, Kenya, and other countries are failing because good business practices are not put in place. So it was a good day. Hopefully we can increase distribution across the continent and even expand in cooperation with Soma Biblia.

Blessed Advent to you!

James,

No problem, it was hectic here as well. Main thing is getting the Swahili *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* printed. We were also trying to print: 1) *Good News About Jesus* in Swahili 10,000 copies; 2) *Enchiridion* in Swahili 10,000 copies; 3) *Enchiridion* in English 10,000 copies; 4) *Enchiridion* in Ekegusi 2,000 copies; 5) *Enchiridion* in French 10,000 copies; 6) *Enchiridion* in Maasai 2,000 copies. I am not sure of the status of these texts and I didn't have a chance to discuss further with Ted. Are all the texts in Bangkok? At a minimum we should get Swahili

A Child's Garden of Bible Stories and *Swahili Good News About Jesus* moving as soon as possible.

You were going to investigate printing the “What About” pamphlets in Nairobi due to the backlog of projects in Thailand right now. Thanks for any information you can provide on these projects.

Blessings,

Jeff

DECEMBER 12

From: John Riay

To: Robert Rahn

Subject: Inquiry

Rev. Dr. Rahn,

I appreciate your assistance and cooperation that led to the election of our Bishop Rt. Rev. Peter Anibati and his team. We would be glad to hear from you that the LCMS recognizes our bishop. That is very important because the former bishop, Noah, may run a parallel ELCSS/S, which is bad. Recognition of the bishop-elect is the ultimate termination of [Noah's parallel] leadership.

In Christ,

John

From: Robert Rahn

To: John Riay

Cc: Peter Anibati; Nicholas Kumbo Louis; Jacob Elinama; Matthew Heise;

Jeff Rahn

Subject: RE: Inquiry

John,

Beyond the monitoring of the government officials and lawyers, it is now incumbent upon the leaders to once again take up the fellowship question with the LCMS. Perhaps a report from church officials to the LCMS president giving details as to how the election process took place, including the part the government officials played, would be in order. The sooner that is done, the better it will be. The official message should be to President Harrison with a copy to Dr. Al Collver.

R. Rahn

DECEMBER 20

The Novosibirsk Seminary was closing. For several years LHF had heard that there were few students attending and that extending recruitment efforts to Africa had failed. LHF had played a role in helping seminary education get started in Siberia in cooperation with the Fort Wayne seminary. To support the seminary, we rented office space for our Siberian representative, Pavel Butakov, and storage space for our books that were distributed from the location. I was sorry reading the Facebook post from Alexey Streltsov presented below:

I didn't think I would have to do it this year, but the time has come to inform some of my Facebook friends about what is currently going on. Our seminary still keeps moving at this moment like a car may move for a while with no more gas in the tank, especially if you switch the gear to neutral. It is slowing down dramatically, however, and once it stops, it will be an engine failure. Even at this moment some significant repair is needed, as damage has already been done to the car. After it stops, there will be virtually no way to restart it due to a simple (or not so simple, alas) matter of legal bureaucratic issues. In fact, I'm genuinely surprised that the seminary managed to last through the last half a year. This inertia feels like life after death really.

I measure the age of the seminary by looking at my elder son Tikhon. Our first academic year was supposed to begin on September 1, 1997. Due to delays in construction of the first seminary building, it did not get started until October 1 with Dr. Horace Hummel as our first professor. In between Tikhon was born—on September 19. So, twenty years seems like a young age to end one's life, but the mortality rate among seminaries in Russia and on post-Soviet space in general has been quite high anyway. Survivors are very, very few now.

Last August's celebration of 20 years of the summer seminars was the seminary's triumph. Right now is the lowest point thus far. *Coincidentia oppositorum* in action, I guess. Those 20 years have been fantastic. We are incredibly grateful to all the people who supported us over the years, who prayed for us, who came to the cold (well, not all the time) Siberia to encourage us to stay on the solid confessional track. Those efforts will never be forgotten. My major concern now is about staff and students. The students will go home, obviously. Now I'm doing my best to make sure we end this semester in a proper way. And then their Christmas vacation is likely to become permanent.

With staff everybody's situation is different, of course. Some have their spouses working and earning money, and it will soften the blow, while others are the sole providers for their families. Some are close to retirement age. Some own certain property, while others have mortgage with due monthly payments. This is life. It is not unique in any way. At this point I want to end things (if things are

coming to an end as they are) honorably. If I had a chance to be the unjust ruler from [the book of] Luke at this time, I would opt for it, but I don't have any receipts on hand.

What are the next possible steps now? If things stay the way they are, next month I would initiate steps to sell some of the seminary property we own (at the best price we can possibly get in the short term, which doesn't sound too optimistic) and use the funds to pay off the debts and shut down the seminary in a decent way (e.g., the staff must be paid several months in advance once organization terminates).

For St. Andrew's parish to continue to use the worship facility, most part of the church and seminary building will probably have to be rented out. I will have to think where to place all my books (no room in the apartment for them), but it is not a major problem to resolve at this point (thinking what to do with over 15K books at the seminary library collection would be a bigger issue still).

I actually don't believe in a crowd funding, not for a matter like this. Seminary is not a business; we don't develop any new exciting technology or things like that. However, if anybody would want to help, you can connect with me personally and I will provide the seminary's official account number (it may be that after we talk, you will decide it will be a better idea to donate elsewhere...). You can also find me next month at the CTSFW (Concordia Theological Seminary—Fort Wayne) symposia if you are going to be there. Meanwhile, your prayers will be much appreciated.

While the Protestant world is getting ready to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, we here in Russia also approach the tragic centennial anniversary of the revolution – the First February Revolution when the Tsar was forced to step down at the crucial moment of WWI and then the October Bolshevik revolt. So at this time I've been thinking a lot about these words of Winston Churchill: "Surely to no nation has Fate been more malignant than to Russia. Her ship went down in sight of port. She had actually weathered the storm when all was cast away. Every sacrifice had been made; the toil was achieved. Despair and treachery usurped command at the very moment when the task was done."

100 years ago, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Russian Empire was among the world's largest. Had it not been for the revolution, there would have been absolutely no need to apply for any outside support for a Lutheran seminary in this country. But there is nothing permanent in this world, nothing incorruptible except that One Who is incorruptible, and it is by faith in Him that we continue to live.

[Author's note: Some emergency efforts in 2017 led to a delay, including the establishment of an endowment that would serve the needs of the seminary down the road. For now, the closure is paused.]

DECEMBER 21

From: Robert Rahn

To: Nicholas Kumbo Louis; Peter Rev. Anibati; Japheth Dachi

Subject: FW: funds for printing Nuer materials

Dear Co-workers,

Recently I received a message indicating a desire that the new seminary classes in Yambio would begin on February 4. The message to Eileen Roberts gives our reaction and rationale for our position that activities during these months center on getting the church realigned to its primary task and focus. We, therefore, strongly suggest that the opening of the new seminary year be delayed to give full opportunity to the church leaders to restore the mission of the ELCSS/S during these early months of the year for reasons cited below. Bernie and I will be willing to discuss any concerns you may have while we are there for the installation of Bishop Elect Anibati.

May the Lord so guide and direct the church so that it once again becomes a growing dynamic body showing growth and stability in the capable hands of new leaders and the evident power of the Holy Spirit to guide and direct. We believe the delay in starting the seminary program will result in a stronger program and a more screened student body.

In the interest of serving the Lord and His Church,

Robert L. Rahn

CLIHM Program Director

Dear Eileen,

Today we had a discussion on Dachi's suggestion for a startup of the seminary on February 4. We are not in agreement on this and prefer that their energies remain fixed on the repair of the church structure rather than adding the burden of a seminary starting to function. In view of the fact that the old bishop is still engaged in his make-believe endeavors of a bishop, the newly elected team will have to make sure the transition is taking place. If necessary, permitting him to live in his fantasy world while the genuine, true elected leadership establishes their position among the members. This may mean a massive visitation program by the bishop and leaders. While there are some pastors who would probably like to see seminars and teaching, we are proposing they focus their attention on getting all things in order. One big project will be getting the U.N. to recognize the newly elected leaders and assuming control of the property. Hopefully this will not become a situation where we have to remove the U.N. from the church premises and lose the income that the old bishop was pilfering.

We, therefore, suggest that any seminars and teaching requests be declined

possibly until fall if they should have all things under control at that time. I thought I would let you know where we stand in regard to involvements other than getting the new bishop properly installed into office so they can move on. Bernie and I will provide a short seminar on church leadership while we are there for the installation.

If the leadership feels it necessary to start classes prior to September (or when the church is under complete control of new leadership) they would have to do so on their own as LHF would not provide the assistance they have become accustomed to. Keep in mind that due to the upheaval of the past year, our board has made it clear that no work should start until it has been approved by the board. One of the changes they will see in the new year is a cutback in stipends, especially for the pastors who have been in the field for the past five to ten years. Of course, should there be income from other sources, they can distribute or use it as the church directs.

This is where we stand in our role as co-workers with the ELCSS/S and in our attempt to help them become more self-sustaining. We just had a good example as to what happens when an institution merely waits for a money handout and is not proactive in seeking avenues of income other than subsidy from the U.S. The seminary in Novosibirsk, Siberia, supported strongly from the outside, just announced it was going to close and some of the property rented out or sold. Part of their problem was a lack of students, which has not been a problem for CLIHM. By delaying our start, it will also give opportunity for proper recruitment of students.

A deliberate, slow move to re-establish the ministry of the ELCSS/S seems to be the best avenue at present. We continue to pray that the Lord would direct and guide the ELCSS/S in its transformation, reformation and dedication.

R. Rahn

CLIHM Program Director

DECEMBER 27-29

LHF's executive leadership held meetings on these days to discuss budget items for the year 2017. The budgeting process is critical; this is the time and place where all translation projects are considered given anticipated income from various sources available in the coming year. The Finance Committee reviews the preliminary budget and usually presents a final version to the board for adoption in February. Late December meetings are also when the Human Resources Committee evaluates individual personnel goals set in the past year and if they were accomplished. New goals and objectives are then established and reviewed.

From: Robert Rahn
To: Japheth Dachi
Subject: RE: Subject; CLIHM 04, 2017

Dachi,

Yes, these budget matters will need to be discussed and we will bring our input as to our posture that is based only on our board's guidance and direction relative to what we will be able to provide and when it can be provided. The board will be looking for our full report on how the ELCSS/S sees its future development, plans, and objectives. If the faculty feels it can initially operate without resources from LHF, that is their prerogative.

One of the concerns that should be addressed is the securing of those funds from the U.N. The legal person who covered the convention should be a contact in Juba to help you carry out the procedure that lets the U.N. know officially who represents the ELCSS/S. He can attest to the convention's decisions and elections. He should be consulted in regard to securing and establishing the fact that there is one treasury for the church and that is in Yambio. This is critical and you may have already been working on this.

A blessed and Happy New Year. We look forward to a more productive 2017 for the ELCSS/S.

R. Rahn

From: Japheth Dachi
To: Peter Anibati
Subject: Subject: A Lutheran Congregation in Koboko, Uganda

Peter Anibati,

Christian greetings. I got a telephone call from our Deaconess Amina Bako that her family has moved from Democratic Republic of the Congo and are now residing in Koboko, Uganda and that they have started a Lutheran congregation there and are asking you for spiritual care by sending them a pastor or paying them a visit. As you are aware, I am not in any position to help them in this. They only used me as a medium to make you know that there is a Lutheran congregation in that refugee camp composed mainly by the South Sudanese and some from the North.

Thank you,
Rev. Japheth Rabach Dachi
Principal, CLIHM, Yambio

DECEMBER 30

From: Ted NaThalang

To: Jeff Rahn; Matthew Heise; Jen Bagnall; Larry Rockemann; Robert Rahn

Dear LHF fellow workers,

This is great news from Vietnam, a communist country, how LHF books are being printed and distributed legally, especially via public media. I think if a thing like this continues, we could possibly distribute it in e-format not just in Vietnam but in China also. Think of the money we could save and the bigger market we would be able to reach out to. There is no way to block the work of the Holy Spirit once His Word gets out. I believe this is what happens when we took away the obstacles so people can see the Word of God themselves with the eyes of the Holy Spirit.

From: Ted NaThalang

To: Jeff Rahn; Matthew Heise

Subject: VN BOC

The editing/proofreading of Vietnamese *Book of Concord* is going well. We are working early this morning because I have to go to the airport back to St. Louis at 1 p.m. Pastor Kinh Vu just got a MacBook Air for the first time to help with the work and he wished that he had bought it long time ago. It works really well with our Mac system. It has a lot of options and it is easier to use. It is so easy to use even I (who don't know a lot) can teach him how to use it. So, now instead of writing his editing notes on a piece of paper and scanning and sending them to me, and I have to send them to a Vietnamese person to try to read his handwriting and type the corrections; now he would be able to type in his notes onto sticky notes and send them to me to my Thai staff in Bangkok to copy and paste. Wow, this is like a miracle! or dream come true. What a wonderful piece of equipment. Somehow he bought it with his money on special deal for only \$600.

Blessings,

TNT

DECEMBER 31-JANUARY 16

Closing out 2016 had me in the office on New Year's Eve Day getting ready to make a hospital call. The vocation of pastor doesn't necessarily end when you serve in a capacity such as executive director or founder of a mission agency. The calls still come to minister to those in need. Such was the case for Jenny Hallgren, wife of our board president, who had dealt with cancer issues and as of December 5 had been hospitalized when radiation was necessary for cancer that had moved to her brain. While the radiation did some good in stopping the brain cancer,

cancer had returned to other areas of her body. On December 29, the doctors consulted with the family and gave them the dreaded news—“there is nothing more we can do.” How many families have heard what has become the liturgy of cancer sufferers?

I made several visits to her bedside for prayer and consolation. Where does it come from? It comes from the Word of God where alone we can find our solace and hope. Since my visits were amid Advent, I read these words from Luke 1:26-28: “Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin’s name was Mary. And coming in, he said to her, ‘Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.’” I reminded her that in earlier visits we had talked about parts of the worship that were familiar to her, and how we exchange the greeting, “The Lord be with you,” and congregants respond, “And also with you.” We could really be saying, “The Lord is with you,” as that is also a statement of fact we get from various portions of Scripture. The word to Mary from the angel is also a word to us.

In another visit, we partook of the Lord’s Supper. On December 24, I distributed two hymns. The first was “It Came Upon the Midnight Clear.” I told her we would sing verses one and three and that she should pay special attention to the words of that third verse: “All you, beneath your heavy load, by care and guilt bent low, / Who toil along a dreary way with painful steps and slow: / Look up, for golden is the hour, Come swiftly on the wing, / The Prince was born to bring you peace; Of Him the angels sing.” I then told her that I had a more familiar hymn from which I was going to sing verse three: “Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask Thee to stay / Close by me forever and love me, I pray. / Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care, / And take us to heaven to live with Thee there.”

Little did we know that by my visit on December 30, the doctor’s verdict would have been made. I, therefore, read Psalm 46 and asked her to remember the One Who is our refuge and strength, present in time of trouble. And I pointed her to the last verse: “The Lord of Hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our strength.” In her moments of lucidity, I reminded her of the Lord’s presence and to abide in His strength no matter what challenges we face. Prayers said, I met with her husband in private and was told of her request that I conduct her funeral. Pastoral ethics seemed to suggest that he should contact his own pastor to see how I might be involved. The cemetery chapel was mentioned as a possible site for the service, but my suggestion was it should be the church. He agreed to discuss this with the pastor before deciding.

A message came from one of our field representatives informing me that his father-in-law, suffering from cancer, was being placed into hospice. “There is nothing more that can be done.” And yet, for us, strength is found in the Lord Who is

with us in all circumstances of life and in the hour of death. It's a message of hope that becomes the foundation for all of our activity here at LHF. Bringing the Word of hope in the heart language of people is important, for one day, through the perfect sacrifice of our Prince of Peace, we can go to heaven "and live with Him there."

On one of my visits in the new year, I went to Jenny Hallgren's room and found it empty. I discovered that Jenny's daughter decided to take a leave of absence from her nursing job and care for her. I then made several visits to the daughter's home where hospice care was also involved. On one of my next visits I shared a few words with her from Psalm 118. When I visited her on January 7, her eyes opened when I announced my presence and they stayed open throughout my short visit that included the reading of Scriptures and prayer. For the prayer, I told her I would sing a verse from the hymn, "Lord, Take My Hand and Lead Me" (LSB 722). I sang verse three: "Lord when the shadows lengthen and night has come, / I know that You will strengthen, my steps toward home. / Then nothing can impede me, O blessed Friend; / So take my hand and lead me, unto the end." My final words during the visit were, "You are safe in His hands, place your hand in His and He will lead you home."

I made another visit to the bedside of Jenny Hallgren on January 9. I continued to direct her to the passages in the Psalms that built on the passage from Psalm 46: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble, the Lord of Hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress." I read Psalm 18:1, 2: "I love you, O LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold."

The prayer was sung, verse three of "Lord, You I Love with All My Heart" (LW 413).

Then let at last your angels come, To Abraham's bosom bear me home
That I may die unfearing, Within my earthly chamber keep
My body safe in peaceful sleep Until Your reappearing.
And then from death awaken me, That my own eyes with joy may see,
O Son of God, Your glorious face, My Savior and my ground of grace!
Lord Jesus Christ, Oh, hear my prayer; oh, hear my prayer,
Your love surrounds me everywhere.

The benediction pronounced, I again assured her of the Lord being present as her refuge, strength, and fortress. Talking with her daughter, nurse by profession, she seemed to think that it might be a matter of hours before her mother would be at home in peace.

Mrs. Jenny Hallgren died approximately a half hour after my final visit with

her on January 12. On the 16th, I preached at her funeral using Psalm 46 as my text. The congregation sang verses from five or six songs that I had sung at her bedside.

JANUARY 2

From: Robert Rahn

To: Peter Anibati

Subject: The Office of Bishop

Dear Peter,

The celebration of New Year's Day was subdued, and I spent some time during the sleepless hours of the night thinking about the situation for the anticipated ceremonies of installing you into office. At this point it seems very probable that we will have no bishop celebrating with us and the question might be, "What Does This Mean?" We know that there is greater concern over this office in your church than there is in ours, where the office of bishop is not a matter of concern.

In thinking about this matter, I have come to the conclusion that a bishop need not be present for the ceremony as the continuation of the succession is still in the office. In your election you did not cut off the succession, but you transferred the office from an errant bishop to a newly elected bishop. What we will be doing is transferring the office to you as the newly elected bishop. If there is some question about this, a confirmation of the bishop's office can be given through another bishop at your next installation should you be elected to a second term, whenever that may take place. Because the office was abused, the office was given to another and in the installation on the 22nd we will simply confer/transfer the office of bishop to you. This is the approach I am taking to assure you that the office of bishop continues as it was bestowed and then abused. The church has rightly removed the office from one and granted it to another.

Of course, my thoughts in the sleepless hours were also concerned about the possible interference of an old bishop in our festivities. Given the climate for conflict in the country as a whole, he could cause a disturbance and use the tribal conflict to inflict damage on the festivities. As you had some available police on duty during the convention, I suppose you have already concerned yourself with this matter and are requesting some kind of protective presence for the event.

At any rate, Bernie and I, along with church leaders, will conduct the rite of installation with some appropriate changes in the rite to reflect the thinking above, the transfer of title or the conveyance of the office that was violated by an old bishop and the transfer of the continued office to the newly elected bishop. I trust that this is of agreement to all involved. It might be something even alluded to in the sermon that will be preached for the occasion wherein the rubrics are stated as to the duties of a man in such a position, according to Paul in Timothy and

Titus. I welcome your comments.

Peter, in preparation for the installation service, would you want me to prepare a service folder? A limited number of copies would be made for those who can handle English. Some local known songs and choir numbers can be inserted as deemed necessary.

As we enter this new year, may peace be brought to the church and to the country through the hand of the Prince of Peace,

From: Peter Anibati

To: Robert Rahn

Subject: Re: The Office of Bishop

Dear Dr. Rahn,

Thanks for sharing your thoughts with us. I agree and think that we can go that way for the installation. Please go ahead and prepare the service folder. We will have government police keeping watch at the Lutheran compound. The government here is in full support of what we are doing. They also deployed police when we had the convention.

In Christ,

Rev. Peter Anibati Abia

JANUARY 5

Rev. Heise and I were asked to write forwards for books that were going to be published in Southeast Asian languages during 2017 in light of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation and the 25th anniversary of LHF. We were asked because I founded the organization 25 years ago and Rev. Heise continues to expand the work of the LHF to new areas of the world with great success.

FORWARD

As we begin this 500th anniversary year of the Reformation, it is important to remember why Martin Luther was compelled to lead a reformation of the Church. The Church had strayed from preaching faith in Jesus Christ alone for salvation and had wandered away from searching the Scriptures. It had replaced the focus from Christ onto the pious acts of priests and men. Thus, good works became essential for the salvation of an individual.

As a former missionary in Russian-speaking lands, I often marveled how those who grew up under a communist system read with wonder the books published by LHF. I used them in my own ministry of teaching and remember hearing students say, "That's what I believe, because that's what's in the Bible!" This book you will be reading highlights Luther's emphasis that we are saved "not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death."

LHF is also celebrating a birthday, its 25th this year. When Robert Rahn began this ministry in the basement of his house in 1992, he had no idea how God would bless it. By God's grace, it has grown and expanded into all continents of the globe. And why not? As Paul teaches us in Romans 3:21-22, "For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

This is a message for all people, that Christ is Lord of all, and we are saved by faith alone in Him! God bless you in this year of celebration and beyond; may His Word sustain you to life everlasting!

Rev. Matthew Heise

LHF Executive Director

FORWARD

The Lutheran Heritage Foundation is pleased to provide the translation and publishing of this volume. As the founder of the LHF 25 years ago, it is also my privilege to add some thoughts as a forward. There definitely is a correlation between what Luther accomplished 500 years ago in the Reformation and what the LHF is doing today. One of Luther's great works was in the field of translating and publishing the Bible into the common language of his people.

This is the work of LHF—to place the writings of Luther and the Lutheran confessors into the language of the common people on a global basis in 100 different languages in 90 countries represented by the 850 titles thus far completed, including a dozen *Books of Concord* during this 500th anniversary of the Reformation and a total of 85 different translation of Luther's *Small Catechism*.

Why is this work important? Noted missionary, Thomas Brooks, has stated the importance of this work when he said: "Books may preach, when the author cannot, or when the author may not, or when the author dares not, yes, and which is more, when the author is not." Or as our own worker, Rev. Ted NaThalang, stated: "Missionaries come and go, but a book like the catechism or *Book of Concord* is around for generations to come."

The Reformation went hand in hand with book and press, and the LHF makes that still possible today. To God be the glory, great things He has done!

Dr. Robert L. Rahn

LHF Founder

JANUARY 6

Rev. Heise sent out a reminder for the next board meeting and noted that a special gift would be presented to retiring board member, Harvard Schulz, who served on the board for some 20 years and had been suffering from poor health. Tom Montie's service on the board was also recognized after his death from Par-

kinson's. A painting of Ethiopian people depicted on what looked like parchment paper was presented to his wife who had faithfully cared for him to the end.

JANUARY 9-24

Central Asia Trip

Executive Director Rev. Matt Heise reports:

Georgia—I was able to pick up the copies of Robert Kolb's *Christian Faith*, printed while I was in Georgia. We received some early copies as samples and, determining that the binding was a little too loose, sent them back. The resulting final copy was much better. I brought back about nine copies with me to America. We are translating Robert Kolb's *Making Disciples, Baptizing* for 2017.

India—I was able to meet in Trivandrum with pastors from our church partners, the IELC (Indian Evangelical Lutheran Church). We had a ceremony at the Trivandrum District offices where approximately 50 pastors were in attendance to receive the second printing of the *Small Catechism* in the local language, Malayalam. Our LHF coordinator, Cherub Sundaram (son of the late LHF coordinator, Rev. John Sundarum) masterfully arranged everything so that we were able to participate in the program with the district president, Rev. Chrispus, and the seminary's principal, Dr. Daniel Monikaraj. Dr. Monikaraj was an old friend from my seminary days in St. Louis, so it was a real joy to share the dais with him on this special occasion. The following day (a Sunday), we attended Rev. Chrispus' congregation and distributed the catechism to many of the parishioners. (There must have been about 300, I would guess.) They were very pleased to receive the books, as only about a sixth of them said that they had our first printed catechism.

Bhutan—This trip turned out to be quite fulfilling. I first learned about Lutheran pastor Lhatru Wangchuk from my visit to Lutherans in Australia this past September. Pastor August Fricke, who heads up a mission group called "Asia Focus," has been employing LHF books for his work in Southeast Asia and has begun work in Bhutan. Bhutan is a heavily repressive Buddhist country. It cannot be emphasized more firmly that here is NO organized Christian church allowed in the country! And yet, Pastor Lhatru has four house groups throughout the country (as do other Christian denominations). He engages Buddhist monks and nuns in conversation and by God's grace has even converted a few! We have agreed to begin translation of the basic *Small Catechism* into his native language of Tshangla for this year. Since it would be impossible to print Christian books in Bhutan, we are planning to print across the border in India, and Lhatru would then bring the copies into the country. I pray that this will be the beginning of fruitful work in this Himalayan Buddhist nation of just under 1 million people.

Bangladesh—I had hoped to meet with some Lutheran evangelists and test out our *Small Catechism* translation (about which I have some doubts, thus it

hasn't been disseminated yet). But while I was in India, I learned that the U.S. State Department had just issued a travel warning, having already sent home dependents of embassy employees due to the threat from ISIS in the country. A major attack on New Year's Day was thwarted and ISIS militants were sent scattering as the police hunted them down. (One female suicide bomber blew herself up when they cornered her.) A further email from OIM missionary Roger James, who is based in Sri Lanka, convinced me that it was wise to postpone the trip. He had been there not long before and needed two bodyguards for safety. With so many red flags, I thought it best not to chance it. (I didn't think you were interested in budgeting for "ransom money," which I now understand is a real threat.) My visa is good until December 30, 2018, but unless conditions improve in the near future, I probably won't be acting on this visa. Thus, our Bengali work is being placed on the proverbial "back burner" for the time being.

JANUARY 17

This was the date I was scheduled to leave on a trip to South Sudan and Ethiopia. Due to visa delays as a result of the increased travel activity connected with the installing of the new president of the United States, Mr. Donald Trump, and the Washington, D.C. embassies being closed for Martin Luther King Day, the visas were not able to be delivered on time. Since there was only one flight to Yambio, South Sudan from Kampela, Uganda, we determined it would be best to cancel the trip. Dr. Bernard Lutz was able to secure his visa and covered the events that were scheduled. Around the same time, my older sister Lorna died at 83 years old, and I planned to attend her funeral. In connection with her funeral, I had the opportunity to schedule an LHF Mission Sunday in Alexandria, Minnesota.

JANUARY 22

Rev. Peter Anibati was installed into office as the bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of South Sudan/Sudan. In documenting the event, Peter borrowed a title for his article that Dr. Bernie Lutz had used for his sermon, which in turn I had provided. The title was based on the Great Commission: "Go and Lead with His Power, Plan, and Presence!"

There were nearly 3,000 people present at the occasion, including government officials both from the Gbudue State and national levels, representatives of all the churches in Yambio, and even members of the Muslim community! There were representatives from the Central and Eastern Equatoria Deanery, Greater Upper Nile Deanery, Western Bahr el Ghazal (Wau) Deanery and the Greater Western Equatoria Deanery. There were also representatives from the USA, Ethiopia, and Kenya who participated in the installation. Rev. Dr. Bernie Lutz and the Rev. Dr. Kebede Yigezu, president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ethiopia

(LCE), presided over the ceremony. The Rev. Dr. Lutz preached on Matthew 28:18-20. The procession started at the Lutheran Guest House at 10:40 a.m. The Divine Service began at 11 a.m. and ended at 5 p.m. with different choirs singing. Bishop Peter Anibati Abia conducted two baptisms, 17 confirmations, and installed the Church Council, Finance Committee, General Secretary Rev. Thomas Gaaniko Raimondo, and his assistant, Rev. Ogiki Benjamin Martin. After the service choirs sang and gifts were presented to the new bishop.

Jesus Never Fails!

By Bishop Peter Anibati

The priority for the new leadership is to stabilize the church and our strategy is to make visitations to the different deaneries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of South Sudan/Sudan (ELCSS/S) holding seminars and workshops. After this, we intend to open the seminary in the second quarter of the of year with the new intake, and towards the end of the third quarter of the year, we plan to have a retreat for all the pastors. The biggest challenge of course will be the financial resources. We hope and pray that trust will be restored and different Lutheran groups around the globe will continue to support the work of the ELCSS/S.

Plans for the next five years:

- Strengthen the basis of our church through proper training of lay people, Sunday school teachers, youth workers, women groups, evangelists, members of the church council at all levels, deacons, and deaconesses. This also includes vocational training for youth, men, and women.
- To increase the number of people in our congregations through effective evangelism programs.
- To improve and develop our existing schools and open more primary and secondary schools where a strong foundation for Christian teaching can be laid, aimed at preparing men and women for further studies at the seminary and other institutions of higher learning.
- To improve the standards of pastors by creating opportunities for post-seminary studies, both locally and overseas, and continuous education program for pastors and the laity through seminars and workshops.
- To continue translation work, publishing, and distribution of Lutheran books with support from the Lutheran Heritage Foundation so that our people can learn the Word of God and understand the Lutheran doctrine in their own native languages.
- To work and establish a media ministry in South Sudan as a tool to reach out to many and through which a quick evangelization and teaching can be attained. This will include preaching the Word of God in the various languages of South

Sudan and Sudan and production of Christian songs videos by our choirs.

- To expand Concordia Bakery & Restaurant into a full business center with services like an internet cafe, halls for seminars/workers, barber shop, grocery shop, etc. and to create more income-generating projects, development, and care giving ministries at the head office as well as at congregational levels upon which the church can support herself.

- To build and expand the capacity of our seminary and introduce the faculty of education and management so as to prepare Christian teachers who can teach at our schools as well as trained managers who can manage the projects and the assets of the church.

- To build and expand St. Luke Medical Clinic into a full hospital that will serve the people of this state and the Republic of South Sudan at large.

- To revive our congregations which have been closed and to plant more churches, particularly in areas which are neglected.

- Expand our evangelism programs into the neighboring countries, particularly Democratic Republic of the Congo and Central Africa Republic, which have no Lutheran Churches at the areas closer to the borders of South Sudan except deep into their home big cities.

- Construct the office of the church at the headquarters in Yambio to reserve the guest house for the purpose for which it was built.

- To revive the Baguga construction project by building a church, offices, library, classrooms on the foundation which is already there for the seminary because our long-term goal is to move the seminary from Yambio to Baguga which has a conducive environment for learning. Eventually, this seminary will be developed and expanded into a Lutheran university with different faculties to meet the educational needs of the people of this state and the Republic of South Sudan at large.

Challenges:

- Lack of enough trained personnel at all levels of the ELCSS/S.
- Lack of proper infrastructure (offices, church buildings, schools etc.)
- Few friends and partners overseas to support the work of the ELCSS/S and shortage of funds to cover the expenses of the ELCSS/S.

- Lack of means of transport for pastors, evangelists, and even the bishop.
- Lack of investment and income-generating projects to support the work of the church.

- Most Christians are unable to support the church financially due to poverty caused by the long civil wars and internal conflicts in South Sudan and Sudan.

- Lack of proper communication facilities for pastors and the ELCSS/S offices. For example, lack of internet at the ELCSS/S headquarters.

- Few pastors but many congregations.
- No salaries to the pastors serving because our congregations are unable to support their pastors. For all these years, LHF has been paying stipends to our pastors but this year we are not sure of what will happen.

How can you help the ELCSS/S?

- Pray for the new leadership of the church and all the ELCSS/S members.
- Volunteer and visit the ELCSS/S to offer training through seminars/workshops to any of the following groups: Sunday school teachers, women, youth, evangelists, deacons and deaconesses, pastors, etc.
 - Tell people around the world about the work of the ELCSS/S.
 - Partner with the ELCSS/S in reaching out to the lost.
 - Donate to support the work of the ELCSS/S and to help us overcome some of the challenges listed.
 - Volunteer to work at our medical clinic in Yambio or help to get medical supplies for the clinic.

JANUARY 27

Matthew Heise wrote:

Interesting note on Facebook from Jeff Thormodson—

The Oromo Evangelical Lutheran Mission Society met at Concordia Seminary on Thursday, hosting other Oromo from around the world. Kou Seying greeted the group and gave words of encouragement. The Multi-Ethnic Symposium at Concordia Seminary and the ALMA conference were attended by many similar ethnic groups, including the Hmong, Chinese, Hispanic, and Sudanese. It is wonderful to see such diversity grow within the Church.

Endorsement of Spanish Volume:

Reverend Karl Heimer of Ysleta Lutheran Mission called to inform LHF of the situation in El Paso. They have more Spanish-speaking people populating the U.S. detention center than usual (because of the new president's policies.) They need lots of Spanish Bibles. (He also uses the Spanish *Good News* and *Portals of Prayer*.) He likes the Spanish Bibles because the *Small Catechism* is bound with it. He is concerned that LHF is bearing the whole burden of their inability to donate much to LHF for the Bibles. He thinks that more people should know about their need for Spanish *Bibles with Small Catechism*. He called their need a "black hole." In other words, he thinks the need will never be filled because there are so many that need to be ministered to. He's well past retirement age and as busy as a beaver.

JANUARY 28

A message from the newly elected bishop of the ELCSS/S dispelled rumors sent out by the former bishop's ghostwriter, Odek.

From: Peter Anibati

Subject: Response to Odek's letter

Dear Co-workers,

Greetings in Jesus! I have been forwarded a letter from Onen Mark condemning the God-ordained event which took place in Yambio last weekend. This is not a surprise at all, as the benefactor of the funds stolen from the Juba property, it was expected of him. But I must stress, the Juba property belongs to the ELCSS/S and no one else will ever claim its ownership. Soon the new administration will be taking serious measures... the old regime and their supporters will have to purchase their own property and perhaps start their sect where they can satisfy their narcissistic ambitions.

Secondly, the list of pastors provided that they are in favor of the old leadership is contradictory; if the impression given is true why didn't the pastors/evangelists/deaconesses sign against their names? I must say some names provided on the list are very new to me; I presume those of you who have been closer to the ELCSS/S will notice that. I have provided some pictures of all the pastors who attended and participated in the consecration and installation, those of you who know these pastors personally will identify them and will judge for yourselves whether the list provided by Odek is true or not. Another issue is that Rev. Charles Undo of Tombura and Jackson Afash of Maridi who assisted in distributing Holy Communion during my installation have been listed as those standing in favor of the old leadership, if any of you are interested in finding out the facts, please call Rev. Charles Undo.

Thirdly, it would be good for Odek to review Scriptures and find therein where the bishop's office is of divine origin. I think it's very clear that the office of bishop is a manmade position, only utilized because it's the tradition of the church. So, you do not need the "Pope" to install you in order to become a bishop! The Bible and the Confessions are clear, the efficacy of the WORD does not depend on anyone but on Christ alone. It's a shame to see that those who claim to be clergies of the ELCSS/S do not know the history of our church. Who installed the late Bishop Andrew as bishop? It was Rev. Dr. Anssi Simojoki from Finland. Did Simojoki have the title bishop? No! But was the installation valid? YES, because it was done in accordance with God's Word! So, there is no need to make an issue where there is no big deal. Perhaps the big problem is lack of understanding of the Lutheran doctrine.

By the way, it was not only LHF which was represented at the occasion; the Lutheran Church of Ethiopia was also represented by the president himself and many other Christian churches and organizations in South Sudan. Also remember not all countries use the word bishop for their spiritual leaders. Others prefer the word president, meaning the same thing as bishop.

Lastly, the information sent does not reflect the views of the majority in our church. Rather, it portrays how the benefactors of the Juba project feel. They are afraid of losing their empire in Juba, simply because it's self-enriching but time is coming when it will be determined who is the true owner of the property. Is it for the church or some individuals?

Now a word to all those to whom Odek wrote his letter. We live in Africa where there is a lot of corruption, abuse of power, and misuse of public funds, property, and etc. This is the environment in which the church in Africa finds itself. You have got the role to help us be the true Church of Christ! There is no way, you who know Scriptures well, can just turn a blind eye to the serious offenses committed in the ELCSS/S just because it is Africa! This will be condoning sin... even the church in Africa must be the light of the world and the salt of the earth.

May the Lord help us all to be faithful servants of the Gospel+

Rev. Peter Anibati Abia

Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in South Sudan/Sudan (ELCSS/S),
Gbudue State, Yambio

From: Dereje Tilahun

To: Matthew Heise; Robert Rahn; Jeff Rahn

Subject: Successful Symposium and Book Distribution

Dear Brothers in Christ

Greetings from Ethiopia.

Yesterday January 28, 2017 we had very successful symposium and Lutheran book distribution in Addis Ababa. More than 200 pastors and evangelists attended the symposium and took each of them the following books: *Getting into the Theology of Concord*; *the Book of Concord*; *Catechisms, Creeds and Confessions*; *The Theology of Martin Luther*; *The Hammer of God*; *Guidelines for Sharing the Faith with Your Muslim Friends: the Dos and the Don'ts*; *Evangelism and Church Planting in East Africa*; *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation*.

Rev. Dr. Bernie Lutz presented the message of Rev. Mathew Heise and Rev. Dr. Rahn and other LHF staff greetings to the congregation. He also shared with us the history and service of Lutheran Heritage Foundation throughout the world. The congregations acknowledge your services and are pleased to continue working together with LHF to expand the kingdom of God by distributing God's

Word and the right teachings of Martin Luther. Thank you, God bless you.

I have given the money for installation ceremony in Gambella which is equivalent to \$1,250=28,000 Birr. He will bring the *Small Catechism* book in Amharic and gift materials on Wednesday.

Dereje Tilahun

LHF Translation Team supervisor

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

JANUARY 28

Once again, the leader of the ELCSS/S petitioned the LCMS for discussions on fellowship. The ELCSS/S has been trying to gain fellowship with the American church body for over 20 years. After the previous bishop was deposed because of malfeasance in office, past efforts were revisited with hope that a decision could be made at a forthcoming synod convention.

From: Peter Anibati

To: Robert Rahn

Subject: Fw: Greetings from the Lutheran Church of South Sudan/Sudan

Below is what I wrote to the LCMS leadership...

Dear President Harrison,

Greetings in Jesus! In this year of the 500th anniversary of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther, we Lutherans around the world loudly and boldly proclaim Sola Scriptura, Sola Gratia, Sola Fide. We thank God for the leadership He causes to come forth and make possible the Gospel light that announces eternal salvation freely, fully, and finally! Although the ELCSS/S is a very small, humble body of small number, we are proud to join the Lutherans around the world to share the inerrant Word of God and proclaim Christ crucified.

I have heard whispers about partnership between my church the ELCSS/S and yours, the LCMS. Now that the Holy Spirit has anointed me as the bishop of the ELCSS/S, I would like to pursue this matter quickly and fully. I believe that God gave LHF the privilege of helping to create the ELCSS/S. As Bishop, I feel that we need to assess the present situation carefully and with God's help determine the best God pleasing direction we must go as a church body.

President Harrison, as the Bishop of the ELCSS/S, I would appreciate an open dialogue with you. I feel that we both could benefit by creating a church pulpit and altar fellowship. I would humbly ask you to consider this matter and I would appreciate any suggestions or recommendations you make.

The ELCSS/S has already requested application for partnership with the LCMS. Let us pray for a path that will lead to a quick and full God pleasing

union so that we together may continue to bring the Gospel to all nations.

Blessings,

Rev. Peter Anibati Abia

Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in South Sudan/Sudan (ELCSS/S)

JANUARY 30

From: Peter Anibati

To: Robert Rahn

Subject: RE: Greetings from the Lutheran Church of South Sudan/Sudan

Dear Dr. Rahn,

Thanks for the compliments... I hope the LCMS leadership will respond to the letter. Another thing I must share with you is that I am planning to visit the LCMS office in the US. I think it would make a difference if I could go and visit President Harrison or Dr. Collver and talk to them personally about the work, plans of the ELCSS/S. I had talked to Dr. Lutz about this and I requested him to find out what time could be best to visit.

Another issue is that we are pleading with the board of the LHF to revise their decision and consider giving the same kind of support they have been giving to the ELCSS/S until the church is settled. We do not have access yet to the UN funds. I have written letters to the UN and also the bank in Juba to freeze the funds. I am expecting a response this week. But for us to have full control and access to the funds, all legal procedures must be fulfilled. Wilson had opened a case in court against the church in Yambio of disposing him at the extraordinary convention. This case will be discussed on February 06 at the court in Yambio. I have heard from our legal advisor that the case will be dismissed because the decision to remove Wilson from office was taken by the convention which is the supreme authority of the ELCSS/S, and secondly this decision is spiritual and the court has no mandate to revise it.

After dismissing the case, our legal advisor will then open a case against Wilson in Juba for refusing to hand over the office and to have Wilson account for the rental money he has misused before the court. This process will be long but we at the ELCSS/S must keep working and doing what the Lord requires of us. For this reason, we appeal to the LHF board to revise their 2016 decision. The wire Jeff sent, more than half has been used as legal fees. It will be cheaper when the case will be handled in Juba because it will not involve air tickets and lodging for the lawyer.

Will keep you posted with the developments.

Rev. Peter Anibati Abia

[Author's note: Because Noah Wilson had access to funds, he was able to bribe the judge. As a result, no definitive action could be taken, and the case remained in limbo.]

JANUARY 31

From: Peter Anibati

To: Robert Rahn

Subject: Re: CONDEMNING HERESY IN THE CHURCH

Dr. Rahn,

Magwi is east of Juba; we had five pastors from there who came for the installation. These men are not in support of Wilson. Some of the evangelists and deaconesses mentioned are not familiar to me. I think the writer [Odek] just wanted to give the impression that there are a lot of people behind Wilson, which is not true.

I will take as many pictures as possible when I meet with the leadership of the Anglican church. I am glad Pastor Bol from Bor Town wants to meet with me in Juba. I will offer him the position of dean and would consider Bor as a deanery of the ELCSS/S and later this will be upgraded into a diocese with a bishop because constitution allows for more diocese and archdiocese with the presiding bishop. For the Anglicans, I will see to it that they become part of the Juba deanery since many of them seem to be in Juba. For both groups, I will offer them an opportunity to study at CLIHM and encourage the LCMS leadership to support their studies. I think it will be great to have you here when these groups will be joining the ELCSS/S. Will write more later.

FEBRUARY 3

From: Bernhard Lutz

To: Robert Rahn

Subject: Two Weeks of Amazing Grace!

Dear Family and Friends: Greetings in Jesus!

Two weeks of safely chasing the sun in Uganda, Ethiopia, and South Sudan have evaporated and I am back in the saddle in Waddell, Arizona chasing gophers! God granted safe travel, successful consecration of Bishop Peter Anibati, installation of the assistant to the bishop in Gambella, Ethiopia, teaching a seminar, "Christian Leadership," to South Sudan pastors and Maor Seminary in Bishoftu, Ethiopia, addressing two hundred pastors, deacons, evangelists in Addis Ababa.

The community of saints in South Sudan are very pleased and feel blessed by God to have new leadership and are accepting God's challenge to be faithful to His Word. The Lutheran Church of Ethiopia is taking steps to be more aggressive

with sharing the Gospel in a truly evangelical manner. The journey was a spiritual merry-go-round and very warm and emotional in so many ways! Like when 100 or more children sang in Gambella (a refugee haven) and the mothers were weeping as the children sang about going back home to the Upper Nile, but that really, heaven is our true home!

May the Lord richly bless you and yours with good health, a strong faith in Christ our Savior, and the joy of serving the Master! And... thank you for your prayers!

Allah mahabah. God is love.

Bernie

A Lutheran foundation renewed its commitment to the LHF mission through its matching gift program. As in 2016, new donors' mission gifts would be matched dollar-for-dollar, and the same would be true for donors who had been inactive for at least 12 months. Gifts (up to \$5,000 per individual) would be matched, up to a total of \$190,000. Grants and bequests were excluded. Through this matching gift program in 2016, LHF gained over 500 new donors and reactivated nearly as many lapsed donors.

FEBRUARY 6

An LHF staff meeting covered the plans for the upcoming 25th LHF anniversary. Earlier discussion had set the dates of November 10-13, 2017. After some consideration, it was determined that all the 500th anniversary of the Reformation celebrations would overshadow anything the LHF would put together. We would put off celebrating until the first weekend of October 2018 when weather might permit an event held outside under a large tent.

All LHF books printed between 2017 and 2018 would include a special LHF anniversary logo. Special publicity for the anniversary would include articles submitted to synod and Michigan District publications, a double-length issue of the LHF newsletter in September, increased social media presence.

FEBRUARY 7

Christianity was new in the vast and sparsely populated country of Mongolia where people continue to make their living by herding and farming. "When communism fell in the early 1970's, we lost our hope of building that kind of society," said Rev. Jurevdori Jamsran who was one of the first Christians in Mongolia. "But with the opening of the country, the Gospel came. The hope of eternal life and everlasting salvation attracted many of us."

Together with two other pastors and several lay leaders, Rev. Jamstran leads three main churches in Mongolia's cities and six to eight congregations in the

countryside. “The traditional religions of Mongolia, such as Buddhism, do not give you hope of eternal life,” he said. As the Christian church in Mongolia grows, there is great need for good teaching material in their own language. Now Mongolians searching for religious truth have *A Child’s Garden of Bible Stories* for their use and spiritual growth. It was translated by Rev. Jamstran.

Mongolia is sandwiched between China and Russia, and you can imagine the insignificant position they have. Due to his location, Rev. Puje Jamsran’s mission activity is not only in Mongolia but also in China, Russia, and Kazakhstan. Puje is principal of a Bible School, a Bible translator, and a Lutheran translator for LHF. He’s just bringing the Lutheran teachings into the country. Puje was the only Lutheran pastor in 1995 when the Norwegian Lutheran Mission Society came to Mongolia. He left for study in Florida, and when he came back in 2003, there were no Lutherans left. That’s when he started a Bible School and seminary. Their church services are usually two hours long. The congregation knows little about liturgy and basic Bible stories. To help them learn, Puje translated *A Child’s Garden of Bible Stories* and was working on the *Small Catechism* and *Augsburg Confession*.

LHF has also released the Japanese *Small Catechism*. It took years to complete but the enchiridion is now available in the Japanese language. Work continues for the eventual publishing of the entire edition as we know it today.

In another part of the world, Slovakia is an area of new work for LHF. *The Church Under Oppression*, authored by Viola Fronkova, tells of the persecution of pastors in Slovakia by post-World War II communist leaders. Fronkova explains, “The spiritual unity of Lutherans was broken by that communist persecution: there were pastors and other believers who carried the cross, who were imprisoned for their faith. Others were misled by many State policy lies, some even bringing reports to the State authorities against their fellow neighbors, with sad consequences.”

Rev. Sefan Havlik was one of some 35 Lutheran pastors sentenced to imprisonment. One pastor, Pavel Uhorskai, imprisoned from 1951-1953 for preaching the Gospel, was released and banned from preaching the Word until 1990. However, he quietly met with other persecuted Lutherans to maintain the church. In that group, the idea came out to prepare a written document about the oppression of the church under communist regime. Rev. Pavel Uhorskaie started the book, *The Church under Oppression*. Fronkova served as his secretary, and when [Uhorskaie] died, his heirs approved Fronkova to finish the book.

“Since 2003, the files of the State secret police of former Czechoslovakia have been opened to the public. This meant that I could read the many pages of interrogation from court proceedings. My sources also included children of persecut-

ed pastors and a few widows still living today.” Frankova is now working on the second volume, which will be published by LHF at the end of 2017.

FEBRUARY 9

From: Peter Anibati
To: Robert Rahn
Subject: Report on Church Account

I will be leaving next week Tuesday for Uganda to be with the Anglicans and will stay for a week. Yes, the discussions I will have with the Anglicans will include having them to become part of the ELCSS/S officially and to have some of their students study at CLIHM. Your suggestion is good, we can have an official service for them in June, and I would like to extend an invitation to Dr. Collver to come or perhaps send a representative.

I just heard from our legal adviser that a letter has been sent by the public attorney general in Juba to the bank to freeze the Juba account and the bank will be sending us a letter this afternoon to confirm that they have frozen all operations of the account. In this way Wilson will have no access to the account but we have yet to find out what balance is in that account. The next step will be to have Wilson answer for the missing money before court because he is not willing to hand it over voluntarily. It seems we will have control over the account when all these legal procedures are completed. I guess we have to be patient... I do not know how long it will take.

The court case Wilson raised in Yambio did not work for him, so, he appealed it again to the high court in Juba but it's obvious that the response from Juba will be the same.

FEBRUARY 17

From: Rev. Tom Batsky
Subject: Vietnam BOC

Hi Matt,

I did a chapel service this past Wednesday at Trinity Lutheran School, Berrien Springs, Michigan. They presented me with a check from all three of our circuit schools for National Lutheran School Weeks... Adding this to the total amount contributed to the project as reported to me, we have an unofficial total of over \$21,000 towards our goal of \$18,000... A few interesting notes: This exceeded our goal by about 17%. This was to be a two-year project; our goal was to raise this amount by Reformation 2017. We started out with our first Vietnam *Book of Concord* presentation in September 2015. Our goal was reached, and exceeded, in 17 months. Over 8% of the total was raised by children in our three schools—nickels, dimes, quarters, dollar bills, an occasional \$20 here and there.

Needless to say, this is thrilling. I would like to schedule some sort of celebratory closure, giving thanks to God, for all of this. Along with this, perhaps a presentation copy of the finished Vietnam *Book of Concord* could be given to representatives of each congregation and school. Let me know any thoughts you may have, as I am anxious to send out this report to our circuit. I know a progress report on the *Book of Concord* project would be welcomed as well.

In Christ,

Tom Batsky, IRPR Western Michigan

FEBRUARY 19

Rev. Larry Rockemann filed a report on an interesting weekend of activities at Trinity Lutheran Church, Roselle, Illinois, together with Rev. Matt Heise and Rev. Puje Jamsran, LHF Mongolian translator. Rev. Heise preached for the three services and Rev. Rockemann taught two Bible classes. An LHF display was also set up in the foyer of the church. While in Roselle for the weekend, Rev. Rockemann met with Rev. Bill Beckmann, who was asked to become one of our IRPR area members.

The main purpose of the weekend was to participate in honoring the Shockey family who sponsored the translation and publishing of the Mongolian *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories*. Rev. Charles Mueller Jr., pastor of Trinity, dedicated the volume during all three services. After the services, the Shockey family and all guests went to the Lutheran Home in Arlington Heights, where Mr. Russ Shockey is a resident, and there, a special dedication ceremony took place during dinner. Rev. Rockemann, who formerly served on the staff at the Lutheran Home, said, "Mr. Russ Shockey seemed to enjoy our time with him—his family certainly did. What a beautiful luncheon and great conversation. Even with his dementia, Russ seemed to engage with anything and everything Mongolian—and, indeed, he connected with the Mongolian *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories*. I'm reasonably certain Russ knew/remembered me. Most of all, though, we were able to praise God for the blessings He continues bringing to people all over the world—now also in Mongolia—with solid, sound, Bible-based materials."

Rev. Rockemann also shared a word of appreciation to Jennifer Bagnall, LHF P.R., "for the beautifully-designed and printed picture/placard that highlighted the Shockey work/Mongolian *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories*—their beautiful picture on it as well. So many of the members of Trinity commented on this picture as they shared many wonderful memories. Most especially did the Shockey family members appreciate this picture/placard. Carolyn took it with her. She plans on setting up a little display at the church where she plays organ on Sundays. I think it will also make a trip up to St. Peter's in Edina so that Pastor Shockey's members can enjoy it."

FEBRUARY 17-21

Rev. Peter Anibati, bishop of the ELCSS/S, traveled to Northern Uganda to meet with and participate in a catechism seminar held for leaders of the Anglican church who are interested in becoming part of the Lutheran church in Sudan. There were 12 bishops leading the Anglican church body with many pastors, including women, and membership around 1.5 million across South Sudan. Many of them were in refugee camps in Uganda and had started churches there. Bishop Anibati presented the history of the ELCSS/S and explained the doctrinal positions of the church. He alluded to the *Book of Concord* as an accepted confession. The participants in the seminar were especially thankful for the Dinka catechism published by the LHF, as many pastors were not fluent in English. Three of the participants wished to enroll in the seminary to receive more training in Lutheran doctrine.

Bishop Anibati said, “The objective of the mission to Uganda was to get to know the Anglican group better. I believe this overall objective was achieved but the question remains when they will be ready to become part of the Lutheran church. I think this will take a while; more time is needed. They need to be taught properly the Lutheran doctrine through seminars and workshops and even seminary training. We are willing to partner with the LCMS to train these people to become Lutherans and eventually part of the ELCSS/S.”

FEBRUARY 27

A special committee of the LHF board hosted a phone interview with Rev. Jacob Gillard for a position on the LHF staff that would combine a minor role in development and a major role as a supervisor of all work in Africa. The committee intended to meet again before reporting to the full LHF Board on March 27.

FEBRUARY 28

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of South Sudan/Sudan continued to strive toward altar and pulpit fellowship with the LCMS:

From: Albert Collver

To: Peter Anibati

Subject: Re: Evangelical Lutheran Church of South Sudan/Sudan Fellowship

Dear Peter,

Greetings on the Transfiguration of our Lord! Grace and Peace be with you! Congratulations on your election as bishop of the ELCSS/S. I hope your election brings peace and tranquility to your church. I pray that the Lord Jesus give you strength and wisdom to serve as bishop. During the time of Bishop Wilson Noah Rule, there was a request for altar and pulpit fellowship with the LCMS. Is this

something you would like to continue pursuing? I have copied Mr. Darin Storkson who will follow up with you.

Blessings in Christ,

Abc3+

Rev. Albert B. Collver, Ph.D.

Director of Church Relations/Executive Secretary for the International Lutheran Council

From: Peter Anibati

To: Albert Collver

Subject: Re: Evangelical Lutheran Church of South Sudan/Sudan

Dear Rev. Dr. Collver,

It is a great joy to receive your message and I thank God for all that He is doing through you to reach out to the lost with the precious Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I would like very much to continue pursuing the request of altar and pulpit fellowship with the LCMS. It is my prayer that God would make this become a reality. Thank you kindly for your message and may our Good Lord continue to bless your endeavors for expanding His kingdom here on earth.

Blessings+

Rev. Peter Anibati Abia, Bishop, ELCSS/S

MARCH 15

The spring edition of the LHF newsletter reported on books released in India and Turkey, including the *Small Catechism* in the Malayalam language. Rev. Samuel Thompson, seminary professor for the India Evangelical Lutheran Church, reports that there may be millions of unbaptized believers in India due to family ties that are broken following baptism. The baptized are ostracized because they are perceived as betraying their family.

MARCH 22

From: Dereje Tilahun

Subject: ACG Book arrival

Dear Brothers in Christ

After long travel and hassle, *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* books in Amharic arrived safely in our store. We received 140 Boxes with 72 books each [totaling] 10,080 books. I will send some photographs tomorrow. Thank you all.

Dereje Tilahun

LHF books translation team supervisor

MARCH 27

This is a report from Bishop Anibati of Sudan, demonstrating the tremendous openness to Lutheranism in that country, their dire needs, and how they are coping:

Visitations

At the beginning of this year, we stated that our first priority was to make visitations to the different deaneries/congregations of the ELCSS/S. The purposes of these visits are: 1) To oversee the work which the pastors are doing in the different congregations and to know their plans for the future, 2) To know the conditions under which the pastors are working and the challenges facing the churches, 3) To introduce the ELCSS/S new policy and action plan for 2017–2021, 4) To revive the congregations which had closed down and to find opportunities to start up new churches in areas where there are no Lutheran churches. Although the ELCSS/S is struggling to make ends meet, I am happy to share with you that by the help of God we have been able to make some of those visitations and we intend to visit the remaining churches which we have not visited. As it is said, God's work done in His way will not lack His supply; surely He will provide for the needs! Our principle for this year is "Do more with less."

On March 4, 2017 I visited Maridi State, the hometown of the former bishop, where there were previously two Lutheran churches and a primary school. Unfortunately, one of the churches closed down, including the primary school, as there was no one to take care of the congregation. I went with 1) Rev. Thomas Gaaniko, 2) Rev. Elinama Jacob Bisi, 3) Rev. Nicholas Kumbo, 4) Rev. Japheth Rabach Dachi, 5) Rev. Kibongo Henry, and 6) Vicar Emmanuel Enosa. We arrived in Maridi at 4 p.m. and were taken to the house of Rev. Jackson John Afash, the pastor in-charge of Maridi Lutheran church and there we had a wonderful meal. After the meal we drove to the Anglican guest house where we were accommodated for two nights.

On March 5, 2017 we had a short visit with the commissioner of Maridi County; he welcomed us to his house and served us with tea. The commissioner stated that it was his first time to hear that there was [a] Lutheran Church in Maridi and he appreciated very much our coming and expressed his willingness to support the programs of the ELCSS/S. After meeting with the commissioner, we went to Mongua, an area where the Lutheran church is located in Maridi. Before we got to the church, we met a group of kids together with Pastor Jackson Afash singing praises and we stepped out of the car and joined them in singing and together we marched to the church. We were warmly received by the Christians and all the invited guests and we started the Divine Service at 11 a.m.

In the service, I preached on Matthew 4:1-11 with the theme: "The first Adam

failed and failed all but the second Adam—Jesus, won and won for all.” After preaching, I installed Vicar Emmanuel Enosa to be in-charge of Ibba congregation, one of the churches which had closed down. After prayers, we had lunch together with all those who came to worship that day among whom were senior government officials. Thank God for the minister for physical infrastructure was among them and I got the chance to put our request before him for a bigger plot for the church.

After lunch, I had a meeting with all the members of the Lutheran church in Maridi while Rev. Nicholas and Rev. Dachi were conducting interviews for pastoral students who would like to be part of our seminary program in June 2017. Two sat for the interview, which is basically Bible knowledge and English. The members with whom I had the meeting highlighted the following concerns:

- Lack of pastors. In the whole of Maridi State, there is only one pastor.
- No income generating projects for the church.
- Pastor Afash has opened a school for teaching kids but he uses the same worship place as classroom.
 - No church building and no built classrooms.
 - Lack of school materials.
 - The current church plot is very small and it needs to be extended because Pastor Afash would like to have a full Lutheran primary school, church building, a house for the pastor next to the church, and a guest house to generate some income for his church. Pastor Afash also wants to plant more Lutheran churches in Maridi state.
- The members in Maridi need workshops and seminars and regular visits from the head office.
 - The women group requested the head office to provide them with a grinding mill as an income generating project for the church.
 - No means of transport for pastor and evangelists. They need bicycles for evangelists and motorbike for the pastor.

On March 6, 2017, we were set to return to Yambio, but first we had to meet with the highest authority of Maridi State, so we went at 9 a.m. and met with the Honorable Governor of Maridi State who received us very well and welcomed us into his office. They brought tea and water for us and as we were drinking, I introduced my delegation to the Honorable Governor and briefed him on all that we had come to do in Maridi including the future plans of the ELCSS/S which he appreciated. We had a brief meeting with him together with his deputy after which we prayed, took a group photo, and we started our journey to Yambio.

On March 9, 2017 we took another trip to Tambura State and arrived at about 7 p.m. in the evening. The accompanying delegation included Rev. Thomas

Gaaniko, Rev. Nicholas Kumbo, Rev. Elinama Jacob Bisi, Rev. Kibongo Henry, Rev. Mosoro George, my wife Jecinta, and my little Moses! On March 10, 2017 which was a national prayer day, I joined all the clergies and Christians and we had a procession to the freedom square where we had prayers for peace and stability in South Sudan. After prayers, we were invited to the house of Rev. Charles Undo Kazimilio for lunch, and our supper was provided by the women of Tambura church. On March 11, 2017 we went west of Tambura town on the road to Wau to see the grave of the father of Rev. Thomas Gaaniko, the general secretary, and there we met so many people who would like to start a Lutheran congregation in that area. We had a short devotion with them and distributed some Zande hymnals and catechisms printed by LHF. There were more than 400 people who attended devotion and Pastor Charles was assigned to be providing pastoral care for these people.

As ELCSS/S bishop, I led prayers for peace, forgiveness, and reconciliation during the visit to Tambura State. We returned to Tambura town and in the evening we had a meeting with the members of Ezo, S/Yubu [that is, South Juba], Tambura, and Giara who had all gathered at Nazereda Lutheran Church in Tambura. They raised the following concerns:

- Training for youth, women, and all members of the Lutheran Church in Tambura to know more about the Lutheran church.
- They need more classrooms for the primary school at Nazereda Lutheran Primary School; there is only one double classroom but the school is from nursery (ages 1-3) to primary 7.
- Means of transport for pastors and evangelists.
- They plan to build a guest house as an income generating project for the church/solar kiosk for charging phones as income generating project for the church.
- Women group want sewing machines for making clothes and church vestments and sell to the churches.
- Uniforms for youth and women choirs.
- Borehole for church and the school.
- They need a grinding mill.

On March 12, 2017 we had joint prayers at Nazereda Lutheran Church under trees because the church building was too small for the crowd that came that day. In attendance were government representatives, representatives of other Christian denominations, including the Muslim community. I preached on John 3:1-17 with the theme: “God’s Love.” In the service, Rev. Charles Undo was installed to be pastor in-charge of Nazereda Lutheran Church, assistant dean of Western Equatoria Deanery/acting dean for Wau. Rev. Evaristo Gima Kazima

was installed to be pastor in-charge of Giara and in-charge of evangelist training in Tambura church and Rev. Mosoro George was installed to be pastor in-charge of S/Yubu church and coordinator for Lutheran Schools in Tambura State. One child was baptized. After the Divine Service we had meals together with all the invited guests. Lastly Rev. Nicholas interviewed seven young men who would like to study theology at CLIHM.

On Monday March 13, 2017 we visited Giara Church which is located outside of Tambura town. At Giara, we had a morning devotion with the people and there were about 400 who attended, and I preached on John 3:16. Some of the needs raised were:

- They need their pastor to be next to the church so that they can have access to his office regularly. That means a house should be provided for the pastor within the church plot.
- Training of evangelists who can be helping the pastor.
- Workshops and seminars on Lutheran doctrine for the members of Giara church.
- Uniforms for the primary school in Giara and more classrooms.
- Support (salaries) for teachers of the primary school.
- Registration of the Lutheran Primary School in Giara with the government.
- Purchase of land lease for the church plot in Giara.
- Grinding mill for the church as income generating project for the church.
- Sports materials to support the football team at Giara.
- More teachers for the primary school.
- Borehole to provide clean water for the people.
- Means of transport for pastor and the evangelists.

At Giara church we were served with lunch and we departed to S/Yubu church at Midday. At around midday, we left for S/Yubu or Rii-Yubu, two hours' drive from Tambura on rough roads. We arrived at around 2 p.m. and we went straight to the government office to introduce Pastor Mosoro George as the pastor responsible for S/Yubu. We were warmly welcomed and after a short meeting with the authorities, we went to the place where our Christians had gathered to wait for us. Some of the needs they presented were:

- They need a church building and a house for the pastor.
- Borehole for clean water since water sources are far from them.
- Primary school for the kids, government schools are far and they also need a secondary school because there [are none in] S/Yubu.
- They need a health centre.
- Means of transport for pastors.
- Restroom to be completed.

We were served with meals and immediately we were on the road returning to Tambura. On March 14, 2017, we started our journey from Tambura back to Yambio and we arrived safely at around 7 p.m.

On March 19, 2017, I was at the headquarters in Yambio and I preached in the second service on John 4:5-26 with the theme “God’s Generous Gift to the Thirsty.” In this Divine Service, I installed Rev. Mariano Joseph Bamuke as pastor in-charge of Yambio Parish. On March 26, 2017, I preached in the English service in Yambio on John 9:1-42, after which I visited Saura Parish and installed Rev. Alison Zebedayo Zebe as pastor in-charge. I conducted three baptisms, two infants and one adult, and confirmed one person. Some of the concerns raised at Saura church were:

- House for the pastor next to Saura church on church plot.
- Means of transport for pastor and evangelist.
- Planning to open a Lutheran basic school since the kids in that area have to walk long distances to attend government school.
- They need pews and altar vestments for the different seasons.
- Training to members, Sunday school teachers, youth, women, and men about the Lutheran church.
- Borehole for the church and the community at large, water sources are very far from Saura.
- They need income generating project for Saura church.

Prayers at Saura Lutheran church installation of Rev. Alison Zebedayo Zebe at Saura. During the visits, I learned one thing: the people love the Lutheran Church and they need the WORD more than anything! Praise be to God that in the midst of adversities, the WORD is spreading and many are being brought to faith+ God continues to do miracles even in our midst today through the preaching and the Sacraments and the Power of His WORD continues to amaze us! Our next visits will be to Juba, Magwi, Maban, Gambella, Khartoum, and Wau.

APRIL 11

LHF received a question about the availability of books for Togo, West Africa in French.

From: Jeff Rahn
To: Jeanne Burtonlee
Subject: RE: Togo Books

Jeanne & Tom,

I am pleased to reply that we are working closely with the missionaries in Togo and CLET (Lutheran Center for Theological Studies). I have been in regular

contact with Rev. Jacob Gaugert over the last several months. Currently en route from France to Togo are 900 copies of the freshly printed French *Book of Concord*. LHF, in connection with other partners, reprinted 2,900 copies of this resource for use in Africa (including Madagascar), Canada, France, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic. We also have a pallet of French books at our office that we are including in a larger shipment going to Togo later this year. Included are over 1,000 copies of the French *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* and over 750 copies of *God's No and God's Yes*. We also hope to include other French doctrinal resources that we are currently working towards reprinting. That is, as they say, "the rest of the story," which may be featured at some point in the LHF newsletter. We did have a Facebook posting about this a few weeks ago shortly after the books were printed in France. Thanks for always keeping your eyes and ears open on how LHF books and materials can be used to further the Gospel proclamation around the world! Have a Blessed Easter.

In Christ,

Jeff Rahn, LHF Assistant Executive Director/Director of Operations

APRIL 18

This email is among several that we received from students in an Engineering class in Indonesia. They sent us a picture of about 30 students holding up copies of Luther's *Small Catechism* they gratefully received.

From: Mikhael Haposan

To: Ted NaThalang

Subject: Thank You Lutheran Heritage Foundation

Good morning sir,

Through this e-mail, I want to introduce myself first. My name is Mikhael Haposan Napitupulu and I'm an electrical engineering college student in Del Institute of Technology that located in Sisingamangaraja, Sitoluama, Laguboti, Sumatera Utara, Indonesia. I represent Electrical Engineering that's learning course of "Agama dan Etika" (Religion and Ethics) want to say thank you and we are really grateful because Lutheran Heritage Foundation gave us a book called *Landasan Iman Kristen: Dengan Penjelasannya* that already translate to Indonesian language at no cost. This book is very important for us to learn this book deeply, especially for our self because this book guides us to become a better person spiritually. We don't know how to repay for Lutheran Heritage Foundation that giving us a free book besides making a photo to say thank you from us. We all are very happy and feeling blessed because of this.

For your attention, I say thank you.

Yours faithfully,

APRIL 19

The following is a bizarre exchange relating to Rev. David Hudak's visit to Slovakia in 1974 and someone discovering a note in KGB files about surveillance during his visit.

Greetings Rev. Hudak,

Forwarding this communication to you from Slovakia. Would this have been you that visited Slovakia in 1974? If so, interesting connections!! Look forward to meeting you in a few weeks when you visit our office.

Blessings,
Jeff Rahn

From: Viola Fronkova

To: Jeff Rahn

Subject: Slovakia Viola LHF message

Dear Mr Rahn, may the Lord our God bless you.

This is not any urgent message. I have received an email from Mr Director Matthew Heise, to send an urgent message to you, in case of need. I wonder—maybe, you still can get further this message to brother David Hudak?

Thank you very much for your kindness.

Dear Mr Director,

What a joy to have a Slovak from Cierna Lehota—a true brother helping us. I have been with Lord's special care and strength, finishing the second volume of the book *The Church Under Oppression*. I am in the midst of few more biographies, browsing through documents and files, etc.

Dear Matthew, this is the message for your board member: imagine, in secret police files (StB) I could find a page written about David Hudak: David Hudak, a theology student, visited Slovakia; especially on 21 July 1974 he visited Lutheran pastor in Blatnica. Even with a tape recorder! Etc. The address is written in files, too: N. Keston Ave, Chicago, Illinois 60651... Is this our brother David on the LHF Board?

Maybe, I can prepare a little article for the LHF newspaper? Slovak Lutheran pastor whom David and his friend visited in Blatnica, was then under a special police control. May the Lord our heavenly Father protect your life always, dear Matthew! I am glad you and your Board take care for His child Viola, raising funds and praying for a success with the book.

VF

From: David Hudak

To: Jeff Rahn

Subject: Re: FW: Slovakia Viola LHF message

Yes, this is me! This was my first trip to Czechoslovakia in 1974 when I was still at the seminary in Springfield. I did visit many Lutheran churches in the towns where my family connections resided. One time when I was visiting the pastor and his family at his parsonage near the church in Blatnica, the pastor told me that I was probably being followed while I was visiting there. The pastor could not speak English, but his son Peter was translating for him and for me. I always felt that I was being watched somewhat at times. This, of course, was during the time that communism was in full force. And yes, I did bring a tape recorder and I was taping conversations and greetings from my relatives to take back home to my grandparents and family. I also recorded greetings from my family in Chicago to take to the family in Slovakia. I also recorded some music. It is so interesting to think that they mentioned the fact that I had a tape recorder. This is absolutely amazing. I would be able to tell you more about some of my conversations on this trip for an article that you may want to write or include for the LHF newspaper.

Perhaps I would get a chance to meet Viola in September when I will be in the Slovak Republic. Thanks for sending this to me! I am still very surprised at this.

Sincerely,

Dave

APRIL 27

From: Harri Lammi

Subject: Re: Dari Catechism and Book of Prayer

Dear Jeff and Matthew,

Thank you for super quick replies! Good to hear from you. Brother Wahid's book is in Finnish and I don't know if it is in English too. You could write to him. His name is Wahid Yari. He has a very interesting story about what he has done before he was found by Christ.

Great that you will be visiting the congregation supporting the printing work! Please thank them for their support and prayers for those who are being taught through this catechism. I am using it a lot and many others too in discipling Afghans. It is being used a lot in baptismal teaching and God is doing tremendous work among hundreds of Afghans here in Finland. On the day of Pentecost again two more will be baptized. Two months ago we had the privilege of baptizing two Afghans. They all have been taught through this book and of course the Dari Scriptures.

God bless you on you travels,

Harri Lanni

MAY 2-3

Rev. David Hudak, a new independent regional promotion representative (IRPR), attended a training meeting and was impressed with the work of LHF. He wrote the following message:

From: David Hudak

Subject: Thank You!

Dear Matthew, Robert and Jeff,

Please accept my sincere thank you for a wonderful experience at the LHF headquarters last week. I was very glad that you encouraged me to come and see what LHF is all about. I was very much impressed and pleasantly surprised with all that you are doing to get the printed Word out into the hands of people who are in need of these books. I have been quoting the phrase that was often used during our orientation, "the Word works!" This is so true. I never knew the depth of the work that LHF does. The stories about individuals that became believers as a result of the work of LHF is awe-inspiring! LHF is an organization that I will support and share with others. Everyone was so helpful and dedicated to their positions in LHF. You have a wonderful staff and they are truly invested in their work for the Lord. You all made me feel at home and very comfortable. The three of you are so gifted and it is obvious that the Lord brought all of you together for His purposes.

As you know, I hesitated coming, but I am truly thankful that I had this opportunity to find out more about LHF. I also would like to begin spreading the word about LHF and its mission, even though it may be a bit slow and scattered at first. My first presentation will be in our own circuit at a regularly scheduled meeting. Most of the pastors and churches here do not appear to be familiar with the work of the LHF. I need to let them know about LHF and provide them with some materials to share with their members.

Again, thank you! God bless all that you do as you continue the work of LHF!

In His Service,

Dave

The same sentiment was expressed by Rev. Herb Keistman of Paige, Texas, who was also just coming aboard after retiring from his congregation, Ebenezer Lutheran Church.

MAY 8

From: Robert Roberts
Subject: classes started

We were able to start classes yesterday although the hours were shortened. No power at Rev. Simon Gatluak's house Sunday night or Monday morning so he couldn't print my materials. He brought the printer to our room and we printed until we ran out of paper. I then went to the church to get things started. Simon returned to town to buy more paper and work on other things that had to be found or arranged. I stayed at the hotel and printed the rest of the materials. We had 32 people registered, pastors and women. They were attentive and receptive. The women wanted to have the material translated and printed in Nuer so there is some discussion going on about that. It wouldn't get done this week but could be useful for sharing in their congregations. Rev. Simon is assigning others to be our translation assistants. It worked well yesterday. The two-hour break period for lunch and rest was busy. One of the pastors decided to help me read Nuer—I may have learned about five new sounds. Others wanted to discuss the projects they have in mind, especially for developing literacy classes for the women. We have also had more time with Rev. Hank Young who is building the new shelter at the orphan site. He wants to try to get a ride with the Russian pilots who are flying the WFP (World Food Programme) parachute food drops over South Sudan.

Robert & Eileen

MAY 15

Harri Lammi was LHF's first avenue to reach the mostly Muslim Afghani population in Europe. We asked Harri for some information on Wahid, one of the translators/reviewers of the Dari prayer book/catechism, when LHF printed the improved second edition. Harri wrote the following:

Brother Wahid is an Afghan by birth. As a young man he joined one of the nine Afghan mujahediin/jihadi (holy war) factions against the Soviet Union and the Afghan Soviet-backed government. He later moved to Europe and Holland/Netherlands as a refugee. In Holland he stole a portion of the Gospel of John from a Christian guest house in Amsterdam and started to read it. He became convinced that he needs Jesus as his Savior. Later he was baptized and joined a church. Many years later he went back to the Christian guest house to confess that he once stole a book—namely John's Gospel—from the guest house and then took a few Dari Bibles back to them as compensation. You can imagine the joy this particular stealing of a book brought to the guest house staff. Brother Wahid has translated the Dari catechism and *Book of Prayer* from the English text.

He has also done the updating of the second edition, which has more teaching topics in it. He is married and he and his wife Elisabeth (Dutch national) have three children (if I remember right). Brother Wahid now works with some refugee projects as a consultant for the Dutch Government. I hope this information is helpful.

Harri Lammi

Finland

MAY 15

The May/June newsletter included the announcement of a new resource for Arabic outreach. There was a picture of hundreds of the Arabic edition of *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* being distributed by Disciples of the Way, an Arabic outreach ministry centered in Dallas, Texas, where Rev. Karim Baidaoui serves. 3,000 copies in hardback and paperback were published in partnership with Lutheran Hour Ministries. Radio contacts throughout the Middle East as well as Arabic-speaking immigrants and refugees in Europe would receive copies. Arabic outreach ministries in the U.S. have also benefited from this volume.

This edition included a story on the publishing of an Albanian *Small Catechism*. Rev. Jimmy Svenfelt, a young Lutheran pastor from Finland, has been called to share the Gospel, and to assist him in his work, LHF also published this important volume in Albania, a tiny European country just north of Greece. The work here is difficult. In 1967, the dictator, Enver Hoxha, declared the country to be atheistic. All religions were forbidden.

Ethiopia also received attention in this edition of "The Word at Work." It's time for religion class, and a Lutheran schoolteacher walks into her classroom of 50 first graders. As she meets their expectant gazes she sighs with frustration. How to teach them? She has no books, no materials. She's out of ideas. Rev. Dereje Tilahun, a pastor in the Ethiopian Evangelical Lutheran Church Mekane Yesus and coordinator for LHF translations in Ethiopia, knew that something had to be done for the children of his church and others throughout the country where 8 million Lutherans reside. Rev. Tilahun and Rev. Heise teamed up after LHF published the Amharic *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* and had distributed them in that very school.

"The children like this book very much!" exclaimed Chali Bijiga, director of Addis Ababa Mekane Yesus School. "They always carry their books in their bags when they go home and return to school." More than 500 students attended this school. Rev. Tilahun said that the next step was to train Sunday school teachers how to use the book in their classrooms using LHF's teacher guidebook, which was being prepared. The book was in the process of being translated into other Ethiopian languages as well.

“There has been no book prepared for children for the last 30 years, and this book is the first of its kind and quality,” he said. “We all thank LHF supporters for their generous gifts to our children.”

The newsletter also reported that in the midst of tribal warfare, famine, and church division, the new bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in South Sudan/Sudan was moving forward with an ambitious Lutheran publication schedule, including Luther’s *Small Catechism* in the Acholi and Bari languages, the *Augsburg Confession* and *Large Catechism* in the Zande, the Acholi hymnal, and a children’s story book in Dinka. As violence spread, parishioners were forced to flee to different communities and refugee camps. The conflicts triggered severe food shortages. “The stress is not among the pastors of differing tribes. Rather, the stress is among politicians,” according to Bishop Peter Abia.

MAY 17

Rev. Ted NaThalang made a trip to Southeast Asia from May 13 to June 1. He reported on a significant meeting held on May 17 that included the Cambodia LHF team, members of LISA (Lutherans in Southeast Asia), and representatives of the LCMS OIM. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss ways in which LHF, LISA, and the LCMS could work together. This was one of the first meetings where the LCMS Asia Director Charles Ferry had engaged to discuss mutual cooperation. Ted indicated that the meeting went well. Ted also mentioned a conversation between Dennis Denow and himself on working together in Thailand. The discussion included possibilities of signing a memorandum of understanding. This trip also took Ted to Tokyo and there he distributed copies of Luther’s *Small Catechism*, a pocket-sized enchiridion, that was well received. Rev. Emoto, former general secretary of the Lutheran Church in partnership with LCMS, requested 5,000 copies of the Japanese enchiridion.

MAY 20

Bishop Peter Anibati of the ELCSS/S reported extensively on his trip to various locations, including a stop at the refugee camp in Gambella, Ethiopia. This is a portion of his report which highlights the needs of the church.

The Mission Trip to the Greater Upper Nile Deanery of the ELCSS/S

On April 20th, 2017 I left Yambio and traveled to Juba, the capital of South Sudan. In the evening, the ELCSS/S legal advisor, Advocate James El-Taib, organized a coming together dinner which many of the government dignitaries attended. The fellowship was just marvelous. On May 21, 2017 I traveled to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia to meet with Rev. Matthew Heise, the executive director of the Lutheran Heritage Foundation, and Rev. Dr. Prof. Richard Nuffer, one of

the board members of the LHF. I was also privileged to be invited to attend a theological symposium which was conducted at the Ethiopia Evangelical Lutheran Church. It was great to meet with Bishop Roland Gustafsson from Sweden, the missionaries from the Swedish LEAF (Lutheran Evangelical Association of Finland), SLMS-USA (Sudanese Lutheran Mission Society), leadership of the Lutheran Church of Ethiopia, and our friends from LHF. The Assistant Bishop Simon Gatluak Geng and I had a two-day meeting from April 25-26, 2017 with the LHF representatives and we presented to them the following concerns and needs of the ELCSS/S:

- CLIHM (seminary) start up is important for the ELCSS/S because there is greater need for pastors. Most congregations are served by lay-leaders called the evangelists.

- Church office being constructed to free the guest house (funds needed to complete the building, put fence around, and complete the Yambio church).

- The medical clinic initiated by the ELCSS/S is progressing well, but it needs support (building equipment and medicine supplies).

- Bakery project is bringing some income but the high inflation in South Sudan is affecting the business. More income generating projects need to be initiated (e.g., internet center to be established).

- Request for stipends to support pastors of the ELCSS/S especially during this time of famine in South Sudan.

- The need to revive the Baguga project intended to be the Lutheran Mission Centre in South Sudan.

- Renovation of the guest house in Yambio. The ceiling board has started falling down.

- Plans to open a secondary school in honor of late Bishop Andrew Mbugo Elisa (Bishop Andrew Mbugo Academy for Science & Technology)

- Means of transport for pastors and evangelists for mission work (motor-bikes, bicycles, and car for bishop).

- Printing of Acholi hymnal, Nuer hymnal, and Nuer revised catechism. Continuation of translation work by the ELCSS/S.

- Life-saving relief needed to help the humanitarian situation in South Sudan. (Malakal, Magwi, Nuba MTS, Yambio, Wau, and the IDPS (internationally displaced persons) in Juba). Proposal submitted.

- Support for building and roofing of ELCSS/S churches.

- Financial support to the ELCSS/S to work among the refugees in Gambella, Uganda, and Kenya.

- The need to upgrade pastors' education especially those who have the academic capability so that they can become Lutheran teachers at CLIHM.

- More seminars needed for pastors and lay leaders of the ELCSS/S including

women, youth, and Sunday school teachers.

- The issue of clean water is a problem in South Sudan; the ELCSS/S is seeking support to dig some wells where they are operating both church and school.

The new leadership of the ELCSS/S intends to visit the leadership of the LCMS to update them with the current situation of the ELCSS/S and to make a follow up on the request for fellowship. The ELCSS/S also intends to make connections with all the confessional Lutheran bodies around the globe and to partner with them in spreading the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

MAY 26-28

Minutes from final review meeting regarding the second edition of the *Dari Catechism and Book of Prayer* - from Emmeloord Holland

Purpose of the meeting: Final review of translation, layout, and preparation of printing process.

General overview in terms of large-scale issues in the text or process: There has been no major large-scale issue coming up in the content of the updating or translation of the second edition.

Feedback from the first edition

The first edition (2,600 copies) has now been distributed. There are already some 200 copies in request waiting for a new print. The feedback has been very positive with only two exceptions: the small print and the division of the Ten Commandments. The book has been very helpful and important for those converting from Islam to Christianity, particularly the prayers (since the concept and practice of prayer is so different in Islam) and the short history of the Church. It has been a very good tool for teaching those in baptismal teaching; there is a simple and clear path for teaching sessions.

JUNE 9

From: Nicholas Louis Kumbo, CLIHM Dean of Students

To: Robert Rahn, Matthew Heise, Jeff Rahn, Peter Anibati

Subject: Re: Intake for CLIHM 2017

Dear Dr. Rahn and the rest,

Greetings to you in the blessed name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I would like to inform you that we have done all the necessary arrangements in order to get some young men who are interested to join the seminary this year. 31 applied but 23 of them have been admitted. We are waiting to hear from you before we send to them admission letters. We propose to open on July 1. The number may eventual increased to 30 students because there are other deaneries that have not submitted their application yet.

From: Robert Rahn

To: Nicholas Louis Kumbo, Matthew Heise, Jeff Rahn, Peter Anibati, Bernie Lutz, Rev. David Bolte, Rev. Daniel Grams, Rev. Karl Bollhagen, Rev. Richard Nuffer; Rev. Robert & Eileen Roberts

Subject: RE: Intake for CLIHM 2017

Dear Nicholas,

Thank you for your message. It is timely in that there is an LHF board meeting on Monday and I suggest that Matt announce the startup of the seminary for January 7, 2018 and that the report be made of the tremendous interest and opportunity we have to strengthen the church and seminary now that it is under new leadership and is showing great signs of growth in the midst of war and famine, that it is worthy of full support and commitment from all of us. This will also have a great impact on translation of books and the distribution of books and the utilization of the books published.

Upon their understanding and upon informing them of the plan, and there being no objection, I will inform you of their support and begin the development of the program and the recruitment of faculty for the new school year. May the Lord bless the plans and the initiation of the program. I will consider being there for the opening the Epiphany opening service.

Rev. Robert Rahn

CLIHM Program Director

From: Matthew Heise

To: Robert Rahn

Cc: Jeff Rahn

Subject: RE: Intake for CLIHM 2017

This sounds like it will give us time, Bob. I agree. I have included pictures in my PowerPoint of Peter's work in the regions, plus the difficulties of working there now (famine, tribal conflict). Despite all of this, the Lord is working there mightily. The promise of South Sudan is great. The numbers of interested students is a testament to that, as well as Peter's reports from the field. It is not a time to give up on them, so I will push for continuing the stipends until the end of the year (don't know if that will fly, but I'll try!). Plus, I will inform them that Collver has regular correspondence with Peter now (through Storckson). About three or four letters concerning ILC membership. And lastly, we are quite hopeful that the UN property rental will be turned over to the ELCSS/S before the end of the year. Wilson is yesterday's news, as Peter's dinner with government officials and TV interviews show. Wilson has no access to these folks.

JUNE 15

(From the June 2017 “Word at Work” newsletter:)

French Theology Books Energize African, Haitian Pastors

by Jennifer Bagnall

Take a look in any American pastor’s study and you’re likely to see books—shelves overflowing, even piles of books on the floor. But in poverty-stricken areas of the world like Africa and Haiti, many pastors consider themselves fortunate if they have even one or two theological books written in a language they can read and understand.

Now, through the faithful support of countless LHF supporters, French-speaking Lutheran pastors and seminarians throughout West Africa and Haiti will have three new volumes to help them become better shepherds of their people. Thousands of copies of the French *Book of Concord*, a three-volume set of *Dogmatics* and *A Manual of Christian Doctrine* are on their way to the Lutheran Center for Theological Studies (CLET) in Togo, where more than 30 students are expected this fall. “Every pastor in the LCMS knows the importance of studying a dogmatics (study of doctrine, or teachings) text,” said Rev. Jacob Gaugert, an LCMS theological instructor at CLET. “These texts help pastors and evangelists with their tasks of teaching the faithful.”

“Our pastors have the benefit of standing on the shoulders of theological giants,” agreed Rev. Matthew Heise, LHF executive director. “But for pastors and seminarians around the world who don’t have our good theological books, written in a language they can understand, they’re left to answer the hard questions on their own.”

Yet for seminary students coming to CLET from countries like Benin and the Republic of Congo, where finding clean water and food must take priority, books are an impossible luxury. “Many of our students will not be paid at all when they go back to the parish to be ordained,” Rev. Gaugert said. “They will have to work their own fields or another job alongside their pastoral duties to survive.”

The same is true in French-speaking Haiti, where Rev. Eliona Bernard, president of Concordia Theological Seminary of Haiti, is greatly anticipating their shipment of theological books.

“It is not a secret, but it is a shame that Haiti is the poorest country in the western hemisphere,” Rev. Bernard shared. Most Haitian Lutheran churches are not able to provide stipends for their pastors, who must grow gardens for their families’ food. “We need these books because they are the main ones we use in Bible study, in our seminary and for training church leaders,” Rev. Bernard said. “Before, our pastors did not have these books, but with the new ones LHF is sending, each pastor will have one for his personal study, and we will have some

available at the seminary.”

The Lutheran Church in Haiti has already seen the benefit of having simpler books like LHF’s French *Small Catechism* available for their members. “One of the challenges of the Lutheran Church in Haiti is infant baptism. It takes time for someone who grows up in the Baptist Church or Church of God to accept infant baptism,” he explained. “But fortunately we have an important document to face this challenge: the *Small Catechism*. We give thanks to God that most of our members now have a copy of this book that we love so much and is so easy to understand.”

Planning a short-term mission trip to Haiti or other regions soon? Bring along LHF books to give away!

Lost and Found in a Kazakhstan Marketplace

by Rev. Matthew Heise

He was always mocked because he was the shortest in his class. He felt like he was a nobody and that if there was a God, why would He care about him? So, he decided to kill himself. Nazer went for one last walk around his hometown market in Kazakhstan, where he liked to visit the fortune tellers.

But for some reason, today he couldn’t see the fortune tellers. Instead, he was drawn to a woman reading a book. As he engaged the woman in conversation, he realized that she was reading a book of great worth. It was God’s Holy Word!

Having been touched by the Word, he decided that maybe he wouldn’t kill himself that day after all. And as he looked around, he now saw that all the fortune tellers had been there the whole time! Apparently the Lord had blinded him to their presence. That day, the Holy Spirit planted the seeds of faith in Nazer, and he became a believer in the Living Word, Jesus Christ.

As is often the case among those whom the Lord has rescued from the depths of despair, Nazer just had to share that message of hope with others who were as lost as he had been. After the initial contacts of evangelism, though, how best to explain the Christian faith?

Nazer has found the answer in LHF’s Kazakh translation of Martin Luther’s *Small Catechism*, which continues to be the best explanation of our common Christian faith. Now, people from this overwhelmingly Muslim country in Central Asia can learn more about their Savior, who rescued and redeemed them, lost and condemned creatures.

Through your faithful support, LHF will soon publish *A Child’s Garden of Bible Stories* so that Kazakh children, as well as adults, will be able to hear the Good News in a language they can read and understand. Thank you for bringing that life-giving Word to God’s people, the Kazakhs!

JUNE 17

Good morning, everyone,

Thank you to all, especially Jen Bagnall, Marlene Herzog, Jeff Rahn, and Anna Bagnall, for the work on the National LWML grant proposal—“Lutheran Children’s Books for Families Worldwide”—\$100,000. I am pleased to announce that we have been blessed to receive the grant from the LWML! We will send thanks to them for choosing our grant proposal, but many thanks to all of you for your hard work on this! Our Lord will be praised through these resources to children worldwide, that they may come to know their Savior, Jesus Christ our Lord! Soli Deo Gloria!!!

In Christ,

The Rev. Matthew W. Heise

From: Larry Rockemann

Subject: RE: National LWML grant

Working alongside of our executive director and our founder, I was privileged to represent LHF at the LWML Convention. I was heartened greatly to hear from so many attendees that they not only knew of LHF but supported our mission as well. The good word about our work is getting out! Thanks be to God! What great things the Lord will continue doing through the Bible-based, Christ-centered, Reformation-driven books we are able to produce through their generosity. What a blessing to so many people in so many more languages! Thanks be to God!

JUNE 29

From: Eliona Bernard

To: Jeff Rahn

Subject: Re: Shipment of French Books to Haiti

Dear Jeff Rahn:

Grace to you and peace from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! It is really important to me to send you this to thank you very so much for your contribution to the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Haiti. Many years ago, we had faced challenges to provide Lutheran books to our seminary students, pastors, and leaders of the church. Most [of] the district presidents attend seminary in USA, [they] speak English and all the books they have are in English.

Through the effort of dear sister Lil, who is a good fighter in this regard, we had some Lutheran books in French, we are so thankful to her. Now, 100 new *Books of Concord*, it makes the difference.

On behalf of the pastors, leaders, and lay pastors, I thank you for taking

this need into consideration. We have no need for Creole *Small Catechism* but great need for both the French *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* and *God's No and God's Yes*. I will check with Casco Shipping to know how often they ship to Haiti. This past Sunday the 15 new pastors were ordained and sent back to the field. We will not meet at Leogane for this summer but each district will have weeks of training with the local pastors and leaders. Here at Cap-Haitian we will have a session in August. Thank you again for supporting our church by supplying it with solid and important stuffs and may God bless you.

JULY 7

LHF negotiated the purchase of a vehicle for distribution purposes in Ethiopia. May the Lord bless the use of this vehicle for the furthering of His Kingdom through the distribution of books and resources across Ethiopia.”

JULY 18

From: Bonar Lumbantobing
Subject: Catechism in Persecution
To: Ted NaThalang

Dear Rev. Ted,

Perhaps you have heard few months ago, that there are several church buildings from some Protestant church bodies and Catholic churches burned by intolerant groups in the Singkil area of Aceh Province in Indonesia. One of the Lutheran churches whose churches were burnt is Pakpak-Dairi Protestant Church (GKPPD). Seven congregations of GKPPD in that region are not allowed to build their churches again, so they have to worship outside the settlement as in the fields or elsewhere. May I ask for your help to enable us to make a visit to those congregations and render the book Luther's *Small Catechism with Explanation* and *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* free of charge to this afflicted congregation? We will hold a discussion entitled “Catechism in Persecution” at the end of August, in response to their request for ‘traumatic healing.’ For your help and understanding we thank you very much.

Bless regards,

Bonar H. Lumbantobing
North Sumatra, Indonesia

AUGUST 7

Dr. Anssi Simojoki was a blessing from the Lord and his work with LHF benefited many across the globe. I recognized his birthday by sending him an e-birthday greeting to which he responded:

Dear Rahns in Michigan, thanks for your courtesy and friendship! I look forward to accomplishing a number of my projects in translation, writing, and in the service of the Mission Diocese. I thank God for you; it was your trust and friendship that made in my life a huge difference for the better. It is wonderful to be able to continue together on this path. In Christ, Anssi

AUGUST 8

From: Ted Na Thalang

To: Jen Bagnall; Jeff Rahn; Matthew Heise; Larry Rockemann; Robert Rahn

Subject: Re: *Book of Concord* Work

Hi Jen,

Here is latest info on *Book of Concord* projects in Southeast Asia.

1) Vietnamese—I am working with Bangkok team closely on the final layout, and some final editing, hope to have it ready for printing by the end of August. Will have two volumes. I hope to have at least one volume done for October conference for sponsor to see.

2) Thai—It looks like it will be for 2018. There is so much work to do yet.

3) Khmer—Compiling the documents into the *Book of Concord*, and translating the introduction, and notes. Hope to have it ready for printing in September, looking at November publishing.

4) Korean—The translation is done, being edited now. I hope to have some text for layout soon. Looking publish either in November or early 2018. Prof. Kim is so busy with his works. They are going through a big crisis.

5) Indonesia Bahasa—Final editing, being proofread by some theologians. Hope to have it published and introduce in November.

6) Hmong—Sorry, the Luther's *Small Catechism* is not yet finished. Not thinking about *Book of Concord* right now.

7) No Lao or Myanmar.

8) Chinese, traditional—Is going through final editing, hope to have it for printing by October.

9) Chinese, simplified—Is going through final editing too, will be done in conjunction with the traditional. Hope to print either late 2017, or early 2018.

The *Book of Concord* is the toughest and biggest project we have. It takes a lot of work and great people to have it done well. This is where I would say to myself, "What was I thinking?!" It is by the grace of God that we have these people working on them. And there will be some mistakes that some people will attack us for. Please pray for the people who are doing these projects.

Another big project is *God's Word for You*. I am not sure what is going on with the illustrator. They have not been keeping up with their promise. They should send me the final line drawing by now but don't have it yet. I hope to be over

there in September to follow up with these projects. Otherwise, it is hard to have them done on time. Other projects basically will be reprints, like Luther's *Small Catechism*, *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories*, *Augsburg Confession*, *Summary of Christian Doctrine*, Luther's *Small Catechism* enchiridion, Luther's *Small Catechism* workbooks, *Large Catechism*, etc. in many languages in Asia and Africa.

AUGUST 9

From: Richard Ondicho

To: Robert Rahn

Subject: Re: Advancements

Dear Rev. Dr. Rahn,

Greetings from Helsinki in the mighty name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. I hope that you have enjoyed your summer. Here in Finland it rained all through and so we had a cold summer with a lot of showers. However, we have enjoyed meeting people here and there. I want to share with you the fact that I am very thankful for your support. The catechisms are precious as gold. I had put them into use immediately since we had nothing here, so you supported us at the right time. Here is an overview of what I have been doing here in the urban ministry. I finally baptized those other Muslims into Christian faith and now have a total of 51 new Christians. I have only been using the Bible and the catechism that you sent me. The crosses are special gifts for those baptized. I gave the crosses during the Divine Service and Anssi Simojoki happened to come there that day, so it was a big thing.

I plan to continue teaching the new group of ten Muslims from North Africa and Iraq, Bangladesh, etc. Now I miss Farsi Bibles and catechisms. Earlier on Matthew Heise had promised to help with Farsi catechisms and now we have about six of them in our church and want to take care of them. The work continues and I have even visited the train station to talk to those immigrants hanging around there. I must work while it is day for the night cometh when no man shall work. Thanks for your gracious support to me and to the work of the Lord with the weak. God's blessings.

Rev. Richard Ondicho Otiso

Pastor & Missionary for Immigrants

English Speaking Congregation

AUGUST 15

Rev. Jacob Gaugert is stationed in Burkina Faso but travels around the area as a theological instructor and works closely with CLET in Togo. In speaking with Rev. Gaugert, I learned of the difficulties connected with work in Africa. Prospective seminary students need to be trained to fill out proper forms for sem-

inary enrollment for the purpose of providing housing, health care, and church endorsement. It is difficult to impress on them the importance of submitting the proper forms. Of 30 expected students at CLET, only five filed proper papers. Many prospective students assume they will be accepted regardless. The staff is determined that, without proper credentials, prospective students who have failed to submit all forms will be sent home to wait two years before they can attend.

“To answer the hard theological questions, students need good theological books written in a language they can understand. If they are not available, the students are left to answer the hard questions on their own,” said Rev. Heise. Yet for seminary students coming from countries like Benin and the Democratic Republic of Congo, where finding clean water and food must take priority, books are often an impossible luxury.

While in the U.S., Rev. Gaugert drove to the LHF headquarters in a Penske rental truck to load up pallets of French volumes, including the *Book of Concord*, a three-volume set of *Dogmatics*, and *A Manual of Christian Doctrine* which were to be delivered to his dad’s farm shed in Sullivan, Wisconsin to await shipment to West Africa. However, he had come from Fort Wayne, and was already hauling a great number of books donated from pastor’s libraries. The truck could not accommodate the thousands of volumes in boxes on nine pallets, each weighing over 1,000 pounds. He instead arranged to ship them to Wisconsin with help from LCMS Missions.

In addition to books on the truck, there were bells. Muslims are a minority, but according to Rev. Gaugert, “Every time there is one Muslim, the Saudis come with money to build a mosque,” and understandably, he grew tired of the morning, noon, and night prayer calls from muezzins in minarets. The bells would be used to announce church services and underscore Christianity’s presence in Africa.

In French-speaking Haiti, Rev. Eliona Bernard, president of the seminary, looked forward to their shipment of theological books from LHF. “We need these books because they are the main ones we use in Bible study, in our seminary for training church leaders,” Rev. Bernard said. “Before, our pastors did not have these books, but with the new ones LHF is sending, each pastor will have one for his personal study, and we will have some available at the seminary.”

AUGUST 18

From time to time, we receive reports from the field which show the desperate situations in which some of our translators work. Dr. Nelson Unwene is a retired president of the Lutheran Church in Nigeria and he and his family work with LHF in the Efik language.

From: Nelson Unwene

To: Jeff Rahn

Cc: Udeme Unwene; Nsima Unwene

Dear Brother Jeff,

Welcome back from your deserved vacation. I am very thankful to God and to you for coming to my aid at a time like this! Even your good self will join in my praise to our heavenly Father for causing the bank here to act immediately upon my approach to them on Monday 7th August 2017. They granted me the right to withdraw \$2,100 at the rate of N315 for \$1. We could not access our mail before the receipt of this money because we were unable to purchase the common things like recharging our modem for internet connectivity, cartridge, and printing papers.

Things have really been hard in Nigeria at this time! The cost of recharging our modem for internet services has gone up from N5,500 (\$407) to N8,500 (\$628). The cost of office materials such as printing ink/cartridge, and printing papers have all gone up. We very rarely have electricity supply for use in our home. The price of diesel (fuel) for the running of our generator has gone up from N4,800 (\$355) to N6,000 (\$444). I and my son, Nsima, are striving to get the translated copies of the *Apology* distributed—also to all the congregations in the rural villages. This has been a hard work especially during this rainy season. We are therefore running into higher cost in the distribution of the *Apology*. This has been so because my 25-year-old car has completely broken apart. So, we hire a taxi every time we go out for distribution. We are doing this with the desire that we may create space in our congested room for the expected publication of the *Smalcald Articles*. Of course, I am still expecting your favor of getting the copyright permit for us, which will allow me to call on our printer to copy my work for pagination, costing, and possible printing upon your approval. I am going over the entire work again and hope to complete this review at the end of the month.

I was at the University of Uyo Teaching Hospital last Thursday and Friday. I was asked to pay for a new pair of eyeglasses which, until you sent the wire, I was not able to because I ran out of money.

Once again, thank you for your prayers and every support to me, which, above all else, keeps me in my continual theological study even as I translate the Lutheran confessions!

In Christ,
Nelson U.

AUGUST 19

Dear brothers, I greet you from St. Petersburg. I want to share some latest news.

1. In the church of St. Anne (in the heart of St. Petersburg) for the past six months we have been actively engaged in missionary activities using the books of the Lutheran Heritage Foundation. We made packages with the logo of the church and invested in the packages some books and booklets of the Foundation. Several times a month we conduct excursions around the church, and in the end, we give all such packages. In a month we distribute about 500 similar packages, that is about 2,000 units of printed products! Until January 2017, the parish of St. Anne consisted of four people. From January 2017 to August 2017: 13 people were confirmed; regularly in the Sunday mass there are 20-40 people; For the course “Fundamentals of the Christian Faith” (confirmation training), which will begin in September 2017, 77 people have already signed up (90 are planned). All students of the course will receive a set of spiritual literature issued by the Foundation. These are results that are hard to believe. In many ways they were achieved through the proper use of literature.

2. In addition, in the church of St. Anna laid out the entire range of books of the Foundation, which can be obtained for any donation. All collected money goes to the restoration of the church of St. Anne. Students regularly come for books from the Orthodox Academy, Christians of other denominations, and people who just became interested in Christianity.

3. In July of this year, we made a missionary trip to Siberia. The Foundation's books were delivered to the parishes of Omsk and Yoshkar-Ola.

4. From September, confirmation classes will begin in many parishes in St. Petersburg and its environs. We began distributing sets of literature to churches, so that students received them as a gift.

5. The Theological Confirmation Camp for Youth was held at the Theological Institute. All students received a gift of the Foundation's literature. Thanks be to God for His work in Russia!

Besides the news, I have a suggestion. The last few months there has been a great interest in Lutheranism from people not ecclesiastical. Very popular are small books, especially the *Small Catechism* (a brochure). In the same way: *On the Freedom of a Christian*, *Good News About Jesus*, *Augsburg Confession Today*, books from the Our Response series. Is it possible to publish in the near future several brochures with a large circulation (5,000-10,000 copies)? Particularly interested in the *Small Catechism* of Martin Luther.

God's blessings!

Evgeny Raskatov

AUGUST 24

An article that appeared in the LCMS - Michigan District news:

Continuing What Luther Began: Michigan Mission Celebrates 25 Years of Worldwide Lutheran Translation

by Jennifer Bagnall

Five hundred years ago, many Christians despaired of their eternal salvation. How would they ever know whether they'd done enough good works to get them into heaven? They couldn't find reassurance in the Bible because it was written in Latin, a language few of them could read. The Church was in need of a Reformation!

Today, people all over the world are still in need of a Reformation, and a Michigan District mission organization is taking on the challenge.

On November 10, the Lutheran Heritage Foundation in Macomb celebrates 25 years of translating and publishing Lutheran books that clearly explain how Jesus died that all may be saved. LHF has published nearly 900 titles—including Martin Luther's *Small Catechism* and the *Book of Concord*—in 96 different languages. The books are given free of charge to churches and missionaries in more than 80 countries.

"You might think that, since Martin Luther led the Reformation five centuries ago, the whole world would already know the basics of the Christian faith," said Rev. Matthew Heise, LHF executive director. "But this simply isn't the case. All over the world, people are living in spiritual darkness and wrestling with the same questions Luther and his contemporaries did."

Overcoming the Language Barrier

In most of the world, few if any Lutheran materials are available in the languages of the people. Arabic-outreach ministries such as Disciples of the Way and People of the Book Lutheran Outreach (POBLO) in Michigan have come to rely on the books LHF has translated, including the Arabic *Small Catechism*, to overcome language barriers to sharing the Gospel. Now, through the support of a mission grant provided by the LWML of the Michigan District, LHF has partnered with Lutheran Hour Ministries to translate and publish a new Arabic book especially for God's littlest ones: *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories*.

One person putting the Bible storybook to good use is Joy Markus, a Muslim convert and POBLO teacher. "[This book arrived] right on time, when I had just started student ministry in Dearborn," Joy said. Joy meets in homes with Muslim youth who are curious about the Christian faith. They gather to read their Arabic Bible storybooks and then enjoy some ice cream.

"I like this book, because it's easy to understand," said Ali, one of her students.

Ali's words would have pleased Martin Luther.

"Five hundred years ago, Luther translated the Latin Bible into German, so that all his people could read and understand God's Word," explained Heise. "Today, LHF is continuing what Luther began: translating the good books of our Lutheran faith, so that people in all corners of the world can know that Jesus has opened the doors of heaven for them, too."

AUGUST 24

Volunteers gathered at the LHF office to catalog and box 18 cartons of books that were destined for Nairobi, Kenya, where Rev. James May was establishing the Lutheran School of Theology. Earlier, I had donated my entire theological library to be housed in the school's LHF library and translation center. The container to carry the books was packed in Houston. A weekend hurricane struck and resulted in historic flooding. Consequently, the shipment was delayed for several weeks until Houston recovered. LHF continues to collect pastors' libraries to satisfy the demand for materials in Africa and around the world.

AUGUST 27

A three-fold celebration took place in Missoula, Montana on the 50th anniversary of Messiah Lutheran, a church I helped establish. The congregation thrived and grew to 325 souls during my seven-and-a-half-year tenure from 1968-1975. Preaching on John 8:31-36, my theme was "It's All About Truth." I noted the truth espoused during the Reformation 500 years ago and the truth printed by the LHF in 105 languages as the organization celebrates its 25th anniversary. I urged the congregation to continue in this truth. My son Jeff and grandson Carter also attended the celebration. Jeff, a native Montanan who was baptized and attended Sunday school at Messiah, revisited where he was born and lived in his early years.

AUGUST 30

From: Nicholas Salifu

To: Jeff Rahn

Subject: Ghana projects update

Dear Jeff,

Greetings in Jesus' name. All is going on well in all the four projects. *Lutheranism 101* translation will be completed by end of September. *Apology* work is being checked for accuracy and clarity. Bimoba Luther's *Small Catechism* is also almost completed. Komba's *Smalcald Articles* is steadily going on well.

Good news! Kusaal *Lutheranism 101*, which was being printed in Ghana (Tamale) by the Ghana Institute of Linguistics Literacy and Bible Translation has

been received. It was dedicated on August 27, 2017 during the National Youth Convention which took place in Bawku. Delegates from most of the congregations in Ghana were in attendance. More than 200 copies of the 300 copies printed were given out to people who can read Kusaal. What a wonderful ceremony as the book talks about “It is all about Jesus” and the Reformation theme also being the same. The Lord is good to us all the time. *Lutheranism 101* is a book that seems to be next to Luther’s *Small Catechism* for every Lutheran to read. The Lord richly bless LHF for the wonderful work you are doing for the Lord’s people in the world.

SEPTEMBER 6

The LHF board met and considered several items, chief of which was support for the Sudan seminary (CLIHM). When troubles erupted because of the errant bishop, Wilson Noah Rule, the Board of Directors asked that the new seminary class be delayed for one year. When Bishop Peter Anibati demonstrated the kind of leadership the board was looking for, they authorized the seminary program to reconvene in January 2018 with 30 new students. The incoming class would include five Anglican pastors who desired to serve in the Lutheran Church. A number of these pastors had attended a seminar on Luther’s *Small Catechism* and discussions concerning the Anglican church’s desire to become part of the ELCSS/S. CLIHM was one of the largest international seminaries in operation at the time and even more students would be interested in attending should the budget permit them. LHF hoped that ELCSS/S’s request for fellowship with the LCMS might draw financial support from the synod.

Dr. Bernie and Dr. Elly Lutz would serve as instructors for the first three weeks of operation and as I had for the past 20 years, I would recruit the needed faculty for the remainder of the year.

SEPTEMBER 14

This message from Bishop Peter Anibati details threats to the Lutheran ministry in South Sudan. Please pray for the persecuted church.

Dear Rev. Matthew,

I have prayer request: Last Sunday prayers were disrupted in Yambio church because fighting broke out between one notorious rebel commander and the government soldiers. Just after the first reading was announced, serious shooting began. This rebel commander who has been terrorizing the people was killed in the fighting and one of his soldiers was [shot] dead at the compound of the Yambio church. We were instructed by the army to lie down inside the church as the fighting was going on. It lasted for about 30 minutes and we were ordered to evacuate

the church building. No one from the church members was wounded or killed. Now relative calm has returned to Yambio. The government has indicated that this fighting was intended to kill this particular rebel leader because he has been behind the unknown gunmen who have been killing many innocent people in the area. I had candidates to be confirmed that Sunday but it was not possible so I have rescheduled for this coming Sunday. Please keep us in your prayers as usual.

SEPTEMBER 20

Rev. Heise received pictures after students in the confirmation class of Mikhail Ivanov, a former student of his in St. Petersburg, had finished checking the accuracy and layout of the Russian Bible with the CPH Study Bible notes, maps, and helps. LHF had previously published just the notes and helps, but these books placed them next to the Bible text, making it more convenient for readers. The printing of these Bibles marked the completion of another major Russian project.

SEPTEMBER 27

Rev. Hugo Gevers from Leipzig, Germany visited the LHF World Mission Center to discuss his work reaching out to the many Iranians and Afghans immigrating to Germany since the year 2000. Among the immigrants are those who want to use the church as the means to retain their immigrant status. Gevers pointed out that the church does not get to choose between the good guys and the bad guys. He explained how he interacts with the immigrants and indicated that the relationship must be eye to eye. He said, “We are different, but ‘we are all God’s children’ is one concept. Another is that we walk hand in hand with them, but the correct relationship is under the cross, below the cross, and always pointing to the cross. Under the cross all have a place.”

In 2006, the government dispersed Iranians and Hugo said his mission was to try and find these groups to minister to them. By 2015, the work changed when Leipzig became the hub. On Christmas of 2015, Gevers’ group distributed a tract about the way of salvation. Amazingly, Muslims helped distribute the tract, and as they did, they insisted that people read it.

At the time, we had about 2,000 copies of the *Small Catechism* in Leipzig. For many American Lutherans, symbols like the cross and Luther’s seal are common sights on Lutheran books. However, in other parts of the world, either of those symbols would be culturally offensive, particularly to Muslims. The cover of these *Small Catechism* copies depicts the parable of the sower and the seed. This parable and its depiction illustrates what the book produces. That is what makes the cover unique and usable in the effort to reach Muslims.

Gevers’ church only had access to a small room in which to conduct catechism classes and they had to split the group to allow everyone interested to attend ses-

sions. Gevers worked with groups an hour at a time from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.—not enough time to form personal relationships. These people wanted freedom and they wanted to be baptized but needed time to be introduced to Lutheranism. Gevers insisted on teaching; he pointed out that many churches baptized but failed to teach. The average Muslim knows little about the teachings of Islam, and when they learn the principles of their faith, most consider it nonsense.

These immigrants came because they were tired of Sharia Law. The poorest of the poor never make it. Gevers said that President Angela Merkel’s open border policy was influenced by the images of a child dying on a beach and 30 people suffocating in a van. Is there a limit to receiving immigrants? Gevers says there may be, but it is a problem for politicians. There may have to be a limit, but human rights of immigrants can’t be ignored. “In Christ’s Great Commission there is no limit. Once they are here, the Gospel needs to be given,” Gevers said. “Now we are establishing meals together so that fellowship can be extended, and people can get to know one another.” It is important that teachers can engage with the Muslim mindset and have the capacity to accept ex-Muslims into their midst.

In 2017, Gevers shifted his focus to other towns. Some groups had to be served by other denominations, but LHF materials, like the Farsi catechism, were used. These people needed a foundation in Scripture. Some people don’t believe that Jesus saves. They treat Jesus as a glorified aspirin tablet or a cosmic electric fan—use Him only when needed.

SEPTEMBER 29

Years after graduating in 1954, I humbly received the Distinguished Alumni Award from Concordia University, St. Paul, Minnesota. During a special banquet as part of the homecoming celebration, Director of Alumni Relations Rhonda Palmersheim bestowed the honor with a few words: “I would like to formally congratulate you on being awarded this award for 2017. Your faithful and exceptional service to your profession, your community, your family, and Concordia is very evident and appreciated.”

Dr. Bernie Lutz, my schoolmate (class of ’52), was chosen to introduce me at the banquet. “Robert has been a faithful servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. He has served God and His people faithfully—whether it was throwing paint on houses, translating the Word, pastoring congregations, starting new ones, starting new church bodies in Africa, authoring books, or founding the Lutheran Heritage Foundation. He has traveled God’s world endlessly, often day and night, connecting the lost with the Good News about Jesus.”

OCTOBER 1

From the September/October 2017 “Word at Work” newsletter:

LHF Founder Looks Back at 25 Years in Mission

“I’m here to raise a banner for the Lord, and I’m looking for people who will stand with us on the truth of Scripture.”

“It’s not something I talk about very much, but as I look back on it, it’s clear that the Lord had a path arranged for the Lutheran Heritage Foundation from the time I went to my first call as a Lutheran pastor,” recalled Rev. Robert Rahn, who together with a Board of Directors headed by Rev. Robert Preus, founded LHF on Nov. 10, 1992.

It was a time of amazing opportunity. The atheistic Soviet Union had collapsed and for the first time in 70 years, doors were open to sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ with people living behind the Iron Curtain. Rev. Rahn seized the opportunity by traveling to Moscow, where he and a few friends distributed Bibles and tracts in Red Square – an act that would have been forbidden just a year earlier. “It was Reformation Day 1992, and we decided to test the degree of religious freedom in Russia,” he said. “It was a smooth operation. What was most significant was that after the literature was distributed, we checked every garbage can in the Red Square area, and we didn’t find a single Bible or discarded tract. Everything disappeared!”

During his time in Russia, Rev. Rahn saw a hurdle to telling the people about Jesus: there was very little Lutheran literature available in the language of the people. So, from the basement of his home, Rev. Rahn started LHF, a mission organization that 25 years later would be translating and publishing confessional Lutheran literature for people in more than 80 countries and 100 languages. Though the organization has gone through many changes throughout its growth, one thing has never changed: the commitment to solidly confessional Lutheran teachings, most simply put forth in Luther’s *Small Catechism*.

“When the Baptists and Pentecostals and the Russian Orthodox come to us and ask, ‘Can we have this book,’ well, we’ve never seen anything like this!” Rev. Rahn exclaimed. “And why shouldn’t they want it? It’s the best tool available for explaining Scripture and the faith that is ours. It’s certainly worthy of being shared not just in Luther’s Germany or our Lutheran churches in the United States, but everywhere, for all people.”

As he has stepped back from the daily leadership of LHF activities, Rev. Rahn expressed confidence in Rev. Matthew Heise, who has been LHF’s executive director since 2014. “Matt has brought a wealth of mission experience and connections to the mission, and this bodes well for the future,” Rev. Rahn said. “My vision for the next 25 years is for LHF to be at work in all areas of the world

where the Truth needs to be taught and demonstrated. There's a hunger for the understanding of Scripture, and we have the materials that can fill that gap. We're not interested in just feeding somebody's stomach, but to feed people's souls with the Word of God."

This newsletter also featured articles by international pastors and missionaries commending the work of LHF. Countries mentioned included South Sudan, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Russia, Ghana, Mozambique, Nigeria, several Southeast Asian countries, Vietnam, Mongolia, Dominican Republic, Peru, and Denmark. Visit the website to read each article from Volume 24 Number 5, September-October 2017 edition.

LHF: Looking to the Next 25 Years - Rev. Matthew Heise

Who would have guessed what the Holy Spirit had in mind? In the spring of 1994, Rev. Robert Rahn was guest preacher at Guardian Lutheran Church in Dearborn, Michigan, where the people were bidding a fond farewell to one of their members about to become a missionary in Russia—Matthew Heise. To Rev. Heise, now executive director of the Lutheran Heritage Foundation, this chance meeting was just one more example of God's plan he's witnessed in all his mission work. "This is nothing we're putting together," he said. "God is way ahead of us!"

After more than a decade as an LCMS missionary in Russia, Rev. Heise now uses his experiences in Eurasia to lead LHF in serving other missionaries and church bodies. "I saw firsthand people reading LHF's materials, such as Luther's *Small Catechism* and the *Book of Concord*, and it made a change in them," Rev. Heise said.

As LHF continues its work of translating and publishing books like the catechism, Rev. Heise sees a need for even more basic materials. "Sometimes missionaries are going to people where there is no established Lutheran church, or even a Christian church! We need to be able to give them some basic, easy-to-read pieces for people who are beginning to investigate the faith."

In looking to LHF's next 25 years, Rev. Heise said he's most excited about LHF's new work beginning in Asia and Africa. "The idea of Christianity moving to the southern hemisphere really is true," he said. "There's an explosion of faith in those areas. For example, there's a chance we might be able to get LHF's books into Chinese bookstores. Can you imagine? That would be huge! Where the Holy Spirit leads, LHF will go."

OCTOBER 14

Dear Matt,

Greetings from Canada! Bishop Torkild Masvie from Norway is doing mis-

sion work in Israel. Dr. Masaki will be joining Bishop Masvie in Israel in December. They will be meeting some Russian Jews. We are wondering if you have any copies of the *Book of Concord* in Russian. If you have it in the United States, perhaps you can send two copies to Dr. Masaki at the Fort Wayne seminary. If you only have copies in Europe, perhaps you could arrange for your distributor to send it to Bishop Masvie in Norway. I will be getting Dr. Masaki a couple copies of the *Book of Concord* in English. I look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you,

Abc3+

Rev. Albert B. Collver, PhD

Executive Secretary, International Lutheran Council (ILC)

OCTOBER 15

From: Gary Schulte

To: Jeff Rahn; James May

Subject: Burundi

Dear Jeff and James,

Greetings in Christ from Ouagadougou! I hope all is well with both of you and your families. I just wanted to give you both a quick heads up. Jacob Gaugert, Ryan McDermott, my wife, and I recently visited the Lutheran Church of Burundi and we had a long discussion during our meeting with the church council about their desire to have more Lutheran materials in their local languages. We mentioned to President Fidèle Mbundi and the council that they could take up contact with LHF by contacting either one of you. I hope that is ok.

Thanks and God bless!

Rev. Gary Schulte

Area Director for West and Central Africa

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

Office of International Mission

OCTOBER 25

From: Albert Tshikumbi

Subject: Book Request

Hello, my name is Albert Bakat. I am a member of Resurrection Lutheran Church in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and I am currently enrolled in the EIIT (Ethnic Immigrant Institute of Theology) program in St. Louis. I am a Congolese immigrant, and I used your materials several years ago to help me in my studies and with our other immigrants in Sioux Falls. I have a request from connections in Lubumbashi, Congo who very much want to know more about Lutherans. The LCMS does not have much of a presence in this area. Would it be possible to send

the following materials there so they could read them? They are all in Swahili.

1. *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories*—as many as possible; 2. *Book of Concord*—five copies; 3. *Small Catechism*—30 copies (whichever edition you have available); 4. *Church Leadership*—five copies; 5. *Hymnal*—ten copies; 6. *Stories from the Bible*—as many as possible. I know this is a lot, but these people are hungry to be Lutheran and I have nothing to give them. There are no missionaries in the area I can point them to, so I am trying my best from South Dakota.

In Christ,
Albert Bakat

This is another example of the kind of requests LHF receives. LHF makes every effort to fulfill all requests for materials. If we do not currently have copies, we reply that we will contact them when a book, tract, or other publication is reprinted and available. The email was sent to Rev. James May in Nairobi to ship the books from there or send them with someone going to the Congo.

OCTOBER 31

On Reformation, LHF received word that the Tshangla catechism was ready for use in Bhutan.

From: Lhatru Wangchuk
To: Matthew Heise

Dear Dr. Matthew,

Greetings from Bhutan Lutheran Church. Definitely we will take that next steps for children's Bible. Let's first bring the catechism in Tsanglha in print copy and will send the hard copy or send picture in bulk and single picture. We are thankful to you for taking on the noble project. Once again thank you for the literature support and prayer.

Thanks
Lhatru Wangchuk
Bhutan Lutheran Church

(From the October 2017 "Word at Work" newsletter:)

Reformation Embraced by Thousands in Thailand

by Jennifer Bagnall

Over 2,000 people attended Lutheran Reformation celebrations held this past November in Thailand and Cambodia—a significant event given that these Southeast Asian countries are less than one percent Christian.

Organized by LHF's coordinator for Southeast Asian projects Rev. Ted NaThalang and Rev. Niran Temsakun (another pastor in the Thailand Concordia Lutheran Church), Christians from a wide variety of denominations attended the celebration, which included a mix of educational lectures, exhibits, joyful concerts, and panel discussions.

"The goal of this Reformation celebration was to introduce people in Southeast Asia to Martin Luther and the teachings of the Lutheran faith," Rev. NaThalang said. "Anyone who came was required to do some research first so they could know the basic teachings of the Christian faith." While the event was thoroughly Lutheran in its content (more than 3,000 of LHF's Thai *Small Catechisms* were distributed), top Christian leaders from the local Presbyterian, Baptist, and Evangelical Fellowship of Thailand (EFT) churches were included on the panel discussions, where those leaders focused on what they appreciate about the Reformation.

"Because there are so few Christians in [Buddhist] Thailand, it's good to focus on the beliefs we share," Rev. NaThalang reflected. "These leaders and members of other local Protestant churches volunteered to help prepare for this big event, which had never been done at this level before. The people from other Protestant denominations caught on that the Reformation is their history and heritage, too."

As part of their preparation for the celebration, the Presbyterian, Baptist and EFT leaders studied Luther's teachings. Most exciting of all, before the event began, the three leaders decided to sign a Statement of Faith to adopt the five Lutheran solas (Scripture alone, grace alone, faith alone, Christ alone, glory to God alone) as part of their Christian faith and teaching. "I got goosebumps when I heard this," Rev. NaThalang said. "I think that if Martin Luther could have seen what was going on in Buddhist Thailand, he would have been very happy!"

Enthusiasm for Lutheran doctrine has continued to grow since the event.

In Cambodia, for example, one of the attendees asked to have 50 copies of each LHF Khmer-language book to distribute in a poor province near Vietnam. In Thailand, a Presbyterian church requested dozens of LHF's Thai *Small Catechism* to give their parishioners.

"Luther wanted to make sure God's Word went out to everybody," Rev. NaThalang reflected. "In Southeast Asia, without LHF and the books they have published, this would not happen."

NOVEMBER 9

From: Robert Rahn

To: LHF Board of Directors

Subject: Anniversary

Dear Members of the LHF Board,

Tomorrow on the 25th anniversary of the Lutheran Heritage Foundation, we pause to give thanks to God for His manifold blessings, far beyond anything we had ever imagined when we took to our basement to begin this work in Russia and now a global operation in nearly 100 languages and in over 90 countries. Early in our 25th anniversary year we will be releasing our 1,000th title and reaching the three million mark in total books published. It is only by the grace of God, the LHF board, the willing workers we have, and the tremendous prayer and financial support that carries us along to new heights. To God alone be all praise and glory.

NOVEMBER 10

From: J. N. Cherubin

To: Robert Rahn; Jeff Rahn; Matthew Heise

Subject: Re: FW: Anniversary

Dear Dr. Rahn,

A BIG CONGRATULATIONS to you, Jeff and Pr. Matt. What a joy to know about the 25th year celebration of LHF and it is a blessing to be part of this wonderful ministry. How could have Indian Christians got to know Luther's *Small Catechism with Explanation* in their own mother tongue without LHF? How could have there been a Catechism Revolution in the Indian Lutheran Church? How could have Tamil-speaking Indian Lutherans come to know about *Book of Concord* without LHF? Praise God that He is using LHF to take the pure Gospel to the corners of the earth. May God continue to bless LHF to spread the pure Gospel around the world.

In Christ,

Cherub

NOVEMBER 22

The message below provides another example as to how translation projects are initiated. A year before, Rev. Rahn had met with the Keinbaums at Fort Wayne when Santi started his work on an advanced degree and requested LHF to work in the Catalan language of Barcelona.

From: Santi Keinbaum

To: Matthew Heise

Greetings Matt!

Your presence in my ordination has greatly blessed me and those who were around that day! I'm always thankful to you and for you, for accompanying both Alex and me during such special and historical day for us. What a privilege to count you as a brother in Christ!

Unless God has other plans, it has been agreed that we (family and I) return to Barcelona on May/June of 2019. This is in about 19 months from now. Time goes by quickly and, as always, there is no time to lose.

I am addressing you to propose you to find a time and a place to meet to talk about the translation of the *Small Catechism* into the Catalan language and to formalize a strategy to complete that work before we go back home. I will be in Fort Wayne for the symposia from 1/17 (late evening) until 1/20 (early morning). Maybe, if you're attending, we could meet there. Otherwise, I would be available and pleased to meet with you at the LHF headquarters in Macomb on 1/16 or 1/17.

Matt, I can't hide the great excitement that would bring a partnership with you, in working together to preserve and proclaim our Christian doctrine, and to bless many whose heart language is the Catalan language. I'm looking forward to hearing from you. Many, many thanks for considering!

Peace,

Pastor Santi Keinbaum

NOVEMBER 29

Recruitment efforts continued to bear fruit. The number of LHF's IRPRs grew to 14.

From: Larry Rockemann

Subject: New Missouri IRPR

Brothers,

I am so pleased to share with you this news: we have a new IRPR, a newly retired pastor very familiar with and supportive of LHF. His name is Rev. James (Jim) Dahlke. He and his wife, Claudia, live in Concordia, Missouri. He is serving as a vacancy pastor for St. Matthew Lutheran Church a few miles down the road from Concordia (in Ernestville). I've talked at length with Jim about becoming one of our IRPRs, giving it prayer and conversation with his wife. He informed me last evening that he would very much like to serve LHF. Because of his geographic location, Jim can not only serve the Missouri District, but also eastern Kansas (Concordia is about 60 miles east of Kansas City). He informed me that he would have no problem with traveling to serve in east Kansas as well as working in Missouri.

DECEMBER 1

The following correspondence comes from a pastor in the Gambella, Ethiopia refugee camp where he and 250,000 displaced Sudanese were living after escaping tribal conflict in South Sudan. Observe how outward-focused he is despite the

circumstances. How could we not want to visit and give them the encouraging hope of the Gospel?

From: Simon Gatluak Geng

To: Robert Rahn

Subject: confirm and welcome

Grace and peace from God our Father and our Savior Jesus Christ. It become a joy to the members of ELCSS/S for your coming to Gambella and meet with the South Sudanese refugee displaced by war. I will arrange all the necessary need, meeting with all different groups, church leaders from Upper Nile and Anyuak Christians leaders. I will work out how you can reached to the refugee camp.

We have made the quotation for printing of Nuer *Small Catechism* with pictures for children and sent to LHF but we were waiting for yes. The Nuer *Small Catechism with Explanation* we are face a lot of challenges; the editing was done in the [Mekane Yesus] of Ethiopia church in Gambella, they have people and have Nuer vernacular in their computers and need some amount for their work.

The training that will be conducted by Roberts will help and encourage the Christians how they should remain in their faith in this time of trouble and many hardship. The call of Dr. Lutz for some leaders to attend his training in Addis is part of expansion of the missions of Christ and when they come back they will help and train others.

Translation of LHM (Lutheran Hour Ministries) tract and [*Good News Journal*] will help many Nuer to understand Christ in their own language, now the church in Upper Nile and the people come to the refugee camp are strong and happy to hear people talking about Jesus.

We see more guns are shot and the WORD of our Lord preach tireless without fear and many come turn to our Lord let us rejoice for the soul who come to our church and get confirmed and many children in upper Nile Deanery. Every month 20 to 25 children get baptized, our pastors are working and Christ is using them every day. Pray for our congregations who remain in South Sudan displaced camp and those who are in refugee camp so that they continue trusting God our savior. We ask for prayers for them because they use under trees as their churches.

Let the Lord of peace bless LHF.

I also received a message from Rev. Richard Ondicho Otiso in Finland. I had encouraged him to start an English-speaking congregation in Helsinki, and with help from Carla Niemeier, LHF had supported his efforts. After he was called to a position with the LEAF mission society, we continued to provide books and materials. He was and is a successful missionary and reported on his work in reaching out to Muslims. Readers may recall that when LHF sent a shipment of Sunday school materials, Rev. Otiso indicated his wife wept on the sight of them.

Even growing up as a Lutheran in Finland, she had never seen such beautiful material. What we in the States take for granted is considered a luxury in many parts of the world.

From: Richard Ondicho
To: Robert Rahn
Subject: RE: Mission Update

Dear Dr. Rahn,

Greetings from Finland in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. I wish to share with you the fact that our Mission work has continued with the help of LHF materials. I finally got a connection to Demark where Mr. Knud [member of a Danish mission society] has finally sent me very many of Luther's *Small Catechism* in Arabic and Farsi. I first received 170 books and was able to share with others here in Finland who do not have such books. I shared with LEAF's congregations which have some Arabic and Farsi speaking members.

Today I received two more boxes full of Arabic *Small Catechism* which is timely since I am travelling tomorrow morning to Western Finland where LEAF has got a Bible school. I will be speaking to people attending LEAF's mini-mission course people there tomorrow and Saturday. I already received requests to bring with Luther's *Small Catechism*, so I am taking with me 80 pieces to help those people who don't have [these] blessed books.

I was able to get in contact with LHF Executive Director Matthew Heise while he was in Denmark. It was so nice to have this kind of contacts that you have connected me to. I totally appreciate all that you are doing to make this possible for our Muslim converts. I have baptized over 70 Muslims where LHF has been the provider of all these kinds of translated work. I had requested Rev. Matthew Heise to help me with large print *Lutheran Study Bible* with thumb index but he sent me the ordinary and now sincerely want to implore you to help me get one. I find it challenging when I am teaching here looking for specific Bible readings in hurry and so I will be very grateful to have one.

I am now rushing to a place called Espoo to teach a group of Muslims there because I have groups here and there in Helösinki, Vantaa, and Espoo towns. So at a time I feel that I am getting a burn-out in some way because I have too much work and I am alone in taking care of this work. Although I can't complain but fatigue is there anyway.

Rev. Richard Ondicho Otiso

DECEMBER 4

Rev. Douglas Rutt, director of International Ministries, visited the LHF offices and provided an update on the Lutheran Hour. He expressed appreciation to LHF for the strong connection that has developed between our ministries first with the Spanish *Bible with Small Catechism* and more recently the Arabic catechism connection.

Rev. Rutt explained that when the Lutheran Hour first aired in 1920, it was met with some resistance. Dr. Walter A Maier, Lutheran Hour speaker, first broadcast in October 1930, live from Detroit. Rev. Rutt indicated that the strategy of Lutheran Hour Ministries is to reach the “unreached;” those who have no opportunity to hear the Gospel message. There are 7 billion people in the world and 40% are not able to hear the Word of Christ, according to Lutheran Hour Ministries. Rutt also noted that the current year also marked the 100th anniversary of the Lutheran Laymen’s League, a sponsor of the Lutheran Hour.

DECEMBER 15

(From the December 2017 “Word at Work” newsletter:)

Russian Study Bible Brings New Understanding

by Jennifer Bagnall

Even for the longtime Christian, Scripture can be confusing. The catechism’s question, “What does this mean?” often comes to mind.

Just in time for Christmas, LHF’s many supporters are providing a gift to the people of Russia to help them better understand God’s Word to them: a Bible with study notes. “This is something the people have been asking for a very long time,” said Rev. Leif Camp, missionary to the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ingria in Russia. “That this project has come to fruition is a great thing!”

Previously, the study notes were available in a separate volume, which wasn’t always convenient, but inserting the study notes into the Bible layout was a monumental task. A Lutheran pastor in St. Petersburg, Rev. Mikhail Ivanov, took on the project with the help of his adult instruction class. After working all summer long (and even on Rev. Ivanov’s honeymoon!), the Bible was finished in late October.

“This edition of the Russian Bible opens Scripture for thousands of Russians,” said Rev. Matthew Heise, LHF’s executive director who was on hand for the Bible distribution. “What a wonderful gift to our brothers and sisters who want to deepen their understanding of who Jesus is and what He’s done for them!”

The Gospel Light Shines Through LHF

by Jennifer Bagnall

The Word is a gift for all—and yet many are denied. But perhaps there is a way...

In an Asian country far across the ocean, three young children gather around their computer. Soon their American English conversation teacher will join them in a video conference, where they will improve their English skills by chatting about a variety of topics—including their assigned Bible lesson for the day. The children are part of a Gospel outreach program devised by Rev. Jim R., a retired Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod missionary. The program is part of a mission organization called 316NOW.

Because it's illegal to openly evangelize in this country (country and pastor names omitted so Rev. R.'s work isn't threatened there), having private conversations via the Internet has proven to be an excellent way to introduce unbelieving children to Jesus Christ, as well as to strengthen the faith of young believers and their parents. The classes are led by American volunteers.

"Classes last for about an hour," Rev. R. explained. "After an ice-breaker conversation, we move into the English portion of the lesson. For example, we might practice how, when we ask a question in English, our tone goes up at the end. Or we might practice pronouncing challenging words."

"Then we move on to our Bible lesson for the day," added Rev. Charlie H., another pastor who coordinates the Bible lessons. "If we've been learning about creation, for example, the teachers will ask, 'What do you think about that, how God was able to make our whole world in six 24-hour days?' So it's an opportunity for the children not only to learn the facts, but the Holy Spirit uses those facts to strengthen their faith in the Savior."

Rev. R. travels regularly to Asia to visit the program's adult leaders (all Christians) who oversee the students. He is always sure to include LHF's translations of the *Small Catechism* and *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* to give to the participants. But even more written materials are needed for teaching the classes, and LHF is actively investigating the best ways to provide them.

Could you be a world missionary?

"Last year, we had about 50 kids in nine different cities participating," Rev. R. said. "This year, without recruiting, our enrollment has increased to somewhere between 200 and 300 children. So now we really, really need American volunteers to help teach them!"

Rev. R. emphasized that no special skills are needed to be a 316NOW volunteer. Sunday school teachers or anyone with a heart for sharing the Gospel with children can be effective English conversation teachers. "I like to say that you can be a world missionary from your couch," he said.

As Rev. R. looks to the future, he and his team are excited about mission possibilities opening up in other Asian atheist and Muslim countries where governments don't allow the Gospel to be freely shared.

"It's like an invisible Sunday school," he said. Plans are also underway for that

“invisible Sunday school” to expand. Though the program is currently set up to last two years, Rev. R. would like to see it become a three- or even four-year program. His vision is that the students would study Bible history lessons for the first two years and then expand into the *Small Catechism* for another year or two, using LHF’s Chinese catechism translation as the primary text.

JANUARY 3

Dr. Bernie Lutz, Dr. Elly Lutz, and I embarked on our trip to Africa loaded down with 23 suitcases mostly filled with theological books for seminary students.

JANUARY 6

We arrived in Yambio, South Sudan, minus the 23 suitcases, which arrived four days later by cargo plane from Juba.

JANUARY 7

A report from Rev. Rahn

Two motor bikes, an administration building, and an internet center were dedicated for the Concordia Lutheran Institute for Holy Ministry's use. Although all were practical, the internet center in particular would not only enable the church to have a reliable internet connection, but for a fee (which would fund the church and seminary), the surrounding community could also use the building. The six-hour service following the dedications recognizing the seminary's 25 new students. I preached, and in my sermon, referenced the visit of the Magi. To a church filled mainly with subsistence farmers, I said, "One of the greatest lessons of the Epiphany story is that Jesus came for the poor, lowly, destitute, discouraged, hopeless people of the day. He came for the common people. He came for the sinner. He came for you and me.

"It's been truly breathtaking to make this visit to a church that is on the move," I later reflected. "It's been so refreshing to see so many improvements and additions made to the facilities under Bishop Anibati's very capable leadership this past year. It's a privilege and a joy to work with a church that shows this kind of strength and vitality, this kind of forward-looking zeal and enthusiasm!"

JANUARY 8

Dr. Bernie and Dr. Elly Lutz conducted an orientation session for new seminarians and officially began the instruction process in the back of the Yambio church while they waited for the completion of a seminary classroom that would accommodate 35 students. The first structure built for 15 students was designated as the seminary's library.

JANUARY 9-20

I spent these days visiting Nairobi, Kenya and Ethiopia. In Kenya, I was hosted by Rev. James and Tiina May and visited the site of the Lutheran School of Theology to which I had donated my theological library, which would become part of the new LHF library, translation, and distribution center. Rev. May was building facilities to house and train students and pastors in advanced theology as deeper theological training was and is a great need throughout Africa. A guest house and dormitory had been built and Rev. May's home on the campus was being completed. Other structures would feature solar electricity, garden plots with drip-type irrigation, a well, and a dam.

The trip also included a visit to Gambella, the site of three refugee camps. These camps housed over 300,000 (mostly Nuer) people from South Sudan who had fled because of tribal wars.

We traveled to Bishoftu, about 50 miles from the capital, Addis Ababa. There, we met with Dr. Kebede Yegezu. Dr. Kebede utilizes the Amharic works that are published by LHF. He started a theological school and wanted instructors in Yambio to teach for a week at the Maor Theological College and Lutheran Church of Ethiopia. One floor of the proposed four-story building had been finished. When the entire building is completed it will also house a facility for the church worship.

Rev. Dereje Tilahun, LHF Ethiopian translation coordinator, used the vehicle LHF provided to drive to Owlisso, about two and a half hours south of Addis Ababa, where we conducted a distribution event. The translation team presented before we distributed three volumes in Amharic—the *Book of Concord*, Luther's *Small Catechism*, and *Luther The Reformer*—to the 125 pastors in attendance.

While in Addis we also visited with Rev. Gurhan, our coordinator for Somali translations. LHF, through the efforts of Dr. Anssi Simojoki, brought him to the Lutheran faith for which he had been persecuted by Muslim authorities, and to avoid the persecution, he immigrated to Holland. Gurhan has started several Lutheran churches and travels frequently. As a Somali Lutheran pastor and lecturer with a winsome evangelistic personality, Gurhan is a sought-after seminar speaker on Lutheran outreach to Somali Muslims. He was interviewed by the Minnesota South District as a possible missionary to the large Somali population in Minneapolis.

There was and is great demand for theological education and general assistance for the 24 new churches in serving refugees, many of whom are already Lutheran, including two pastors who were trained at the seminary in Yambio, South Sudan. I was often invited to return. The encouragement LHF provided and still provides for these people was and is far more important than anyone can comprehend. The trip could be summarized by this comment from an Ethiopian pastor: "Christ builds His kingdom, not on our achievements, but on our sacrifices."

JANUARY 25

Rev. Matthew Heise traveled to St. Louis to defend his doctoral dissertation. His doctorate would be conferred at the Concordia Seminary-St. Louis graduation on May 18.

FEBRUARY 14

The Anglican Church of South Sudan continued to express interest in merging with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of South Sudan/Sudan. Rev. Heise sent this message to the bishop of the Anglican church:

Dear Archbishop John Thon, Anglican Church of South Sudan,

It is with great pleasure that we are able to send along several copies of Martin Luther's *Small Catechism* in the language of your people, the Dinkas. We are grateful to Dr. Curtis Peters for making the delivery of this important exposition of the Christian faith and for his teaching. We are also grateful to Pastor Nathaniel Bol for making the translation of the catechism.

The Lutheran Heritage Foundation was founded 25 years ago by Pastor Robert Rahn in the state of Michigan with the express purpose of translating, publishing, distributing, and introducing books that are Bible-based, Christ-centered, and Reformation-driven. We began in Russia after the fall of the Soviet Union, but soon other countries beckoned. Among those countries, in Sudan, an Anglican by the name of Andrew Mbugo Elisa, contacted our founder in 1995 in order to learn more about the Christian faith through the catechism. Since that time, we have been deeply engaged in Sudan, and now especially in South Sudan where we help support a seminary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of South Sudan/Sudan in Yambio.

We are privileged to be able to share with you this resource and want to let you know that this year we anticipate publishing a children's Bible story book and Law and Gospel booklet translated into Dinka. May the Lord bless you and your church as you receive these materials that we believe provide a succinct and compelling explanation of the Christian faith!

God bless you, Archbishop Thon!

In Christ,

Rev. Matthew Heise

FEBRUARY 15

The LHF board met to issue a call to the Rev. Dr. Dinku Bato to serve as the LHF African coordinator. At the time, he was serving an Ethiopian congregation in Minnetonka, Minnesota.

FEBRUARY 19

The bishop of the Anglican church and the bishop of the ELCSS/S were both in Uganda attending a seminar on Luther's *Small Catechism* for Anglican pastors preparing for membership in the Lutheran Church. A year prior, the Anglicans (a group rumored to have more than one million members) had indicated a desire to become part of the Lutheran community in South Sudan. Much the Anglican's interest developed when they saw materials provided to pastors of the ELCSS/S and learned of doctrine taught at the seminary. In preparation for this church to be received, her pastors were being confirmed in the Lutheran faith—a major step towards the amalgamation of the two bodies. Eventually, selected Anglican pastors would enter the seminary for further theological training.

FEBRUARY 20

Bishop Peter Anibati reported on the state of the church in the ELCSS/S newsletter:

The Hosanna Building

For a very long time since the headquarters of the ELCSS/S was moved from Khartoum to Yambio, South Sudan, there was no church office building. The HQ of the church and the seminary—CLIHM— was being hosted by the guest house and later on, St. Luke Medical Clinic was also added into the same guest house and really the facility became much crowded. The church had no seed money to build a separate administration building, but God worked a miracle!

In early January 2016, the church started a local initiative, raised some funds, and bought a few thousands of bricks and laid the foundation for the ELCSS/S HQ office. That is all we could do, the foundation, and as we were stuck, the AFA (Asia Focus Australia) came in and bought some more bricks and cements and we were able to raise the wall halfway. That was a real push but still God worked another miracle through a friend, the Rev. Dr. Bernhard Lutz, who visited the ELCSS/S HQ and saw the need. He saw some few bricks laying around and as I explained to him the plan, he prayed with me and all he said was, "I do not have the money but when I go back, I will try to raise funds for the building."

There, the miracle started, in a few months, money started to come in and now the building is completed and furnished and was dedicated on January 7, 2018. The church offices have now moved from the guest house next to the church

building. The office building is called the “Hosanna Building,” which means “the Lord saves” and in fact the Lord has rescued the ELCSS/S by providing this administrative building and more importantly He has saved us from sin, our sinful flesh, Satan, and hell through His Son Jesus Christ. Praise be to Him now and forever more. Amen!

The ELCSS/S Installs Internet

One of the challenges that the ELCSS/S has been facing is lack of internet service. Church officers have always depended on commercial internet cafés in town which are not always reliable to access emails, send, or retrieve messages/reports. Those who have visited South Sudan know how difficult it is to communicate to the outside world and how hard it is to get access to internet, but thanks be to God that this service is now available at the ELCSS/S. This tool of communication is to facilitate the work of the head office and to help the seminary students have access to e-books for research purposes and also to help guest professors keep in touch with their loved ones at home while teaching at CLIHM—Yambio. Hopefully, professors who may not have time to come to Yambio can use this to lecture and students can follow from here. To sustain the project, the ELCSS/S has introduced a café which is open to the public to help pay the cost of the service.

Now the ELCSS/S provides the fastest internet service in Yambio, which connects not only the church to the world, but the entire public of Yambio and Gbudue State at large making the world a bit closer. All these have happened because of the support that the ELCSS/S receives from its partners and especially Immanuel Lutheran Church New Hampshire of the LCMS which has funded this project through Pastor Mark Oien.

New Seminary Class Begins

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in South Sudan/Sudan started a theological seminary way back in 2003 in Khartoum. This seminary was started to help train locally pastors, deaconesses, and other lay leaders for the ELCSS/S, because it is very costly to train church workers outside the country and difficult to find sponsorship. The cost of training one pastor overseas can train more pastors in South Sudan. For these reasons, the ELCSS/S started Concordia Lutheran Institute for Holy (CLIHM), which has had three graduations so far and the most recent was in 2015.

By the grace of God, this year 2018, 25 men have joined the seminary from all over the deaneries of the ELCSS/S, representing many of the different tribes of South Sudan/Sudan. The seminary was officially opened on January 7, 2018 with seminarians from the Nuba Mountains, Magwi, Maban (Malakal), Magwi, Awingbul, Torit, Anyuak from Kakuma refugee camp, Maridi, Ibba, Yambio, Ezo,

and Tambura. Unfortunately, others were expected to join from the Anglicans but the candidates due to family problems could not make it on time. Hopefully they will be able to join the next intake.

The opening of the new seminary class was marked with many other activities: the dedication of the ELCSS/S HQ office, the internet centre, and two motor bikes dedicated and distributed to Rev. Evaristo Gima in Tambura and Rev. Kibongo Henry in Yambio. Many important guests were in attendance including international guests like the Rev. Dr. Robert Rahn who was the preacher of the day, the Rev. Dr. Bernhard Lutz and Dr. Elly were the first professors who started teaching the new class.

Still on the seminary, the visiting instructors' building [has] been improved and well-furnished and with good toilets inside. Because the current number of seminarians is double the previous classes, a bigger classroom is under construction and the old classroom is being used as library.

New Churches Planted

Although the ELCSS/S is faced with many challenges including few pastors, wars that have left many displaced and destitute, the church continues to grow and expand in the midst of these difficulties. Last year two congregations were planted in the refugee camps (Bidibidi & Lamwo), in Uganda, and several others in Gambella, Ethiopia. At the very beginning of this year three churches have been planted 1) Magwi—Obbo Congregation served by Pastor Mark Okullo, 2) Nzara—Trinity Chapel served by Pastor Andrea Bernado, and 3) Tambura—Zion Lutheran Church served by Pastor Matthew Kurakpio.

House of Hope Orphanage

The ELCSS/S in her endeavors to make disciples for Christ has established the House of Hope Orphanage where kids who have lost both their parents as a result of the civil wars in South Sudan, HIV/AIDS, or any other reason can be cared for, educated, and brought up in a Christian way. This orphanage is still under construction and is supported mainly by Robert and Paula Lutz and faithful Lutheran Christians in the U.S. You can also participate in giving hope and a brighter future to these helpless children by giving to support the project. The following are needed 1) plaster of the buildings & floor, 2) doors & windows & finishing, 3) gate, 4) beds & [mattresses], 5) bed sheets & blankets, 6) utensils and others.

Hands of Mercy

Hands of Mercy is a training centre opened for people with disabilities and is located in Yambio, Gbudue State. It is an outreach ministry of the ELCSS/S to a people who are normally neglected by the community. At the centre, registered members come daily to attend classes on Luther's *Small Catechism*, learn differ-

ent skills like tailoring, small business management, hygiene, English language, and many other skills. They have a shop and salon intended to generate some income that can keep the centre moving, but the high rates of inflation in town and the famine in the country do not make it easy. The center still needs support from outside to cover its expenses. Thanks to Dcns. Patricia Nuffer who is a backbone of Hands of Mercy. Recently the centre has initiated another project called “Christ Care Centre.” It is a building with several rooms which will be rented to people and the rent will help pay some of the operation costs of the centre.

St. Luke Medical Clinic

The St. Luke Medical Clinic is a local initiative of the ELCSS/S started in 2014 to help address the health situation of the people of South Sudan. There is too much malaria caused by mosquitoes, typhoid, goiter, hernia, HIV/AIDS, and many other diseases. The church has been inviting professional doctors from the neighboring Democratic Republic of the Congo who come to assist in areas of surgery. The clinic has [proved] to be very helpful to the community around and as such many cases are being treated but it is difficult to get medicine! More support is needed to get clinic from the guest house and have it built since the church has more land. Also other necessities include medicine, beds, mosquito nets, upgrade the theatre, get professional workers, nurses, doctors, etc. The church is looking for volunteers who would want work with the clinic or support it.

Outbreak of Fire Leaves Many in Buguga and Saura Homeless

[During a recent episode of tribal conflict] the two villages of Baguga and Saura have been burnt down. It is not known how the fire started or who started the fire, but many residents have lost all their belongings—homes, farms, clothing, food are all gone. It’s an emergency. The situation of the people continues to deteriorate, they need help, rains are about to start but they have no roofs over their head, no warm clothes, children have lost all their schoolbooks and uniforms and [they have] no food to eat. What can the ELCSS/S do? We are limited in so many ways, but I have announced to the church members asking if anyone has an extra shirt, blanket, or any kind of support they should consider helping the fire victims. I also appeal in this letter to all the friends of the ELCSS/S to consider helping the Baguga and Saura people. The ELCSS/S actively works in these areas; we have two churches and schools there and the members are very much affected. Let us know if you are willing to help! A big thank you to all the supporters and friends of the ELCSS/S. I take this opportunity to thank all those who are supporting the ELCSS/S to reach out with the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the lost. Your labors are not in vain!

The Rt. Rev. Peter Anibati Abia
Bishop, ELCSS/S

FEBRUARY 21

The following report was filed by Eileen Roberts. She and her husband Rev. Robert Roberts spent a month teaching at the seminary in Yambio, South Sudan. Her report helps us appreciate the challenges the instructors face training men for the ministry.

...Prices in the market are high. For things like detergent, toilet paper, paper, pens, etc., I am paying the same or more in dollars than I would in the USA. The students didn't get soap to do laundry until after we were here. Power situation remains the same. If the hospital doesn't take it all, we might have some solar power in the daytime, but the batteries don't hold charge much so evenings remain dark—a huge problem for homework. New batteries have been coming from Uganda for almost the whole time we have been here. Word was received that the vehicle bringing them has reached Democratic Republic of the Congo, but the big trucks are all stopped on the road with no one moving and no one knows why.

English competency is a major problem for some. Knowledge of English grammar is lacking. I have actually had to teach how to write the letters in English, capitals and small letters. They have never learned this (except for a couple). Even the placement of the period has had to be taught (they prefer it halfway between lines). Subjects, verbs, objects (all really useful for learning even a little Greek) are brand new ideas and not easily understood. They are getting better at starting a sentence with a capital and ending with a period, and not just stringing things together with “and.” For some it is really hard. Let anyone coming in the next few months know the challenges the men are facing when trying to take in all the things being taught. At least half struggle and give up trying to take notes in the New Testament Intro. They don't know the words in general and have no idea how to spell them if not written out. They are also very, very slow at taking notes, almost as though they were drawing the words, which with the Greek they are.

We suspected it might be like this. New students in the Philippines often could not write in English either so the experience is not a new one. We see progress although it comes slowly, slowly... Indoor plumbing is great when there is water in the tank. The storage tank went dry Sunday morning. Delivery was delayed until this morning (Wednesday) so we just kept a basin full of water for washing hands and a bucket for the toilet. That is something we have been used to. Hopefully anyone coming won't be bothered by that (fetching a heavy bucket when it is totally dark is an adventure as one tries to avoid tripping over embedded rocks and the ditch/trench). Bob's exams start tomorrow with a Greek test in class followed by a take-home handout final in New Testament Intro with the worship test next Tuesday. I will fit in something simple, probably on Tuesday also.

Eileen

FEBRUARY 26

The following email to the bishop of the ELCSS/S typifies several facets of LHF translation work, and in this case especially, the tedious task of verifying correct spellings according to the Ethnologue. It also takes time to set the publishing schedule and amass funds to cover projects.

From: Jeff Rahn

To: Peter Anibati

Subject: South Sudan Translation Projects

Peter, a few additional follow-up questions on the planned translation projects. Please confirm that the three catechism projects are the *Small Catechism with Explanation*. In the Ethnologue, I am seeing the languages spelled as “Balanda Bor” for the Western Bahr-el-Ghazal State, Wau, and Jur River counties, and “Shilluk” in Upper Nile State, Malakal, and Panyikang counties among other locations. Are these the languages you are referring to as “Balanda” and “Shuluk?” I am not seeing “Atoro” but there is a listing for “Otoro” in Sudan. For each of the five projects listed below we need to know how many copies would be printed and when the texts would be ready for printing. We are also planning a reprint of the Nuer *Small Catechism with Explanation* that Simon is working on along with some smaller Nuer booklets from WELS. We are also planning to print three Dinka projects that Nathaniel Bol is working on—*A Child’s Garden of Bible Stories*, *Law and Gospel: The Lutheran Difference*, and *A Brief Story of the Augsburg Confession: Told for Young People*. These will most likely be printed in Bangkok, Thailand.

FEBRUARY 28

From: Melissa Salomon

Subject: Ministry in Tijuana, Mexico

We are a ministry located in Tijuana, affiliated with the LCMS, serving families and children in the large and growing city of Tijuana. We have used the LHF *Bibles with Small Catechism* in Spanish and work with hundreds of families and children each year to teach them about Jesus. Our ministry is growing, and we have started new ministries to children in schools and in communities this year. Could we receive one box of the *A Child’s Garden of Bible Stories* hardcover in Spanish and two boxes in the softcover? What a blessing this would be!

MARCH 1

The mission coordinator of the Mission Province Lutheran Church of Finland sent a message pertaining to the work of Rev. Gurhan. Gurhan’s migration into

Lutheranism began when LHF offices were in Nairobi and Dr. Anssi Simojoki served as the vice president for LHF–Africa. A number of new entities have been organized since Simojoki’s inaugural efforts. Lutherans In Africa (LIA) was developed by Rev. James May after serving with LHF. LHF-Africa was organized to carry out the mission of LHF in Africa. Later, Rev. Juhana Pohjola established LHF-Finland, and from that came the Mission Lutheran Province of Finland, a confessional church body headed up by Bishop Risto Sironomies, who had been an LHF translator in Turkey. Eventually all these groups had an interest in and supported Gurhan obtaining ministerial credentials. The message below outlines the dilemma we sometimes face in supporting mission workers.

From: Tuomo Simojoki

To: Matthew Heise; Anssi Simojoki; Marja Simojoki

Subject: Gurhan’s work

Hyvää iltaa!

The Mission Diocese’s mission committee gathered today for a meeting. One of the main topics of today’s meeting was Gurhan’s work and its future. If I have understood correctly, there is a certain amount of uncertainty at LHF’s side about how long Gurhan intends to carry on his work in Ethiopia. For the Mission Diocese the question is even more about concern.

I should be corrected if I am wrong, but am I right in thinking that for LHF Gurhan’s location is less problematic? For the translation work, his location is of less significance, is it not? For the Mission Diocese the vision has been to support the work of the Somali Lutheran Church. With this intent Gurhan was ordained as a pastor for the Mission Diocese. It was also the Mission Diocese that registered the Somali Lutheran Church in Ethiopia. In this light the question of location is of course a central issue.

In mutual discussions it has been agreed that LHF and Mission Diocese will work in collaboration in Ethiopia. It is because of this that I am writing to all three of you. If I have understood correctly, all the three of you will have the opportunity to meet Gurhan in Nairobi in April. I would be really grateful if in these discussions the concerns of the Mission Diocese were diplomatically handled. It is really difficult to carry on certain discussions over email and a face-to-face discussion is always best.

The worry of the mission committee is that Gurhan is actively looking to leave Ethiopia. If he chooses to move to the U.S. and start working there in conjunction with LCMS, this is of course his option. The work is God’s and we are not jealous of where that work is done. However, planning a long-term cooperation in this situation is very difficult. The mission committee will be evaluating the future of the work in Ethiopia in May. Before that it would be important to know whether

we should be embracing Gurhan's transfer to another location or whether the work will carry on in Ethiopia. If Gurhan is not sure about which direction to take, it is in my opinion a sign that he has not made a long-term commitment.

There is of course the option that Gurhan has decided to stay in Ethiopia and commit to the work he has begun. In this scenario it would be important to know what his view of the future of the work is. What are the resources he needs? What kind of support, beside financial, does he need? The Mission Diocese would really welcome if Gurhan were to carry on with his work in Ethiopia. However, we accept that only God knows what the best solution is for His work. At this point we want to be able to better understand what Gurhan's own intention and wish for the future is. Will we start working towards a common work in Ethiopia or should we prepare for the end of that field?

It has been agreed that my father will meet with the mission committee on his arrival. I would be grateful if in your discussions with Gurhan, these points could be addressed in some way or another.

On behalf of the mission committee,

Tuomo Simojoki

Lähetyskoordinaattori / Mission Coordinator

MARCH 5-6

LHF conducted a training seminar for IRPRs, new staff, and guests. 30-some people crowded into the LHF boardroom to hear various presentations. Rev. Matthew Heise and Mr. Jeff Rahn served as discussion leaders for what some described as an "overload of information."

Rev. Dr. Dinku Bato, who had recently accepted LHF's call to serve as the Africa translation coordinator, was among the presenters. At the time, Dr. Bato was serving an Ethiopian congregation in Minneapolis, Minnesota and he would continue to live in that area. One of the assets he brought to the table took shape in his connections to all Ethiopian congregations in the U.S. Additionally, he was familiar with the Mekane Yesus Church of Ethiopia, the largest Lutheran church in the world with 8 million members. Bato's father was one of the first Lutheran pastors in Ethiopia. Dr. Bato compared the history of Ethiopian immigration to the U.S. using a transliteration of John 1:14: "The Word became flesh and blood and went into the neighborhood." He also said, "Immigrant churches inevitably revitalize American religious life. Immigrant congregations are bastions of fervent religiosity and communities of commitment."

Rev. Hisham Chehab of Chicago, Illinois conducted the Salam Christian Fellowship, an outreach program to Muslims in Chicago and beyond. Dr. Bernie Lutz consulted Hisham when writing *Guidelines for Sharing the Faith with Your Muslim Friends: The Dos and Don'ts*. Hisham is from Lebanon and was reached

for Christ by Dr. Lutz. Hisham was ordained on August 15, 2010 and actively assists LHF in translating Arabic books and materials. He shared the story of his life, transforming from a persecutor of Christians to a Lutheran pastor. One can see parallels between Hisham's life and Saul, the persecutor, and Paul the apostle. At the time, Hisham had baptized more than 25 adults from the Middle East.

LHF Asia Coordinator Rev. Ted NaThalang reviewed the events in Cambodia and Thailand for the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation. Some 3,000 people attended a two-day event in Cambodia. In Thailand, the celebration featured multi-denominational music, dance, displays, and fellowship for the 300 in attendance. There are not many Lutherans in these countries and Rev. NaThalang shared how our books and materials were distributed and received by enthusiastic people. The Asia project list continued to grow. On the list was a Bible story book for teens. An artist was completing pictures that would accompany 70 stories, and when completed, this volume would be translated into numerous languages under the LHF copyright.

Executive Director Rev. Matthew Heise reviewed work in Europe, especially the mission to Farsi-speaking people coming to Germany from Iran and Iraq. He announced he and Dr. Bato would go on an extended trip through Africa and Madagascar so Dr. Bato could become familiar with the people with whom LHF works in these regions.

PR Coordinator Jen Bagnall reported on the progress of the new website under development. The site would be more inclusive, providing updates on LHF global work and other information. She also mentioned plans for the 25th anniversary celebration. Her assistant, Marlene Herzog, reported on progress made with LWML grant requests the PR team submitted to most districts of the LWML.

Jeff Rahn showcased projects in the 2018 budget, highlighting Spanish and French materials. *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* in Spanish was awaiting delivery from Bangkok and another printing of the Spanish *Bible with Small Catechism* was underway. This would be the fifth printing, resulting in a total of some 100,000 Bibles.

Bernie Lutz and I reported on the church and seminary operations in South Sudan/Sudan, indicating that the new bishop was doing great work in serving the church. Bishop Peter Anibati continued to work on establishing fellowship with the LCMS. He had led the complete restoration of the Yambio church campus and built a new church administration building and an internet center. A seminary classroom to seat 35 students was nearing completion. Two new churches were dedicated, and the church was growing. The current seminary class of 25 students were served by faculty I recruited. I also reported how LHF continued reducing support while encouraging the ELCSS/S to become self-sustaining.

Linda Leinhos and Rev. Bob Marshall provided some insights into how the

LHF database could be of assistance to IRPRs. For instance, a program can show all donors in certain counties; a spreadsheet can list donor names, addresses, phone numbers, amount contributed, date of last contribution. Linda continued to do all data entry work and would soon complete 20 years of service with LHF.

When I heard the people serving LHF introduce themselves, I was amazed at the tremendous wealth in their backgrounds. University and seminary professors, high-ranking military officers, synod officials, former missionaries, farmers, maple syrup producers, donors, and others all bring a wealth of differing expertise and experience to LHF. I thank God for such a diverse cadre of soldiers for the Lord.

MARCH 15

Bishop Peter Anibati sent in this report after a training meeting with a delegation of Anglicans wishing to become Lutheran.

Subject: The Conference in Nyumazi - Adjumani

Dear Partners in the Gospel,

Greetings to you from Yambio, South Sudan. I hope you all arrived safely at your different locations. I am writing to inform you that I arrived well and to share with you my observations about the conference. In the first place, I am pleased to have been part of the conference. It was an opportunity and great honor to have met all of you and I pray that our partnership in the Gospel will continue to be strengthened. The ELCSS/S views the relationship with the Anglican Church of South Sudan (ACSS) as an opportunity to reach out with the true Bible teaching that could eventually lead the ACSS to become part of the worldwide confessional Lutheran body.

To share a bit about the conference, I would say it went very well and the ACSS was very hospitable and also eager to learn the Lutheran doctrine. They were happy with the teaching on grace, Scripture alone, sacraments, the history of Martin Luther's reformation, prayer, but had reservations on women ordination. They are not ready to become Lutherans now, but need more time and training, and I think it is very important to design training for the leaders of this church body to enable them to teach their pastors and members. This can be through seminars/workshops and seminary training for those who are young. The issue of polygamy needs to be addressed.

Training of this group needs collective effort and partnership from the LCMS and the Lutheran church bodies on the ground (ELCSS/S and LCU). The goal of the relationship with the ACSS need to be clear and I think the leaders of the ACSS need to be engaged in some kind of dialogue to know their intentions. Do

ACSS want to become an independent Lutheran church body in South Sudan, or are they thinking of becoming part of the existing Lutheran church in South Sudan, or they are looking for partnership with the LCMS only? I bring this up because during our meeting with the bishops and three bishops elect of the ACSS, the general view was that the ACSS is looking for partnership and support to train their people but who knows what will happen in the future!

I feel I should share this also... there is a danger of forming small church bodies along tribal lines in South Sudan. This is already a problem in South Sudan especially with the current politics in our country. The partners need to be aware of this and encourage the churches especially those who call themselves confessional Lutherans to work together.

In conclusion, I would like to recommend that a program be drawn for training the ACSS group and this should be done on regular basis and the young ones should be encouraged to join the seminary training.

When I returned to Juba, I had the opportunity to visit with the ACSS church in Juba in Hai Sherikat. I met with John Ater, one of the bishops elect who took me to one of their schools in Juba before I returned to Yambio.

Let us all keep this group in our prayers and work together to bring to them the true Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Blessings+

Rt. Rev. Peter Anibati Abia

Bishop ELCSS/S Yambio, South Sudan

MARCH 25

The Rev. Dr. Dinku Bato was installed as the LHF translation coordinator for Africa. The installation took place as part of the Ethiopian church service at Jehovah Lutheran Church, St. Paul, Minnesota. The Rev. Armond Boehme, LHF board member of Northfield, Minnesota, served as the preacher for the event and LHF Executive Director Rev. Matthew Heise performed the Rite of Installation. After the service, the local Ethiopian congregation hosted a reception in honor of Rev. Bato. While Rev. Bato will continue to live in St. Paul, his ecclesiastical membership will be part of the Michigan District of the LCMS. Officially, his duties began on March 16.

MARCH 29

From: Soma Biblia – Finance

To: Jeff Rahn

Subject: RE: Invoice for 500 years Coloring Booklets and Good News about Jesus

Hi Jeff,

Please be informed that, today, we have issued to [transport] 86 boxes—20 boxes of *Good News about Jesus*—(GNAJ) pamphlets, and 66 boxes of *Martin Luther 500 Years* coloring booklets. Expected time of Nairobi arrival will be Monday or Tuesday next week. Herbert can start to follow up with them from Tuesday next week. A box of 30 copies of each type was posted to you on 27/03/2018. Invoice for printing and shipment charges is attached for your necessary payment processes. Kindly be reminded to pay on top of invoice value USD 30 bank charges normally deducted from all payments coming from abroad.

Blessings
Alex

From: Jeff Rahn

To: Matthew Heise; Jen Bagnall; Robert Rahn; Dinku Bato

Subject: FW: Invoice for 500 Coloring Booklets and Good News About Jesus

There may be a few new books in Kenya when Matt and hopefully Dinku arrive—the *Good News About Jesus* reprint (10,000 copies) and the 500th Reformation anniversary coloring book (10,000 copies)! Take your crayons and colored pencils with!! The “What About?” pamphlets in Swahili, English, Ekegusii were printed/delivered earlier this year. Six pamphlets in each language and 20,000 copies of each were printed for a total of 360,000 copies. The six pamphlet topics were: Abortion; Being a Lutheran; Death & Dying; Holy Baptism; Living Together Without Marriage; The Bible. Per the LCMS website—“Permission is granted to copy any part of the ‘What About?’ series as long as there is no sale of the copied material and no change in content.” The Swahili text for *Here I Stand* is being finalized at the printer. 10,000 copies will be printed.

APRIL 11

After the staff devotions, Jeff, assistant executive director, announced that a shipment of seven pallets arrived in Houston from the Brazil Bible Society, the group that printed copies of the Spanish *Bible with Small Catechism* and *A Child’s Garden of Bible Stories*. The Brazil Bible Society had also shipped these books to various Lutheran Hour Ministry centers in Central and South America. We also learned that three pallets were on the way from Bangkok, Thailand to the U.S. with a variety of titles that had been published there. Jeff concluded his announcement by saying, “Things are moving!”

While traveling in Ethiopia, Rev. Heise received word from his family that his hospitalized mother had taken a turn for the worse and was under hospice care. He kept in touch with his family to determine whether it would be necessary for him to cut short the trip and return before visiting Madagascar and South Africa.

Heise wrote from Addis Ababa:

From: Matthew Heise

Subject: Cutting short my trip

Good morning, from Addis, gentlemen,

Today I meet with the president of Mekane Yesus seminary and Mohamed Gurhan. Simon Gatulak comes in today and hopefully Peter comes tomorrow. I should be able to meet with all of them but have cancelled my flights to Madagascar and South Africa for next week. Mom is in her last days or weeks and so it is time to come home. She is said to be in stage two of the three stages of dying at the hospice, so I plan to fly home on Monday or even sooner, depending upon her condition. Thanks for all of your prayers!

APRIL 13

Matt,

Just checking to see how your mom is doing and if there is anything I can do on this end. Safe travels if you are returning on Monday.

Jeff

To: Jeff Rahn

From: Matthew Heise

Subject: Re: Checking In

Thanks, Jeff,

Internet has been out the past few days. She is down to her last few days. I might make it home in time, but maybe not. So I might take some vacation time next week. Will let you know. Meeting with Peter, Simon, and Kebede now. Thanks for your offer, but my family members are doing everything we can. The Lord will do the most important work as He takes her home!

APRIL 17

From: Matthew Heise

To: Robert Rahn, Jeff Rahn

Subject: Re: The latest on Mom

Good morning, Jeff and Bob,

I will take a personal day tomorrow. Mom is pretty much down to her last days. She was overjoyed to see me yesterday, so thank you for supporting my request to come home early. Since David Rakotonirina and Christopher Webber lost their fathers last year, they were more than understanding my skipping Madagascar and South Africa. She is at peace and ready to go to our Lord. Family is surrounding her and our pastors have been phenomenal in their response.

From: Robert Rahn
To: Matthew Heise; Jeff Rahn
Subject: RE: The latest on Mom

Matt,

Best you stick close to the situation and take what time you need. This morning I wrote to a pastor/member of St. John's who found out he has stage four cancer.

[Rev.] Thees and Margaret [Hoft],

So sorry to hear the news. Commend you to Him Who alone has answers. Safe in His hands. He faileth not. Dt. 31:6 & 8. And this Sunday the Good Shepherd readings will be appropriate. What's Good About the Good Shepherd: 1. He is in a class by Himself; 2. He is capable of leading, feeding, bleeding; 3. He moves us to follow.

Now you know I'm preaching on that but not at St. John's. I'm a little north in Lexington. Think about all the great Messiah works: *Sheep May Safely Graze, All We Like Sheep Have Gone Astray, He Shall Feed His Flock Like a Shepherd, Worthy Is the Lamb That Was Slain, Hallelujah* AMEN.

Green pastures, still waters ahead. Also His rod and staff to guide us to those pleasant pastures. We will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Given your circumstances you could preach the Psalm even better.

Staying with you in prayer,
Rahns

APRIL 18

From: Matthew Heise

...All prayers much appreciated, as we thought Mom would be in her heavenly home by now, so we are seeking God's will for medical wisdom here. She seems to be rallying beyond the basic last moment bursts of energy that happen in these circumstances. So we are seeing if there is some hope for recovery.

Blessings,
Matt

I posted on Facebook saying that an email I was sending to Zereda Elisa, daughter of the late Bishop Andrew Mbugo Elisa, was failing to get through. Boutras Magaya's reply brought back some memories of 23 years ago when our LHF office was located in Khartoum. At that time, we had the strong support of an Allyson Magaya, who was the only Christian serving in a government position. He was the minister of transportation and a member of what then was the ELCS. We had many interesting conversations with him, and his goal was to one day return to the South. When I wrote to Boutras and asked if he was the same person, he

wrote back and said he was the third son of Allyson and was also in government service as a member of the South Sudan parliament. We continued to speak, and I learned that both his father and mother have passed away.

From: Dinku Bato

Subject: Re: Upcoming Plans

Hello Jeff,

My travel document is still processing and hopefully be ready at the end of May. As regards to my travel plan here is a tentative plan: May 1-2, Ethnic Ministries Symposium in St. Louis, Missouri (Goal: networking); May 16-19, Ethiopian Christian Diaspora Conference in Silver Spring, Maryland (Goal: networking and introduction); July 19-22, Oromo Evangelical Mission Society Annual Conference in Kansas City, Kansas (Goal: Introduction and distribution of LHF publications in Afan Oromo); July 25-29, Mekane Yesus Lutheran Fellowship in North America Annual Conference in Alexandria, Virginia (Goal: Introduction and distribution of LHF publications in Amharic and other Ethiopian languages).

Moreover, in June (second or third week), I am planning to travel to two additional locations (Denver and San Francisco) to meet with Ethiopian and Oromo pastors and church leaders to deliberate on needs for LHF publications (available and prospective) and identify members of a prospective advisory team for Oromo translation projects in the U.S. I am still waiting for a reply from Pastor Wescoatt (Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, Guymon, Oklahoma) for a possible date to visit with them and the immigrant community his church is ministering with.

I will send you contacts of the Ethiopian, Oromo, and Eritrean network in North America by Tuesday after doing a final update based on information I'll receive from contacts this weekend and from a meeting this Monday. Soon, I'll follow up with more information that includes communications received from Africa (Mali), plans for organizing an advisory team for Africa translation works in North America, and progress on translation of *Small Catechism* (pocket version) in Amharic and Afaan Oromo. Please let me know if you have any questions.

APRIL 23

Dear Dr. Rahn,

The classroom has been roofed and plaster begins this week. we were waiting for cement for plaster, the truck arrived yesterday from Uganda. Also the new generator has arrived. I will send the progress report within the week with more pictures.

Blessings+

Peter Anibati

APRIL 26

From: Richard Ondicho

To: Robert Rahn

Subject: Re: RE: Muslim Ministry in Helsinki

Dear Dr. Rahn,

Thanks for your immediate response. You have always been a great source of support in this work. I thank God thus far and I owe you gratefulness for your willingness to support small people like me. I take no credit in all this and so I remain to be a mere local pastor who has done what he is commanded to do.

I am right now preparing some six Muslims for Baptism. Sometimes I don't have a day off like others because I feel this is golden chance that I must do while it is day as the Lord Jesus puts it. While other are busy making dynasties and empires I delight in walking with these Muslims whom you have faithfully enabled me to through materials. If you happened to find used altar covering, please remember me.

I pray that God will prosper you as you find supporter of LHF. You have many disciples here in Europe. They are wearing crosses provided by you and most of them wear it openly. I remain committed to praying for your work at LHF.

My sincere regards to our LHF staff in Detroit. How many people have received your teaching materials, more especially the Arabic *Small Catechisms*? So many and so I feel honoured to partner with you at LHF to fulfill the Great Commission. God alone repay you.

APRIL 27

From: Matthew Heise

Subject: Betty Heise 1931-2018

Dear staff,

As you may have heard, my dear mother slipped away gently into heaven last night as our Lord took her home around 7 p.m. As usual, she never wanted to be a bother, always putting others above herself, so she waited until everyone was out of the room and my brother and younger sister were distracted.

I thank you from the bottom of my heart for your prayers and understanding over these past months. I apologize and ask your forgiveness when I have been distant, as it has been very hard for me. And yet, I rejoice for her for she has gained the crown of life! Plans are for funeral home viewing Sunday afternoon/evening and a funeral on Monday with committal on Tuesday. I will probably head out to St. Louis Tuesday night or Wednesday and return Friday because Mom would have it no other way! Thank you again!

God's peace to you! He is risen!! Matt

Matt,

While we are sorry to hear the news about your mom's death, we rejoice in the fact that the family had many days to usher her into heaven's gate with hymns and prayers and conversation. The Lord Jesus said: "Because I live; ye shall live also. I am the Resurrection and the Life, He that believeth in Me shall never die." So we have these words of hope and comfort after having just celebrated Easter and declared "He is alive!" May the God of all comfort give you and the family His blessed consolation.

RR

From: Matthew Heise

To: Robert Rahn

Subject: Re: Condolences

Thank you, Bob! We had a great hymn sing with our Pastor Mews a few hours before Mom died. They were blessed times but now she walks the streets of gold! We give thanks to God! Thanks so much for all of the support from LHF! You really are family!

Matt

MAY 10

From: Nicholas Salifu

To: Jeff Rahn

Subject: Seminar

Dear Jeff,

Though we faced some challenges, we held the seminar successfully from Monday, April 30-Sunday, May 6. There were 12 participants. I will write more about the seminar and Jigjiga congregation next week.

Two of the neighbours... are asking for copies of the workbook. I think printing the revised Luther's *Small Catechism* will help many people to use the workbook. *Komba A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* is accepted by all the people, traditional people, and even Muslims. The stories are interesting and I pray that since the Word is powerful, the Holy Spirit will use the *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* to bring Muslims to wanting to hear and know more about Jesus, the only Savior of the world. We are most grateful to you and LHF for the wonderful work you are doing for the world by making it possible for many people to read the true message of the Bible. The Lord richly bless you. I am excited that by the grace of God I will see you in November.

Blessings and peace,

Pastor Nicholas Salifu

From: Rev. Michael W. Salemink

To: Matthew Heise

Subject: Lutherans For Life

Dear Rev. Dr. Heise:

The Lord be with you! Pursuant to one of the six objectives of our recently adopted strategic plan, Lutherans For Life (LFL) is exploring opportunities for sharing our resources with international partners and audiences. We have already begun establishing some of these relationships, and over the course of the next year or two we will be opening conversations with ILC member church bodies and LCMS international missionary leaders. This will of course involve a need for Lutherans For Life materials to be translated for use in these contexts. Is this a project on which LHF would have an interest in collaborating with us? In speaking with Rev. Robert Pfeil at the Iowa District East convention, he indicated an appreciation for LFL resources. I observed that LHF's translations appear to involve works of a more general theological nature, and he directed me to you. Members of our Board of Directors also suggested reaching out at our most recent meeting. I look forward to communicating with you about how we might proceed on this.

In truth and love,

Rev. Michael W. Salemink

Executive Director, Lutherans for Life

From: M. Gurhan

To: Jeff Rahn; Matthew Heise

Subject: RE: Seminar

Dear Rev. Heise,

I have my next court hearing on Friday, 20 July. I hired a lawyer who is expecting a verdict in favour of me reached next Friday. [*Author's note: This after Gurhan was attacked and injured by Muslims.*]

On the other hand, the believers' fellowship here is thriving, with several new converts attending their bi-weekly meetings regularly. This afternoon, I met two of the church elders who told me that their security situation improved the last couple of months following the country's change of guard and the new prime minister's commitment to human rights and freedom of conscience.

Pastor Ben Griffin was regularly updating me. He told me that I will be invited to speak at a conference being organised by Rev. Demelash on 19th August. Then once I am in the States, Attorney Israel Gobena will help me with the process of my immigration application. I am making preparations for my relocation to the States.

Please pray for my court case, for my relocation, and for the believers in Jigjiga.

JULY 12

From: Matthew Heise
To: Rev. Michael W. Salemink
Subject: RE: Lutherans For Life

Good morning, Michael,

Thanks so much for your e-mail! As I was discussing it with my staff this morning, we were most interested in collaborating with you on some projects. While it is true that we focus on books like Luther's *Small Catechism* and CPH's *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories*, we also work on some apologetics materials. For example, we have translated the "How to Respond..." series in several languages. While it is true that we are near the end of some of the summer conventions, will you be attending any others? (Or someone from your staff?). I will be at the LWML Michigan convention in a little over a week, as well as the Hispanic Lutheran Convention in Houston (July 24-25). Let's begin the conversation! We are most interested!

JULY 13

From: Peter Anibati
To: Robert Rahn
Subject: Re: FW: Hurrah!!

Thanks to God for everything and thank you at LHF for these booklets. They have just come out at the right time. I think our people very much need the message in the booklet "Jesus Never Fails." FYI, we have now the Acholi translation too and I am pushing to have it in Arabic, Nuer, and Dinka. Maybe those could be printed together? Let me know if LHF will fund publication of those versions.

Blessings+

The Rt. Rev. Peter Anibati Abia

JULY 21

To: Simon Gatluak
Subject: Stewardship Lesson Under the Shade Tree

Simon,

You will remember that when I was there, the women of the Gambella Ethiopia congregation wanted to meet with me after that five-hour service and we set chairs under the shade of a tree. What kind of tree was that? While I don't know its name, I have talked about the meeting as a stewardship lesson under a shade tree. Three of the women served as spokespersons. Each one of them began their presentation by saying, "We are happy." The thought that came to mind immediately was, "How can they be happy if they come from a refugee

camp?” The question loomed even larger when they outlined their needs and told of their plight... They were forced from their homes. The conflict was intense and they had to run, leaving everything behind. Many lost their husbands in the conflict. They now were left to care for themselves and their children.

What came to my mind was a statement our Ethiopian Director Dereje Tilahun used in a PowerPoint presentation, when we conducted a distribution program for pastors of a circuit, giving away the Amharic *Book of Concord*, catechism and *Catechisms, Creeds and Confessions*. The statement he showed was: “God’s Kingdom is not built on our achievements, but God’s Kingdom is built using our sacrifices.” It’s part of the stewardship lesson under a shade tree. As each of the women spoke, they were requesting help not necessarily for themselves but for the church they loved. I listened carefully:

- Fencing that could be placed around their church property to protect it from squatters. It was the same need expressed later by members of the Anuak-speaking congregation in another part of Gambella. \$5,500
- Cement to be used to paint the wall of their church. They had painted it with mud but in the rain it washed away. \$5,000
- A well so they would be spared walking great distances or from buying it from a donkey water wagon. \$7,500
- Bibles (1,000) for those who had to leave theirs behind. \$7,350
- An orphanage for 200 children, ages 2-13 and their educational needs. \$3,500
- Plastic roof coverings for 20 churches until they could afford a more permanent zinc roof. \$240 each= \$4,800
- A scholarship for one of their pastors to get advanced education. \$3,500

When the women finished their presentations, I simply told them that most of these needs are outside the mission objectives of the LHF. I, however, made a promise to them that I would let their needs be known in America when the opportunity presented itself.

This weekend I made a trip to Minnesota because a retired pastor friend of mine called and asked me to call one of his former farmer members to whom he had mentioned LHF as his favorite, most effective mission. I talked to the farmer and sent him LHF materials, newsletters, brochures, and the book *Jesus Never Fails*. I made an appointment for this past Saturday and took with me a proposal listing the above items and the publishing of several books for a total of \$48,150. Not knowing the level of support he and his wife might provide, I added a project with a lower amount as well. I labeled the page FOREMOST FOCUS: WELL, WATER, AND THE WORD and listed items for \$20,800.

- Dig the well. \$7,500
- Deliver the Word (Bibles). \$7,350

- Decipher the Truth (catechisms at the well). \$3,000
- Distribute the Gospel (“Jesus Never Fails” booklet). \$3,000

The idea of water resonated with this farmer as in a distant field we could see the bean field being irrigated by the use of an irrigation pivot. I shared with them that the digging of the well would provide water for the church families, water that would be shared with the community around the church and provide opportunity for a Lutheran Gospel witness. I reminded them that we as Lutherans believe that the Word has power, value, comfort, and hope. I shared the story of the woman of Samaria whom Jesus talked to at the well and said to her: “Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing to eternal life.” John 4:13, 14. I explained that too many mission efforts are well intended with the distribution of food, water, glasses, buildings built, and all sorts of projects. We believe the Word needs to accompany these acts of mercy. Once the well is dug and water is flowing, we not only want people to be drinking water to fill a thirst that will reoccur, but we want to provide the water of the Word that will quench an eternal thirst. I told them our prayer should be: “Lord, let us give them this water and this Word, and it will result in no more walking for water or purchasing it from donkey water carts.”

The wife wrote the check to cover the cost of the well. He asked that I keep them informed of the progress and requested an additional envelope for gifts in the future. He also indicated that he would give the proposal to his three sons, partners in the 3,000-acre operation, and maybe they would help provide the Word to be distributed at the well.

On Sunday I preached at Zion, Annandale, Minnesota and the Gospel reading for the day was on the Feeding of the 5,000. My theme was “Bread King or King of Kings, What Is Jesus For You?” I told them about the stewardship lesson under the tree. Many thanked me after the service for sharing the story and that a Minnesota farmer had provided the well, and now we have the opportunity to provide the Word to go with the water through our gifts. It’s the mission of LHF to pray, preach, and print the news of the availability of bread that lasts and water that provides the eternal refreshment. I introduced them to the “Jesus Never Fails” booklet, one of the publications we want to give at the well. The gifts given after the service amounted to over \$700 thus far.

When I returned home and told Donna that the well will be dug, she was pleased because she had asked many times about it and was looking for a way to help provide the water. The praying and the paying are what provide the product. Simon, it took a while but the message I’m sending is that you can tell the women, “The Lord provides.” Let the process for the digging of the well begin and we will continue to search for the funds to provide for the Word that will be distributed

with the water in the books we publish. May thirsting souls receive this water for physical thirst-quenching and may you provide the water of the Word that has eternal thirst-quenching power. God wants to use you and me to give strength and hope from under our shade tree. All gave some, some gave all, militarily. So it can be among those serving in the army of the Lord.

Yours in Him Who is the Bread from Heaven and the Living Water for the soul.

R. Rahn

AUGUST 5

From: Rev. Rod Benkendorf

Subject: LHF Call

Brothers—

I made my announcement to Concordia this morning... After much prayerful consideration, I have decided to accept the call to LHF. That position will begin at the start of September. I am stepping down as circuit visitor after our meeting on August 14. Thank you all for your prayers in all of this. Not an easy decision at all! Concordia and the Altenburg Circuit has been a wonderful place to have done the Lord's Work for the last 10 years. Would you please keep Concordia, LHF, and the Benkendorfs in your prayers? That would be greatly appreciated.

Shalom - Rod

Rev. Rod A. Benkendorf

Concordia Lutheran Church

Frohna, MO

AUGUST 7

The following correspondence once again takes up the question of church fellowship between the ELCSS/S and the LCMS that started during the time of Andrew Mbugo Elisa's leadership of the church body in Sudan back in the early 1990s.

From: Matthew Heise

To: Albert Collver

Cc: Jeff Rahn, Peter Anibati, Daniel McMiller

Subject: Visit of Bishop Peter Anibati to the USA

Good morning, Al,

I can now inform you that the bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in South Sudan/Sudan (ELCSS/S) has received a visa to travel to the United States. Bishop Peter Anibati will join us for our 25th anniversary celebration on Saturday, November 10 (to which you will also receive an invitation). We would

like to explore if there might be time for you (and/or President Harrison) to meet with him while he is in the U.S.? You could come to us or he could come to you, most likely after November 14. We know the time is tight with the Thanksgiving holiday looming shortly afterwards, so please let us know as to the possibility and your availability. Blessings on your summer!

From: Albert Collver

To: Matthew Heise

Cc: Jeff Rahn; Peter Anibati; Daniel McMiller; Darin Storkson

Subject: Re: Visit of Bishop Peter Anibati to the USA

Dear Matt,

Thank you for writing. Unfortunately, I am in Brazil from November 7-15, 2018. They invited me to give a presentation on world Lutheranism in several locations in Brazil. I have copied my assistant, Darin, who can likely meet with you perhaps on November 10. I know that the ELCSS/S has applied for ILC membership. At the present moment, Archbishop Ekong has recommended that the application be postponed until the situation regarding Bishop Anibati and former Bishop Noah Wilson settles down. If you or Bishop Anibati have additional information that Archbishop Ekong should be aware of, please let him (and me) know. It might be possible for me to meet with Bishop Anibati after my trip to Brazil.

Thank you.

Abc3+

To: Albert Collver

From: Matthew Heise

Thank you very much, Al, we know you are on the road often.

The ELCSS/S is working through the South Sudan Council of Churches to rectify the matter of former Bishop Wilson's malfeasance. He has not accounted for large sums of money (approximately \$100,000 per year for about four or five years) that came through renting church property to the U.N. The property had been secured by the late Bishop Andrew Elisa for the benefit of the church, not one individual. That, among other things, is the reason for the conflict in the church. But we understand. Perhaps after your visit to Brazil he can come to you. We can keep this open as a possibility.

God's blessings on your travels and endeavors for the LCMS!

Matt

AUGUST 8

From: Jeff Rahn

Subject: Gambella well quotation

In the notice below, Rev. Simon Gatluak, asst. bishop ELCSS/S, submits the official bid for drilling a well at the Gambella Church site that the women of the church requested. They were walking great distances for water and a \$7,500 grant was received to underwrite the project. The plan is to dispense water to the community and distribute LHF books and materials at the site.

Jeff

Greetings in Christ Name

Hope everybody is doing well and we all are fine and Christ is preached everyday and His joy and hope with in His church. Attached the quotation for well of Gambella Church.

His love forever

Rev. Simon

From: Matthew Heise

Subject: Mohamed Gurhan's perilous situation

Hello, friends of Mohamed,

I have received distressing news that Mohamed is in Jijiga, Ethiopia, where recent violence is threatening Christians like him. Please pray for him. Internet is down, but we are texting back and forth. Here [are] some of our texts from the past half hour... (I have just added his texts, but you can get the gist of the problem from his words).

"I am supposed to be in Minnesota before August 19, and still don't know anything about my visa and airline ticket. Could you please call Rev. Griffin and let me know about it. All the highways here are closed except the one to Hargeisa, Somaliland. I am planning to go to Hargeisa to fly from there to Addis Ababa. Almost all the businesses, banks, and hotels in the city were looted. 7 churches were burnt and over 50 people killed. I am not safe here and need to leave as soon as possible. The city is in mess. Since yesterday the army took control of the city though still there's high tension. I will try to leave on Friday. Please pray for me, for the Christians here and for peace... There are numerous sides involved. The regional government, Islamists and some anti-reform elements."

Ben,

I told Mohamed that the conference has been moved back, so not to worry about that. (I talked to Dinku today). Please do ask LINC (Lutheran Intercity

Network Coalition) and others to pray for his safety. I am doing likewise with our LHF board and volunteers. Thanks so much!

God be with Mohamed!

Matt

From: Ben Griffin

To: Matthew Heise

Subject: Re: Mohamed Gurhan's perilous situation

Keeping him in prayer and stirring up our network. Thank you for letting me know the details. I have been unable to reach him and am glad that this message came through. Demelash said he thought that the violence was settling down. Have you heard any new information, confirmation that he is ok? We need him to send something to the lawyer to get the next step in the Visa taken care of.

God bless you all and continuing in prayer.

Ben

Hi, Ben,

I received a text yesterday telling me that things had calmed down. So I don't know if he took the road out to Somalia today (he was going to fly back to Addis Ababa from there), or whether another road opened up to Addis. The police/military seem to have taken control, though, so praying that all is ok. I just texted him and will let you know what I hear.

Matt

AUGUST 9

From: Matthew Heise

To: Peter Anibati

Hi, Peter,

Perhaps it will be a good time for you to ask Dr. Collver what steps need to be taken for fellowship to occur between the LCMS and the ELCSS/S. It would be good to immediately address the issue since he has just written. We are working on your schedule while in the States. I will have a follow-up e-mail to you very soon on this topic.

Blessings,

Matthew

From: Peter Anibati

Dear Dr. Collver,

Thank you for your kind response. I really would like to meet with you and present in person what is happening at the ELCSS/S. I know you have heard so

many things about us and especially the incident with our brother, the former bishop. We are working on resolving the matter. As Rev. Matt has rightly put it, it was all about accountability to the church. I believe the issues will soon be resolved and I beg that this should not jeopardize our membership with the ILC. This is what we have desired for a very long time, to belong to a confessional universal body of Christ like the ILC and the LCMS. I pray that you would consider us like brothers who need your direction. If possible send me the email of Archbishop Ekong, I would like to write to him on this matter.

God be with you in all your travels.

Blessings+

From: James May

To: Matthew Heise

Subject: Re: Lutheranism 101 and Lutheran Study Bible

Karibu sana! We could translate *Lutheranism 101* but with the catechism and the *Book of Concord* in Swahili, I don't think it is a priority. We just published an historical resource in *Here I Stand*. Exegetical and devotional resources are needed now. In my opinion.

LHF staff met to further discuss plans for the 25th anniversary celebration. The group reviewed a sample of the invitation to donors, designed by Jen Bagnall. I suggested that the Bible passage and theme of the piece should be the Ebenezer text from 1 Samuel 7:12: "Then Samuel took a stone and set it between Mizpah and Shen, and named it Ebenezer, saying, "Thus far the Lord has helped us." We made a list of our international guests and assigned who would preach where the Sunday following the celebration. Rev. Heise had sent personal invitations to synod and district officials and shared the responses he received. The group also discussed the district-level LWMLs and Jeff Rahn showed that, to date, about a dozen had adopted an LHF project.

Rev. Benkendorf had accepted the call to LHF. He would be installed on September 16 at a church of his choosing in the Frohna, Missouri Circuit area where he lived. Rev. Heise would discuss with Benkendorf whom he would like to preach the sermon. Jen Bagnall prepared the announcement and publicity for Benkendorf's installation.

AUGUST 10

ELCSS/S Asst. Bishop Simon Gatluak was informed that a wire had been sent for half of the amount to be used in digging a well at the Gambella church site.

AUGUST 13

Jeff,

Thanks brothers in the Lord. We received the money that you send for the well project and the water well. Will start. We will keep you on the progress through the pictures and all information will shares with you.

In Christ

Rev. Simon

Gambella Lutheran Church Complex

AUGUST 14

From: Robert Rahn

To: Peter Anibati; Jeff Rahn; Matthew Heise; Simon Gatluak Geng

Subject: RE: Confirmed the money for the well

Dear Peter,

We are pleased to have the project begin and look for the updates. I'm now promoting the translation and publishing of the books that can be passed out at the well and elsewhere—my "Jesus Never Fails" booklet and the catechism. I assume it will be in several Sudanese dialects like Nuer and Zande and others.

I can't remember if I wrote to you out of concern relative to a request Rev. Elinama Bisi made to Mike Roth and his congregation, when he requested Rev. Roth to provide funds for a youth center. It was at the very time when you and I were discussing the need for all projects and programs to be initiated and approved by your office so we don't have these end around efforts. I think you have addressed this before with your students and pastors. Today I received a message from one of our LHF reps, a member of Roth's congregation. He had received our newsletter in which we featured an article on the need to support pastors in the ELCSS/S. He mentioned that he was going to talk to Roth about it. Here is what I wrote to him: "We have been asked a couple of times about an Adopt-a-Student idea, but we are not interested or equipped to monitor that. Our goal is simply to designate it student assistance and let the bishop and his administration decide how to disburse it and to whom. We have had some students go around the system, get help, and then the request comes to us to send the money through our channels. That is where it gets difficult. Some students are helped and maybe some that are even more needy (don't have access to internet) are not helped."

All of the above is shared as a matter of information. It probably is a little difficult for you to monitor this as you'd like in this internet age, but your reminders to the students and pastors from time to time [are] important. It is also the whole matter of stewardship training we attempt to provide on a regular basis with Bernie.

Just want you to be aware of the fact that I'm in the process of compiling

the ELCSS/S church history, doing two books at once. I have a lot of Sudan history in the LHF book and I'm transferring anything of a Sudan nature into the ELCSS/S text. I just discovered yesterday how to use a split screen on my computer to deliver me from what I had been doing in copying the information, closing the LHF text, opening the ELCSS/S text, pasting the info, saving it, and going back to the LHF text. Now I have both editions in front of me to go back and forth. It is saving time and energy and gives me new hope that I may get through the editing by the end of the month. I am just building your history on a document I had published in 2012 that already had a lot of the history recorded. It will take your history through the present and then hopefully someone else will pick it up for the future. (Who knows? This piece might even appear in our history as it reflects a problem that has been with the church since its inception.)

What about the bakery? Is Pascal still working with it since he became a student? The results are probably tied directly to the state of the economy at present. How are things at the seminary with the local staff in the teaching role for August? Coming next is Rev. Henry Malone and his Sudanese friend Mike Salah Lado. They will be taking the Juba route because Malone's congregation is helping build a church in the Juba area (I believe). A Sudanese group uses his church in Salt Lake City for their worship service. That's how he probably got hooked up with Lado. You can find out all details when they arrive as to what Lado is doing.

Back to the editing. Blessings,

RR

From: Peter Anibati

To: Jeff Rahn; Matthew Heise; Sgatluak Geng; Robert Rahn

Subject: Re: RE: Confirmed the money for the well

Thank you Dr. Rahn for taking your time to write the history of the ELCSS/S. This is very much needed, especially as we prepare for the December 2 anniversary of our church. Through your support we will be able to hand out this document during the celebration.

The "Jesus Never Fails" booklet is now ready in Acholi and I would like the Arabic version is being worked on. Hopefully Rev. Simon is getting the Nuer version in order!

When I returned from Nairobi, I did address the issue of projects submitted to visiting instructors without the notice of the office. I think from now onwards this practice will cease.

The bakery was on hold for some time, now we have Linda and Pastor George working with it. Pascal is busy with his studies and does not have time to work at the bakery. Hopefully this will start generating some income for the church soon. Will keep you updated on this.

Concerning the issue of support to pastors, it is very much needed specially at this time. I would recommend that the support is given to the church and designated as support to pastors rather than individual pastors because we want everybody to benefit from whatever support the ELCSS/S gets.

Blessings+

The Rt. Rev. Peter Anibati Abia

AUGUST 16

From: John Donkoh

To: Robert Rahn

Cc: The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ghana

Subject: JNF Booklet

This email comes with warm greetings to you and your family trusting all is well with you. It's been a while since we last communicated. My installation as the president of the Lutheran Church in Ghana was held on July 1st but soon after, I toured the whole country visiting Lutheran churches and congregations. I started office business about two weeks ago. During my visits to our churches, one of the most requested [actions] was the translation of our Lutheran materials into the mother languages of the areas visited. I have communicated the request to the translation committee to prepare the needed resources. I also mentioned the work you and your organization have done for many churches over the years, in assisting with funding to make Lutheran resource materials translated and published in the mother tongues. A budget has been worked on and [I'd] like to humbly ask your kind permission to present this for your kind consideration.

Meanwhile, I looked at the booklet ("Jesus Never Fails") you've written, and I'm inspired and motivated. It's so practical, relevant, and above all theologically sound and doctrinal in meeting the needs of our churches especially in our context. Thanks for your time in writing this booklet, which seems to cut across all situations in our world. In view of the importance of the content to our situation, I would be grateful if you could kindly allow us to translate it into several of our Ghanaian languages to be used in our churches at our Bible class sessions.

We congratulate you for your unique ministry and the assistance you have [given] to Lutheran churches over the years. We acknowledge you and cherish your partnership into the future! I commend you to Christ and wishing you God's richest blessings.

Sincerely in Christ,

Rev. John Shadrack Donkoh, President of ELCG

AUGUST 13-20

During this week, Rev. George Ondieki spearheaded a youth gathering that

observed the 70th anniversary of the ELCK (Evangelical Lutheran Church of Kenya), the 25th anniversary of LHF, and the 10th anniversary of the NELCKYA. All events included the use and distribution of LHF books.

National Evangelical Lutheran Church of Kenya Youth Association (NELCKYA)

INTRODUCTION: NELCKYA is a forum through which members of ELCK congregations empower the youth for the future of Lutheranism in Kenya through seminars and conferences. It began in August 2008 with the view of gathering few Lutheran youths during school vacations. Over the period of ten years, the activities of NELCKYA have spread to four dioceses out of the five dioceses of ELCK. NELCKYA's work has also spread to Sirare and Tarime parishes of the Lutheran Church in Tanzania. Through the support of ELCK, LHF, LIA (Lutherans in Africa), and ELCK mission partners, NELCKYA has organized 28 youth seminars in different parts of Kenya and two youth seminars in Tanzania. In these seminars, Lutheran teachers have taught the youth using the rich Lutheran heritage materials translated and distributed by LHF. NELCKYA encourages young Lutherans to join the Office of Ministry. Rev. George Ondieki who is working with LHF is one of them. With prayers and dedication to the youth work, our Lord Jesus Christ's work will be continued.

The topics covered in the gathering were: 1. Abiding in Christ: John 15:1-8; 2. 70 Years History of the Lutheran Church in Kenya; 3. Lutheran Confessions; 4. Law and Gospel Distinction; 5. Heaven on Earth: The Lutheran Worship Service; 6. I Believe: The Three Universal Creeds; 7. Our Lutheran Heritage; 8. The Spiritual Warfare: Romans 7:15-25; 9. Health Preparedness: Emerging Issues; 10. Career Choice and Development; 11. Managing Parent-Child Stress: The 4th [Commandment]; 12. Lutheran Hymnody; 13. Liturgical Music and Choirs; 14. The Colors of Salvation; 15. A Day Out for the Youth; 16. Divine Service.

AUGUST 21

The following messages will demonstrate how a lack of communication results in new church bodies forming without existing bodies' knowledge. The bishop tries to address this question by merging churches.

Dear President Harrison,

My name is Rev. Douglas Morton. I served LCMS congregations from 1979 until my retirement in 2012. I am currently the Dean of Theological Education for the Lutheran Church of South Sudan's (LCSS) Trinity Lutheran Seminary, in Gambella, Ethiopia. I live in Omaha, Nebraska but travel back and forth to Gambella. The Lutheran Church of South Sudan is a young confessionally Lutheran

church body whose seminary and headquarters is currently in Gambella, Ethiopia because of the civil war that has raged in South Sudan since December 2013. Many of its people and pastors are refugees in neighboring countries. Rev. Jordan Manpign Long, the president of the LCSS, is currently in the United States sharing the LCSS's story with congregations. He has great admiration for the LCMS and also a great concern for confessionally Lutheran education of pastors, teachers, evangelists, & deaconesses. This is why Trinity Lutheran Seminary was established a few years ago. If it is at all possible on your end, I would like to bring him to Saint Louis to meet with you personally sometime before the end of this month. If that does not work, then I would suggest a meeting between the two of you on his return to the United States in the month of October. I have talked with President Long about this and he has given me permission to contact you.

In Christ,

Rev. Douglas V. Morton

Dean of Theological Education

Trinity Lutheran Seminary & College

Gambella, Ethiopia

Rev. Morton:

Greetings from St Louis in Jesus' name. Thank you for your message and especially for your interest in facilitating contact with the LCMS. Can you kindly assist us in getting to know this church better by providing some additional information? 1. What is your membership? 2. How many pastors do you have? 3. How many congregations do you have? 4. Would you please provide us with a copy of your constitution? 5. What is the history of the church? 6. Is it a member of the LWF (Lutheran World Federation)? 7. What contact, if any, does it have with the other Lutheran churches in Sudan/South Sudan? 8. What is the complete contact information of the leader of the church? 9. Is the church self-supporting? Thank you again for facilitating this communication.

In Christ,

Darin Storkson

Assistant Director of Church Relations

Office of the President

AUGUST 22

From: Peter Anibati
To: Darin Storkson
Cc: Albert Collver
Subject: Re: Your Contact

Dear Darin,

Thanks for your inquiry. I came to know this church body, that is, the Lutheran Church of South Sudan (LCSS) last year when I visited Gambella, Ethiopia where thousands of South Sudanese refugees, mostly the Nuer tribe, are sheltering. When I visited Gambella again this year in June, I met with Rev. Douglas and on my way back I visited the LCSS in Gambella. It seems the LCSS has been operating in Malakal, the Greater Upper Nile region of South Sudan for some time now among the Nuer communities. They also have a website indicating the areas where they are operating in South Sudan, but the information is not quite right because most of the churches mentioned especially in the Equatoria region do not exist. One of the ELCSS/S pastors who is actually my assistant said the LCSS is liberal; it seems they have women pastors (I may be wrong but that is what I heard).

As bishop of the ELCSS/S, the oldest Lutheran church body in South Sudan/Sudan, I have always encouraged that we Lutherans in South Sudan/Sudan should work together, especially those who regard themselves as confessionals. If we have the same faith and confession and one Lord Jesus Christ as the head, then nothing should divide us. I believe the church can only separate on doctrinal matters. I have also advised that partners should encourage Lutherans in South Sudan to work together instead of helping to create other small Lutheran churches in South Sudan, especially if they all want to be confessional. If this is not handled with care, there will be so many small tribal Lutheran Churches in South Sudan. I am also interested in learning more about that church body... I have met their president once and I intend to meet him again to know more about his church. It seems, they do have supporters in U.S. and Canada.

Blessings+

The Rt. Rev. Peter Anibati Abia

AUGUST 22

Peter,

I'm not sure if this project [of building a primary school] being touted by Rev. Mike Roth is a priority or if it has been endorsed by you. Earlier I sent a message to Mike about unauthorized soliciting for projects. Rev. Bisi had requested stipends for teachers. Now a school is going to be built and how will teachers be paid? What happened to the priorities established by past consultations? It

presents a dilemma for us as we try to maintain support for books and materials.

R. Rahn

From: Thomas Batsky

To: Robert Rahn

Subject: FW: Circuit Business

Hi Bob,

In your email you mentioned Mike was contacted about building a facility in South Sudan. I thought I would pass on to you pertinent parts of his email to our circuit pastors as I don't know if this is what you were referring to or not. It seems logical that some sort of effort might, or should, flow out of his recent trip.

AUGUST 23

From: Peter Anibati

To: Robert Rahn

Cc: Jeff Rahn; Matthew Heise; Bernie Lutz; Rev. Thomas Batsky

Subject: Re: School

Dear Dr. Rahn,

Thanks for your concern. I did endorse the building a primary school project with Rev. Mike Roth. This came as a concern when I visited the Lutheran School in Saura. That area has no schools; children have to walk more than 15 kilometers to one government school where there is even no teaching because the government is not paying teachers. In that Lutheran school, we have one classroom built but the kids are many. We have four classes and next year it will increase. The rest of the classes are actually conducted under mango trees. When rain comes, classes are disrupted and as a church we would like to support that village community by providing education for their kids and the goal to bring these kids eventually to the Lutheran faith. I hope this will not interfere with the resource mobilization for books.

About payment of teachers, we charge school fees and from that collection teachers are paid. We as the church basically gain nothing out of that but it helps the community to have access to basic education.

When I visit, I think we should sit down and make some priorities for the ELCSS/S at the meeting. I also see that there is need for consultation meeting with all supports of the ELCSS/S so that we can come up with some priorities.

Blessings+

The Rt. Rev. Peter Anibati Abia

Bishop

AUGUST 25

From: Bernhard Lutz

To: Matthew Heise; Robert Rahn; Jeff Rahn; Peter Anibati; Japhet Dachi

Subject: Some thoughts on ELCSS-S/CLIHM

Greetings in Jesus!

May the Lord bless our coming together to truly glorify His name. Some thoughts for us to pray about: God willing, I will be given the honor to teach and be with the Year I class at CLIHM just prior to the closing of 2018 school year. I have been given two weeks to lead the Dogmatics III class which is to conclude prior to December 2. It has been suggested that there is a strong need for a stewardship seminar to equip pastors and lay leaders in the area of Biblical stewardship. Perhaps the first week of teaching at CLIHM, special emphasis can be placed on Dogmatics III, for the full day. The second week could be split between Dogmatics III and Biblical Stewardship. The mornings dedicated to Dogmatics III and the afternoons to Stewardship. This would give four afternoons to Biblical Stewardship. In scheduling in this way, these important classes would be attended by the students of CLIHM and they would benefit from the afternoon stewardship classes. The Stewardship seminar would include pastors available, vicars, and key lay men and women in the Yambio area. Travel and lodging costs dearly restrict hosting of such seminars. Gentleman... your input is very valuable as I put together an academic programme for the ELCSS/S/CLIHM.

I am also planning to work with Bishop Anibati and Dr. Heise to develop an appropriate 25th anniversary worship service for ELCSS/S. This service would include special reference to the retirement of the honorable Rev. Japhet Dachi as he leaves the principalship of CLIHM after ten years of service.

Thank you for your comments and suggestions. May the Spirit help each of us to eagerly tell what we have heard and seen about Jesus... and do so boldly!

Allahu mahabah. God is love.

Dr. Lutz

AUGUST 27

From: Ruth Schmidt

To: Jeff Rahn

Subject: "Jesus Never Fails" booklet

I am interested in obtaining 100 booklets entitled "Jesus Never Fails" for Blessed Hope Christian Church in Lincoln Park. Blessed Hope is a non-denominational church that provides a food pantry and lunches and dinners to the community. In addition, they have a volunteer social worker who assists clients with their needs. My function is as a volunteer treasurer-bookkeeper. I am not a member of the church but do attend Trinity Lutheran in Wyandotte and have had the

opportunity to hear a pastor from your organization when he substituted for our regular pastor.

When I received the booklet in the mail recently, I showed it to Pastor Crystal Schippling at Blessed Hope, and she said it was just the kind of booklet that the people who use their services could benefit from. Many are homeless and take advantage of the food pantry as well as being able to take a shower and get a change of clothing. Please contact me to let me know how to proceed.

Thank you for your consideration,
Ruth Schmidt

This request came through a form on LHF's website:

Who would you like to contact: Book Requests

Your Name: Janet Reynolds

Your Message: I have a one free copy of your booklet "Jesus Never Fails." As Director of Care Ministries at Trinity Lutheran, Litchfield Park, Arizona, I would like to order 50 copies so I can give them to our shut-ins and people on our homebound list.

AUGUST 27

On Sunday, August 26, it was confirmed that I will cover the pastor vacancy at the International Lutheran Church in Seoul, Korea, during the months of October, November, & December. Thus, I will be present for the 60th anniversary of the Lutheran Church in Korea when you, Dr. Heise, & Pr. Na Thalang are also hopefully present for the public unveiling of the *Book of Concord* in the Korean language. See you there!

Larry W. Myers
LHF IRPR, Wisconsin

AUGUST 28

From: Peter Anibati

To: Robert Rahn,

Cc: Bernhard Lutz

Subject: Proposed project in honor of late Bishop Andrew

Dear Dr. Rahn,

I have some thoughts that I would like to share with you. 1) I am prayerfully thinking of establishing a secondary school in Yambio in honor of the late Bishop Andrew to recognize his effort of laying the foundation of the ELCSS/S. I am thinking of a name like this: Bishop Andrew Mbugo Academy for Science and Technology—BAMAST. This would avail a Lutheran Secondary School for graduates of our primary schools and the community at large would benefit from

it. My issue is that I would need supporters for the project. What do you think of the idea?

2) This year has been one of the most difficult years for our pastors here. They were used to receiving stipends to support their families. We are trying with stewardship but the truth is that many of the people we serve struggle to put mere bread on the table for their families. I am thinking of looking for education support for pastors' children. If such an item is included in our next year's budget do you think we could get support for it? Tuition for primary education here costs about \$50-\$60 per child for a year and double of that for secondary school for a child, apart from uniform and books. I think it can ease the burden on pastors if one or two of their children can get education support.

3) Opportunity for further studies for ELCSS/S pastors. Many of our pastors as I indicated in my recent report are diploma holders. Some since they graduated, they have never had the chance to get refresher courses that can improve their skills. Advise me on how these pastors can be upgraded beyond CLIHM. Perhaps, it is time we start thinking of improving CLIHM to offer bachelor degrees. Perhaps, we could plan advance courses for pastors to be taking at CLIHM and invite professors to teach such courses. It might not be necessary to have pastors full time since they are busy with the ministry. Maybe, they could be invited for two- or three-weeks' intensives at CLIHM. Do you think we can get support from LCMS, Fort Wayne, or St. Louis Seminaries?

I have applied for PhD studies at Fort Wayne. If I am accepted I would like to do distance learning and attend when I am needed. The Lutheran Seminary in South Africa & University of Pretoria have sent my academic transcripts to them. That should be enough for now... I need your thoughts on this and comments from Dr. Lutz.

Blessings+

The Rt. Rev. Peter Anibati Abia, Bishop

From: Robert Rahn

To: Peter Anibati

Cc: Matthew Heise, Jeff Rahn

Subject: RE: Proposed project in honor of late Bishop Andrew

Peter,

A great idea but conceived at the wrong juncture of the ELCSS/S history. Right now my focus, as it probably is yours, is on the upcoming celebration and Bernie being there to teach the last session of the school year. At the present time we are unable to keep up with all the projects—the wall, the truck, the paver patio between church and administration building.

I agree that the needs are reality. I especially agree that a move in the near fu-

ture will have to be made to get pastors credentialed so appropriate degrees can be given. It's something to look at once you get the fellowship in place between ELCSS/S and LCMS. Maybe we can get to the point after that when CLIHM is given more recognition and support from the synod. We will be unable to carry that load in addition to the seminary program already being funded. Perhaps it will be some kind of amalgamation that takes place. It would be nice if the seminaries take a hand. Maybe after your visit that will also be more possible. I know this puts a lot of weight on your shoulders but it's time the church steps up and assists a viable seminary rather than a lot of money down the drain for smaller struggling ones. Things aren't so simple now that you have to deal with the [dispersed] membership of your church in various refugee camps.

We gave some thought to hosting a consultation while you are here but decided that we are maybe past that necessity because you as bishop will simply have to try and keep a lid on all those groups going in different directions with projects. Somehow you have to reach out to those entities and simply put a foot down and state that ELCSS/S is the church that should have the focus because of its prestige and history. None others have it, in my humble prejudiced opinion. We hear of other church bodies but they hardly know who they are and what their constituency is and yet they think they should be recognized by the LCMS. The president of our synod needs to get an inside look at the picture in Sudan, [going] over there and [assessing] things firsthand.

Now is the time to think about the celebration you hope to have on December 2. Will you be able to cover the expense of that event as well as the stewardship seminar Bernie hopes to conduct for area clergy and lay people? Who will come from a distance and need transportation? Perhaps the church leaders can begin to process the plans and the cost so that there aren't last minute surprises. Don't forget that you have the history of the ELCSS/S that you plan to publish. Perhaps you will print a limited number of copies since it is in English. I have completed the text but have not yet done an editing of it. I am just going through the LHF history volume for the second time to try and reduce its size. At one time there were close to 900 pages. How it will be trimmed to 400-500 I'm not sure, but I'm working on it.

This is a very busy time for us as we prepare for our 25th celebration on Nov. 10. You will also be busy preparing for your own event while participating in ours. I'll soon be starting on the recruitment of instructors for the 2019 school year. Did you say the school would open on the 27th of January? I'll have to search for the message in which you referred to the opening as the seminary staff determined. I know there is much more that could be said but let this be sufficient for the moment. Enough for today.

Blessings always, RR

AUGUST 29

From: Peter Anibati

To: Robert Rahn

Cc: Matthew Heise; Jeff Rahn

Subject: Re: RE: Proposed project in honor of late Bishop Andrew

Dear Dr. Rahn,

I appreciate your comments. Thank you very much. There is more work to do than ever. It is difficult, challenging, and hard but God is in charge. All we can do is to pray that His will may be done among us. As you rightly said the ELCSS/S must have a focus and a set of priorities and I am trying to have these priorities documented to share with different entities/individuals involved in the work in South Sudan.

I pray that the fellowship with the LCMS can be finalized soon and that CLIHM can be recognized by them. I have invited Dr. Mark Rabe and Rev. Shauen Trump for the ELCSS/S 25th anniversary but I have not yet heard from them. I hope they will respond.

About the other church bodies, I appreciate also the LCMS for asking my opinion about them and I hope to present a strong case to the synod officials about the other small emerging churches.

For the ELCSS/S anniversary on December 2, we would like to have representatives come from the five deaneries of the ELCSS/S. What we are doing at the moment is having congregations contribute food items for the occasion. That has been going on for some time now. We will need help with transport of delegates. About the seminar, I informed Dr. Lutz that we do not have the funds to cover the cost. If we do not get support, we may end up conducting the seminar for students and pastors within Yambio but still we will need some refreshment. There is a committee for the anniversary, I believe by now they have the budget ready but I am expecting it in my office this week. I will share that with you soon. The seminary is scheduled to open on January 27, but students will have to here before that date.

Will you print the ELCSS/S history in U.S. or do you want us print in Juba? How many pages is the book?

Blessings+

The Rt. Rev. Peter Anibati Abia

AUGUST 20

Greetings Jason,

I'm continuing to collect books for the library and would have five or six boxes to ship your way if a container is going over in the near future or later. Have you given more thought about going over to Yambio, South Sudan to take a look at

the aborted [two-story building] project we had in Baguga and what can be done to salvage some use of the construction? I'm thinking that my next short trip to the area might be in January in connection with the opening of the new school year for the seminary. It usually starts up in January. It may also be in connection with the dedication of a well we are providing in Gambella, Ethiopia. We appreciate the work you have done for the mission enterprises we represent.

God bless and keep now and always,

R. Rahn

AUGUST 26

From: Jason Stephens

To: Robert Rahn

Subject: Re: Shipment

Hi Dr. Rahn!

I head back to Kenya on September 18 for about two weeks... As for the container, we have several pallets of books at our warehouse that I need to inventory and schedule to ship. I'm guessing the container wouldn't go before [late] October or November. So if you have anything to add, please do! I need to check in with Pastor Green because I thought he had quite a few to add as well.

I'd be happy to go to Yambio and take a look at the building. Do you know what dates you might be going in January? Perhaps I can combine that with another trip to Kenya as well. Let me know if you have any particular plan in mind... I'm happy to help! Thanks for all of your kind words! It's been a fantastic experience working with James and very fulfilling to be able to help spread the Gospel.

Thanks!

SEPTEMBER 3

From: M. Gurhan

To: Matthew Heise; Jeff Rahn; Robert Rahn; Anssi Simojoki; Tuomo Simojoki

Subject: Jigjiga violence

Dear brothers,

On August 4th and 5th, Jigjiga residents faced the worst violence the city experienced for decades. Hundreds of businesses and homes, dozen hotels—including the one I was staying—and two churches were looted, destroyed, or burnt. Dozens of people were murdered, including one Orthodox priest. The violence also took place in several other major towns of Somali Region.

On August 4, around 7:45a.m., I left the hotel to have breakfast with some of the SLC (Somali Lutheran Center) members in a near by restaurant. There were soldiers and armored vehicles of the federal defense forces in the main streets of

the city. Though I had no idea what was going on, I suspiciously continued walking and entered into the restaurant. About half an hour later, we heard crowds shouting anti-government phrases followed by several gun shots. The restaurant owner closed the doors, warning his clients to remain inside.

An hour or so later, I left the restaurant and walked towards my hotel. There were looters and a lot of destruction trails everywhere. I saw two men lying down on the street near my hotel, one crying out for help and the other lying in a pool of his own blood. When I was closer to the hotel, I saw black smoke going up. The hotel was in flames. Many people were running in all directions, some carrying items they looted, others were running for their lives. As I was standing in front of the hotel wondering what to do; a man passing by warned me to leave the area quickly. I ran towards the house of one of my relatives in the southern end of the city and remained there the next couple of days. My two suitcases with my clothes and books, and my handbag with my laptop, money, and many documents were either looted or burnt out in my hotel room. The next two and half weeks there was no Internet or airline flights. I returned to Addis safely on 24th August. Please pray for the safety of the believers in Jigjiga and peace for the country.

In Christ,
Rev. M. Gurhan

From: Richard Ondicho
To: Robert Rahn

Dear Dr. Rahn,

Greetings from Finland in the mighty name of Jesus Christ. This is me, yes me Richard Ondicho wanting to thank you for your continual support of the work that I am doing here. It is me Richard Ondicho wanting to thank you for many Lutheran materials that I have received from you to equip me to work here. At the time when I was dehumanized you stood with me. When I wrote you very sad emails you stood with me and encouraged me. Where can one find such a great friend? It is hard to find such...men who love the work of advancing the Gospel. You travel tirelessly for others to benefit. I can't say enough. I just want to say thank you for LHF work which you have at heart. I see it always and have always remained thankful when I visit LHF website. May God continue to lead you and guide.

From: Nicholas Salifu
To: Jeff Rahn
Subject: Ghana Reports

Dear Director,

Greetings in Jesus' name. We rejoice in the great things the Lord does for us. We praise Him for the great works LHF is doing for the world. I am glad to in-

form you that translation of “Jesus Never Fails” tract is completed in two more languages and sent to Rev. Ted to continue from there. Bimoba language is a bit delayed because the translator, his wife, and brother were sick and were in the hospital. Unfortunately his brother died and by the grace of God the translator and his wife are doing quite well at home now. We are keeping only ten copies for emergency purpose. Pastor Samson, the translator, has asked that more copies be reprinted.

Please I have finally been able to book an appointment for visa interview at the U.S. Embassy. The date is September 14. By the grace of God, I trust all will be well.

Blessings and peace,
Nicholas Salifu

SEPTEMBER 6

From: Jeff Rahn
To: Robert Rahn; Matthew Heise
Subject: FW: LHF’s Endowment Fund - Thank you for your generous donation

This marks the first external gift to the endowment fund given by the son of former board member Elmer Sedory; very fitting! It is significant in that it was given in memory of his parents who served Gloria Dei Lutheran-Chicago where we were members and Rev. Rahn served as Rev. Sedory’s pulpit assistant. It is where I went to Sunday school as a preschooler.

From: Rev. Matt Heise
To: Daniel Sedory
Subject: LHF’s Endowment Fund—Thank you for your generous donation

Hello Daniel,

As the Lutheran Heritage Foundation celebrates 25 years of work, we look toward the next 25 years of translating, publishing, and distributing books of the Lutheran faith like Luther’s *Small Catechism* and *A Child’s Garden of Bible Stories* to the world. Where missionaries cannot stay, these books remain to share the saving Word.

The LHF Endowment Fund has existed since 2009, and your gifts have helped LHF to provide the following books (among many others): *Good News About Jesus*, *A Child’s Garden of Bible Stories*, and *Understanding Christian Faith* in Somali; Luther’s *Small Catechism* in Tok Pisin for Papua New Guinea; Luther’s *Large Catechism* in Yala for Nigeria; and *Grace Upon Grace* in Latvian. Thank you for helping to provide the books and materials that will create a Lutheran foundation

for churches around the world for generations to come. God be with you as you remain in His powerful hand.

In Christ,

Rev. Dr. Matthew Heise

Rev. Heise reported on South America. He specifically mentioned San Pedro Lutheran Church in Argentina, established by the Germans and Slovenians, once lively, now slowly dying. Brazilian Lutherans took it on as a mission and started a school that has grown to 1,000 students, most of whom come from atheist families. The school conducted a program on Friday and handed out coupons that indicated the Spanish *Bible with Small Catechism* and *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* would be given to all students in church on Sunday. To accommodate the 400 children who attended, the service had to be held in the gymnasium. For many of these students, it was their first time in any church. The Brazilian group bought property around the school, including a castle-like structure, which will become a university.

SEPTEMBER 7

Jeff Rahn reported that CPH planned to print 500,000 English editions of the catechism Enchiridion. LHF's agreement with CPH dictates LHF will print a like number of the catechisms in various languages for distribution around the world.

SEPTEMBER 10

The following is an LHF press release:

The Rev. Rod Benkendorf has accepted a call to serve in development and church relations at the Lutheran Heritage Foundation. He will be installed at Concordia Lutheran Church in Frohna, Missouri on Sept. 16 at 4 p.m. The public is invited to attend the service and a reception afterward. In his new position, Rev. Benkendorf will be responsible for developing strong connections with churches and individual members, so that they may play a part in the LHF mission.

"What I love the most about the LHF mission is the simplicity of it," Rev. Benkendorf said. "There's a simple need: People need God's Word in the *Small Catechism*, in the *Book of Concord*, in children's Bible books, and they need it translated into their own languages. [LHF Founder] Rev. Robert Rahn saw that need, and then decided to establish LHF to get God's Word out there from our Lutheran perspective." Rev. Benkendorf will be based out of Missouri, where he will be available as a guest preacher and Bible study leader at LCMS congrega-

tions.

“We are really looking forward to Rev. Benkendorf being part of the LHF mission,” said LHF Executive Director Rev. Dr. Matthew Heise. “He has such enthusiasm for spreading the Gospel and for LHF’s work in particular, which will undoubtedly be passed on to the congregations he visits.”

Prior to joining LHF, Rev. Benkendorf received his Master of Sacred Theology (STM) from Concordia Seminary in 2007. He accepted a call to Concordia Lutheran Church in Frohna, Missouri in 2008, where he has been sole pastor for the past decade. Rev. Benkendorf also served on the LHF Board of Directors since early 2017. Rev. Benkendorf is married to Sarah. They have two children, Katie and Megan.

SEPTEMBER 14

From: John Donkoh
Subject: Rev. John Donkoh
RE: Ghana Reports

Dear Friends,

Greetings from Accra and thank you for the wonderful ministry you are doing in the life of the Church on the global stage.

Congratulations on your 25th Anniversary! Lutheran Heritage Foundation has contributed immensely toward the spread of the Gospel through translation and publications of several Lutheran materials into the heart languages of different countries. These have made millions of people get access to the teachings of the pure Word of God to strengthen faith and to bring many to the saving knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!

May God continue to sustain and raise faithful and committed men and women to carry on the great vision of LHF in making Lutheran materials accessible even for and to generations yet unborn! Once again, CONGRATULATIONS!

Yours sincerely in Christ,

Rev. John Shadrack Donkoh

President of ELCG (Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ghana)

Accra-Ghana

SEPTEMBER 17

From: Santi Keinbaum
To: Karen Floyd, LHF mailroom manager
Subject: Book request

Good morning, Karen,

I hope you’re doing well as you read these lines! We will be needing some books for the Hispanic outreach here in Lincoln, as well as some books in the

Nuer language to help our Sudanese brothers. These are the books: In Nuer language: five Bible Stories and ten catechisms; in Spanish language: 25 *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories*. I'm always thankful for the work of LHF! What a blessing it is to the Church at large!

Christ's peace,

Rev. Santi Keinbaum | Assistant Pastor

SEPTEMBER 24

In the interest of satisfying readers' curiosity, I would like to emphasize that LHF makes a point of fulfilling every request, including this one, and doing so as soon as possible.

Hello Karen,

Thank you for sending the books! I received them today. By Thursday I will be sending a donation for your generous support. Also, I know you told me you are out of Nuer language materials. But, do you know when will they become available? Is there any chance to get some Bible stories books and/or catechisms in Nuer before October 20 when there will be a Sudanese Omaha-Lincoln area meeting? Thank you very much!

Blessings on your day,

Rev. Santi Keinbaum | Assistant Pastor

SEPTEMBER 25

As you know, Bob [Rahn], preaching the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ is a joy in life. Right now, I am getting good opportunity to do that with the vacancy in Thompson Falls. Still, when I get those chances to do it with an LHF presentation it is a special joy, even fun. When the folks light up with excitement about the work LHF is doing, it makes all the travel and time worthwhile. I am sure the folks at Shepherd of the Valley would have been OK with me being gone to present at Lovell, but it is probably better all around that someone else takes it. Besides, Christ Brandt would be happy to see you again if that turns out to be the solution to this.

Will have a short LHF presentation at the Montana District Pastor's Conference next month. That will probably bring some invitations. Shepherd of the Valley knows I may request some Sundays off for this.

God keep you.

[Rev.] Ray [Larson] - LHF IRPR

From: Jen Bagnall

To: Matthew Heise; Robert Rahn; Jeff Rahn; Peter Anibati

Subject: Meeting with Orphan Grain Train

Good afternoon. I just had a very enjoyable and productive conversation with Rev. David Reed, who's also copied on this email. Rev. Reed is the manager of Orphan Grain Train's new Michigan branch. We at LHF have been discussing how to find sources of humanitarian aid for our Lutheran brothers and sisters in South Sudan, and it seems the Orphan Grain Train may be a good fit! Rev. Reed has cautioned that OGT-Michigan is just getting off the ground, and so it may be some time before they're ready to start shipping out. However, we agree that it would be great for Rev. Reed to meet Bishop Anibati while he's here in Michigan, so that he can share South Sudan's specific needs with Rev. Reed.

Rev. Reed is planning to attend the Thumb Circuit Mission Rally on Sunday, November 11. What do you think about finding a quiet place at the church where they could get together to discuss the ELCSS/S's needs? The rally concludes after dinner (hopefully by 6 p.m.)—perhaps that would be a good time? Thanks for input—looking forward to learning more.

Blessings,

Jen Bagnall

LHF Public Relations

SEPTEMBER 26

From: Ted NaThalang

To: Jeff Rahn; Matthew Heise; Jen Bagnall

Subject: update on VN BOC

Hi Everyone,

It looks like the Vietnamese *Book of Concord* will not be ready for November 10. After talking and looking at the latest file of Vietnamese *Book of Concord* with pastor Chau Vo, a Vietnamese pastor in St. Louis, whom I have been working with on this project for many years. I discovered many issues that need to be addressed. Some not too serious, but some are serious.

1) The serious one is that because the word “Christ” is hard to pronounce in Vietnamese, they instead use the word “Savior” for Christ, but not in all cases. Not sure why. I am asking our layout person to try to highlight the word “Savior” in the *Book of Concord* so I can see them. 2) Some words/terms that Vietnamese pastors in U.S. are using in Vietnamese *Book of Concord* are old and not easy for people today to understand. I am working with Mr. Hai Au of Lutheran Hour Ministries to find a good pastor in Vietnam that can [proofread] for us. That's it for now.

SEPTEMBER 27

From: Dinku Bato

To: Jeff Rahn

Cc: Matthew Heise; Dereje Tilahun

Subject: Travel update

Good morning Jeff:

My MAF (Mission Aviation Fellowship) flight from Juba to Yambio is finally confirmed through help from a friend working in Juba for a German NGO (non-governmental organization). I will refund them in the amount of \$260 on arrival. My flight to Juba this Monday is also confirmed and the PNC card payment is approved this time. Since my flight and stay in Yambio takes a total of five days (Oct. 1-5), I am afraid that I may not be able to make it to Addis this time. I, however, have been on a Skype call with Dereje for an hour this morning (they are on a national holiday since yesterday afternoon: Meskel—celebration of the finding of the true cross, one of the main holidays in Ethiopia especially for Ethiopian Orthodox Christians). We discussed in greater detail about the status of clearance of the shipment in Djibouti where Dereje informed me that the audit firm auditing Kebede's organization has promised to release its report early next week which Dereje will submit to the Office of License and Registration waiting for this one document to issue a renewal.

Dereje further told me that it would be a maximum of two weeks before the books would be in Addis with the help of Mr. Elias Kassahun, head of the clearance agency. In the future, as indicated earlier, the Good News Ethiopia would be the sole receiver of our shipments that come through any of the ports Ethiopia uses including Port of Assab (Eritrean), which would be soon a possibility on grounds of the recent peace accord and opening of borders between Ethiopia and Eritrea. The Mekane Yesus Central Office and Seminary in Addis Ababa will provide storage and serve as distribution hubs where Rev. Yonas Biratu (theology and Christian education coordinator) and Rev. Dr. Bruk Asale (principal of the Mekeane Yesus Seminary) are contact persons, respectively.

With respect to printers, Dereje told me that he has been printing books thus far with Yemeskel Minch, Ebinezet, and Barkot printers in order of importance in terms of both quantity and quality of works done so far. While planning to retain Yemeskel Minch (translates "Springs of the Cross") for its better quality (of the other two), Dereje and I agree that Dereje will approach Litho Printer PLC, a well-established Christian printer in Addis Ababa. It is widely known for its quality product even though it might be a little more expensive than others but way cheaper than cost of printing in Europe, U.S., or Asia. Dereje will also collect the booklets I am shipping to Addis tomorrow morning and bring them to these

two printers for quality/price comparison up to par.

I am still looking into possible ways of shipping the Nuer book I collected from the Karen LHF translation office yesterday. One of the possibilities here is shipping it by bus that directly rides from Nairobi to Moyale—a town that lies between Kenya and Ethiopia—and then relaying it from there to Dereje in Addis who can bring it to the seminary where Simon's son is currently doing theological studies who travels to Gambella now and then. I plan to call Simon this Saturday and see if there is a better way.

I am happy to learn that Sandra is willing to bring a suitcase full of books from Ethiopia in a couple of weeks. Dereje already indicated in our Skype call this morning that he is ready to bring with him the titles you listed as he visits with us in November for LHF anniversary. Still, I will work with him on the Amharic materials to send with Sandra since she comes a little earlier which would be helpful to us to get the books/booklets ready for distribution in Oklahoma on October 28. So, this ended up being a very long email! Please let me know if you have any questions or suggestions.

From: Joseph Leech

To: Jeff Rahn

Subject: *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories*

Good morning Jeff:

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hazleton is doing an outreach event for Halloween. As a result of that, the church council has approved and is requesting 150 copies of the Spanish version of the above title to give out, along with free candy to the children of the surrounding neighborhood. Thank you for partnering with us in this way. Our SELC (Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church) LWML grant should be coming to you soon in the amount of \$2,000.

Pastor Joe Leech

From: Jeff Rahn

To: Joseph Leech

Cc: Floyd, Karen

Subject: RE: In the Garden Children's Bible Stories

Joseph,

Thanks for your message and request. We will get to work on sending you the copies of the Spanish *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* for your Halloween outreach event. Please be sure to send us some pictures if you are able. We would love to share with others how you are utilizing this resource!

From: Robert Marshall

To: Karen Floyd

Cc: Jeff Rahn; Robert Rahn; Matthew Heise

Subject: Presentation Place, Time Confirmed for 10/29/2018 Mission Committee Meeting

This morning, I've confirmed the details for the October 29, 2018 meeting with the group from three churches that are interested in sponsoring an LHF book translation. I would guess that it's okay to calendar this. The meeting will be held 10/29/2018 at 7 p.m. at St John's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Millvale, PA. I'll get an estimate on number of people attending and get back to you on that. It would be good to have some sort of 'packet' for them.

I've cc'd several for: a heads-up that I'll need some recommendations for need(iest) project(s) in the short and intermediate time ahead; details and format, etc. of our typical book project sponsorship proposals.

One sows, another reaps; thanks to Dr Rahn who 'some time ago' spent time in the Pittsburgh area and who did the friend-raising with Rev Dan Hahn.

Christ's peace, joy, blessings to all,

BobM

From: Jeff Rahn

To: Santi Keinbaum

Cc: Dinku Bato; Matthew Heise; Robert Rahn; Karen Floyd

Subject: Nuer Resources for Omaha Conference

Santi,

Thanks for your messages relative to Nuer books for the upcoming conference Omaha. I am copying our African projects coordinator, Dr. Dinku Bato, as I believe he is planning to attend the conference (he resides near Minneapolis). This will give him the necessary information for connecting with Pastor Wicheng if he hasn't already done so. He is currently in Africa visiting Kenya, South Sudan, and possibly Ethiopia and the plan is, God willing, for him to bring back Nuer resources from Kenya. Work on a reprint of the Nuer catechism is underway, but this will not be printed in time for the conference. Nonetheless, he will be able to provide a fresh update as he returns from his trip around October 7.

Karen, you can send Santi the pastors for South Sudan school project fliers he requested.

God's Blessings,

Mr. Jeffrey R. Rahn

Assistant Executive Director/Director of Operations

To: Karen Floyd
Cc: Robert Marshall; James Riang
Subject: Re: Book request

Hello Karen,

I'm not sure if you received my last email, but just wanted to ask about the materials in the Nuer language. When do you think they will be available? Will the materials be ready before 10/20? The annual South Sudanese U.S.-Canada gathering will take place in Omaha on 10/20. About 100 South Sudanese pastors and leaders will be gathered to discuss topics related to the Sudanese church in the American continent. Maybe it is a good opportunity for an LHF representative to attend the event to promote the South Sudan outreach programs and resources you have in the Nuer language. If there is an interest in sending someone of LHF to the South Sudanese gathering on 10/20 to talk, present, etc., please contact Pastor Wichiang for scheduling the LHF presenter.

Also, in addition to my question about the Nuer materials, would it be possible for you to send me 100 cardstock flyers to promote the "School for Pastors in South Sudan"? I'm referring to the flyer that shows a pastor holding a small girl, which has a tiger-like frame.

Please know that I am not involved with the South Sudanese ministry, but I'm just trying to help out the South Sudanese community and my brother, Pastor Riang, the South Sudanese pastor here in Lincoln, Nebraska. I would appreciate you sharing this information with the appropriate persons at LHF. Thank you very much for your wonderful support!

Blessings on your day,
Rev. Santi Keinbaum | Assistant Pastor

SEPTEMBER 29

From: Dave Reed
To: Jen Bagnall; Matthew Heise; Robert Rahn; Jeff Rahn; Peter Anibati
Subject: RE: Meeting with Orphan Grain Train

Grace in Christ to all,

I do plan to be present in Cass City for the Thumb Mission Rally, November 11, and will be pleased to visit with Bishop Anibati. I think it would be wonderful to assist LHF in support of the Lutheran Church in South Sudan. And yes, Jen is correct insofar as our new Michigan branch of Orphan Grain Train is in its infancy. I could tell you much about the progress we are making, but it will be a lengthy process to get into full stride. We are still gathering the various essential components even to begin. We do have a wonderful 8,000 sq. ft. building for work and warehousing, but there is still much to be done. Nevertheless, the relationships established early would help give our branch a more specific fo-

cus as we eventually consider particular projects. A link between Orphan Grain Train-Michigan and Lutheran Heritage Foundation seems to me a natural with both our roots here in Michigan.

I will look forward to a conversation with Pastor Anibati on November 11 at whatever time is most convenient to him and those accompanying him. I will be at liberty that day whatever the time.

God bless it all,

Pastor Dave Reed, Orphan Grain Train

OCTOBER 9

Robert [Rahn,]

Please know how grateful to God I am for LHF. Local mission work for most parishes is zilch. Not due to lack of interest or opportunity, but due to lack of trained personnel and resources to carry it out. And so we support other missions. This also helps us not be so VERY parochial. As if CLC (Christ Lutheran Church) in Cleveland is the only church on the planet. I am making a motion to include LHF in our 2019 budget at the amount of \$440; to be raised by 5% each year. God bless you and yours and this wonderful work.

[Rev.] Dean [Kavouras]

From: Japheth Dachi

To: Matthew Heise

Rev. Dr. M. Heisse,

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. I am taking this time to thank you very sincerely for the time and the energy and the economic consideration that you took to take me to study theology at the Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology, in Karen, Nairobi now known as Africa International University in Africa. Without that theological studies, I would have been now in the theological education oblivion. Immediately after I finished the studies, I was staffed to come and serve CLIHM Seminary that has also sharpened my spiritual and thinking capacity. Now I am able to think beyond my nose with the help of God. This further theological education helped me to serve ELCSS/S and CLIHM with a lot of agility that it deserves because I was fresh from the university. God bless you and the same to those who thought of my studies as a priority. Proverbs 1:2-5, To know wisdom and instruction, to understand words of insight, to receive instruction in wise dealing, in righteousness, justice, and equity; to give prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the youth—let the wise hear and increase in learning, and the one who understands obtain guidance. This heart felt thanks is from me and family.

Thank you,

From: Jeff Rahn

To: Marlene Herzog

Cc: Jen Bagnall; Robert Rahn; Lisa Mancini; Linda Leinhos

Subject: LWML Back At it Again

Marlene,

Ring That Bell! Sound the Trumpet! Update your PowerPoint Slide, Excel file, and binders!! Letter today from Oregon District indicating that they have partial funding available for our grant (Bible Storybooks for Vietnamese Immigrant Families) that was not originally adopted at the convention. They have allocated \$2,202 for this project. We can further discuss on Thursday. Lisa & Linda, we can record this amount in October for the Vietnam Fund.

OCTOBER 10

From: Matthew Heise

To: Japheth Dachi

Cc: Robert Rahn; Jeff Rahn

Subject: Re: LHF Thank you for furthering my theological education

Dear Brother Dachi,

I am in South Korea right now, but I did want to take a moment to thank you for your long years of service and hard work on behalf of LHF. Everyone from South Sudan that I speak to is grateful for your service to the church, amidst health care concerns. You have put the Church first, and we honor you for this!! I was not at LHF when you began work, so the thanks for supporting your study at the Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology should rightfully go to Pastor Rahn and Jeff Rahn. I am happy that they helped you to improve your understanding. God bless you and your family, Brother Dachi! We truly thank you for your long years of service and pray that the Lord will bless you and your family in your retirement. You have earned it!

OCTOBER 15

From: Andrew Smith

To: Robert Rahn

Subject: Home safely

Dr. Rahn,

Good afternoon. I just wanted to let you know that I had an excellent time teaching. I flew out of Entebbe that night. Landing in Brussels I caught a train and met my wife and son in Amsterdam for a couple days before spending the weekend with my brother who lives in Brussels. I had a good, safe trip. I accomplished what I was sent to do. I taught Church history to a group of men, most of whom I'm sure, had no idea what a Roman was outside of Scripture, and we went

from Caesar Augustus to Constantine and Charlemagne, to the Crusades, the Great Schism, and the medieval Church. I sure learned a whole lot too and have ideas about how I could do it again and better next time. I don't think they were just being kind when they invited me back to do Reformation history.

I'm sure you're in contact with Bishop Anibati, who was very helpful and very generous of his time and ensured I was well cared for during my time there. One of the last things he told me was that now that I had been to Yambio, I have become an ambassador for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in South Sudan and Sudan. I am going to put my presentation together and give it a trial run in my congregation and school and then hopefully, I can do the same in my circuit and maybe in a few places around my district. We have a number of congregations who are heavily involved in other missions, but perhaps a story with a face on it might involve some others who are not involved.

I do have a few notes about travel and such. The route to Yambio via MAF from Kampala is the way to go. No doubt, you have heard reports of people traveling and still being harassed in Juba. I certainly did and was glad I traveled the route I did.

I know you are busily preparing for the 25th anniversary celebrations and Bishop Anibati's arrival at the end of the month, so I won't bother you further. But I did want to thank you for the opportunity, and I hope that I can be of further service in the region next year.

Yours in Christ,

Rev. Andrew Smith

Heavenly Host Lutheran Church and School

OCTOBER 18

From: Peter Anibati

To: Robert Rahn; Bernhard Lutz

Subject: Re: Dump Truck Mission

Dear Dr. Lutz,

Greetings from the ELCSS/S in Jesus. I am pleased to inform you that the funds have been received on our church account this morning and I have instructed a good friend of ours in Kampala who deals in vehicle business to start the processing of getting the dump truck to Yambio. I will keep you posted on the progress and I hope to have the vehicle in Yambio by the time you come. Thank you very much for taking your time to work on this project and to raise this kind of money to support the ministry of the ELCSS/S. I have no better words to thank you but I know your labors are not in vain. May the Almighty continue to bless and give you strength to do His work when it is still day before darkness comes when no one can work!!!!!!!!!!!!!! All glory to God and a big thank you to all

the donors, they have given generously from their hearts!

I remember in one of the emails you asked me what gift you can bring. I need few laptops for our translation department. That should be enough for now. Looking forward to seeing you soon. I will start my journey from here next week to Juba. Pass my greetings to your dear wife Dr. Elly, I hope she is well.

Blessings+++

The Rt. Rev. Peter Anibati Abia

OCTOBER 16-20

From: Kate Costa

To: Jen Bagnall

Cc: Bonnie Martin; Karim Baidaoui

Subject: Arabic Bibles

Hi Jen,

Disciples of the Way Ministries (DOW) has a wonderful problem. We continue to have more and more Arabic-speaking Muslim refugees coming to our Refugee Service Center. DOW is in need of more Arabic Bibles to distribute to our visiting neighbors. Does LHF have any access to Arabic Bibles? Has LHF ever produced any Arabic Bibles? or Do you know of any source of Arabic Bibles that DOW could access free of cost?

Thank you and May God bless your work,

Kate Costa

Mission/Media Coordinator

Disciples of the Way Ministries

From: Jen Bagnall

To: Kate Costa

Cc: Bonnie Martin; Karim Baidaoui

Subject: Re: Arabic Bibles

Hi Kate! Thanks for getting in touch—and you're right, what a wonderful problem to have!

LHF doesn't typically print Bibles, nor do we have a supply of Bibles in other languages. However, I can definitely put out a request to our Arabic-speaking contacts to see if they have any suggestions.

Another possible solution (although this doesn't answer your immediate need) would be to imitate a Spanish-language project LHF produced that's been very successful—the Spanish Bible combined in one volume with Luther's *Small Catechism*. LHF obtained the rights from the Bible publisher to reprint the Spanish Bible, and then we included the Spanish catechism (enchiridion only) at the front of the book. If you believe this would be useful in your ministry, this

is definitely something we could investigate for you as well. Again, this project would probably not come to fruition until mid-2019, if we were to begin work soon; however, we're about to begin our budgeting/planning for 2019 in the next month, so if it's something you're serious about, we'd need to know soon. We've printed nearly 100,000 Spanish Bible/catechisms at this point, with probably 20,000 distributed here in the United States. So let me know what you and Rev. Baidaoui think!

God's blessings to you,
Jen [Bagnall]

To: Jen Bagnall
From: Karim Baidaoui
Cc: Kate Costa; Bonnie Martin
Subject: Re: Arabic Bibles

Wow—excellent lead Jen. What a marvelous discovery. Why didn't we think of this 13 years ago? Lol Thank you Jen, I will discuss with the team tomorrow and get back with you Friday. Two Questions: 1—We have a PDF file for of a very special Arabic Bible version (New Testament only) Can we use it to go along with the Arabic *Small Catechism*? 2—What Arabic Bible version do we use that is available?

Together in Christ
Karim-Disciple Maker

To: Karim Baidaoui
From: Jen Bagnall
Cc: Kate Costa; Bonnie Martin
Subject: Re: Arabic Bibles

I'm not the person to decide what Bible version to use. I think we'd have the best outcome if we consult between several of our Arabic teams in various parts of the world, because the book would need to be useful for all who would ultimately use it. I'll talk with our staff here at LHF and see what we can get started. Let's keep this conversation going!

Blessings,
Jen

To: Karim Baidaoui
From: Jen Bagnall
Cc: Kate Costa; Bonnie Martin
Subject: Re: Arabic Bibles

This is all really great information! Your explanation of Muslims' view of the written Word is so valuable— these are the kinds of things I have no knowledge of, but I can clearly see the value of what you're saying. I'm very excited about the possibilities of what you're outlining, but to be honest, my time right now is monopolized with planning for LHF's 25th anniversary event coming up November 10. SO MANY projects!!!

Here's a question for you, though: Would you like to attend LHF's anniversary event? We have international guests from a dozen or so countries arriving shortly beforehand, and then we'll be having time on Monday and Tuesday to collaborate, discuss various translation project ideas, and so on. We'd love to have you take part, if you're interested and able. LHF probably wouldn't be able to cover your travel here, but we would be able to provide you with your lodging/motel while you're here. Let me know what you think!

Blessings,

Jen

To: Jen Bagnall

Cc: Karim Baidaoui; Kate Costa; Bonnie Martin

Subject: Re: Arabic Bibles

Hi Jen,

I'm happy to let you know that Pastor Karim will be coming to Michigan for the LHF's 25th anniversary event. He is looking forward to interaction with the other attendees and he will be able to stay for Monday & Tuesday and share in discussions, etc. I'll let you know specific travel details soon, please reserve lodging for him.

Blessings,

Bonnie Martin,

Director, Office Operations

Disciples of the Way Ministries

From: Karim Baidaoui

To: Jen Bagnall

Cc: Kate Costa; Bonnie Martin

Subject: Re: Arabic Bibles

Jen, cc Kate, Bonnie.

Thank you for keeping this conversation open among our team. You can see how excited we all are about this project! Anyway, I am asking Kate to email you the original PDF file and two extra pictures of the Arabic Bible. (One open and one closed to see the cover). Remember it's only the New Testament books. You are certainly welcome to show it to your team and ask for their theological opin-

ions. I can explain if needed. Notice that the writings and the font/print especially the cover of this Bible are what make it special and very attractive to the Muslims eye, even myself. I felt the same way when I first saw it and opened it in a conference display of Arabic Bibles. Why does it get Muslim's attention? Because it looks just like the Qur'an from outside but speaks the very Word of Christ from the inside. (Its visual effect is very strong). Wow!!! In our weekly Arabic Bible study, all students asked and received a copy to study in their homes. We started using this Arabic Bible along the Arabic *Small Catechism* about three months ago and so far, two Muslims confessed their faith in Jesus and were baptized right here at the Refugee Service Center. We promised not to publish their pictures cause of safety reasons as you know already.

Like Bonnie mentioned in her last email, Muslims would rather read their book than follow a Bible app on their cell phones because they believe that the words of Allah are physically contained in the Qur'an. However, they also believe that Jesus is the Word of God (Kalimato Allah) from the Qur'an but now they get to read and hear and believe in a physical God who entered humanity in the Person of Jesus Christ in this Arabic Bible. They love the fact that God in Christ—unlike Allah in the Qur'an—is doing something about their salvation. They are being convinced by the power of the Holy Spirit that Christ lived a righteous life for them and died for their sins. The Qur'an offers no justification by faith alone in Christ alone, only the gift of the Word saves in Christ. Romans 10:17

One more serious note: in my own conversion from Islam and study of the scripture after Baptism, I have always bypassed any discussion about the Holy Trinity even though I was baptised in it. The translation in this Arabic Bible version invites Muslims to discuss the work of the Triune God instead of shutting it down. More to explanation about this topic if necessary... Let's keep this beautiful conversation about the Word of Christ active and alive before He shows up in person again.

Karim—Disciple Maker

2 Tim 2:2

Jen,

Very interesting about the Bible that looks like a Quran. In Tatarstan (central Russia), one of my former students showed me how Christians printed the Bible in Tatar. It was green on the cover so that a former Muslim (or a seeker) could carry the Bible without being accosted by Muslim fanatics. It looked like a Quran on the outside, but ah, the inside? That was a different story.

Matt Heise in Seoul, winding my long journey home tomorrow

OCTOBER 22

From: Rod Benkendorf

Brothers—

...I have been keeping personal notes with regard to my contacts and activities. I have also been updating the LHF database... I will compile my past actions into a report and get that to you this week. I have set a reminder for myself to send the report every month. I will send a report to the three of you.

As the “MyOffice” Calendar shows, I have six LHF Sundays scheduled in November and December (hoping to schedule one/two more since I will be in Peoria, Illinois over Thanksgiving and maybe one for end of December), the Missouri District Educators’ Conference, and one chapel. My goal as I update the database with information for the Missouri District is to send out an email to each pastor asking if I can have a one-on-one and/or an LHF Sunday. I also have the goal of having one-on-one meetings with the pastors in the adjacent circuits.

On a positive note... I have been getting EXTREMELY positive feedback from the people with whom I am sharing the work of LHF. Brothers, the Missouri laity is by and large quite ignorant regarding LHF. (I am actually finding that as a real positive. A clean slate is easier to draw on.) Even the church workers in Missouri are relatively ignorant regarding LHF. A LOW estimate I am finding is that five out of ten church workers do not know what LHF is/does. (One pastor I sat down with has been an LC-MS pastor for 35 years and had no idea! If I wasn’t sure before, I am now 100% positive that we should find a way into the seminaries and the Concordia College system. I am also having an idea of seeing if we couldn’t come up with a “club” that could be implemented into our Lutheran high schools and grade schools. I am meeting again with the Beta Club at Saxony Lutheran High School tomorrow as they want to take on LHF as their service/mission project.

I am ecstatic about the mission and ministry of LHF and getting to be a part of it. If there is anything different I need to be doing, please let me know. Thank you. Shalom – Rod

OCTOBER 23

[*Author’s note: Evgeny is the LHF worker in the warehouse in Russia.*]

Hi, all,

Evgeny let me know that there has been an explosion on the grounds of where our books are held near St. Petersburg, Russia. Our books are held in the town of Kolpanny, in a church on the grounds of a factory.

Evgeny— На заводе в Колпанах произошёл взрыв! (There has been an explosion at the factory in Kolpanny!). Что в церкви я пока не знаю, полиция не

подпускает. (What has happened inside the church, I don't yet know. The police are not allowing anyone inside).

Matt— час вернулся из Азии. Какие новости? Книги не испорчено? (I just got back from Asia. What's the latest? Are the books damaged?).

It looks to me as if the church is still standing intact, and Evgeny hasn't followed up with any bad news yet, so hopefully everything is ok. I got this yesterday, but soon fell asleep afterwards and just remembered to mention it to you all now.

Rev. Leif Camp

OCTOBER 24

From: Matthew Heise

To: Jeff Rahn

Cc: Jen Bagnall; Robert Rahn; Konstantin

Subject: Re: Uh-oh? Explosion near our book warehouse in the vicinity of St. Petersburg

Good news from Evgeny!! (Книги в порядке! Стены церкви выдержали взрыв. Но пока подъезд к церкви перекрыт.) The books are ok! The walls withstood the blast. But as of yet, the entrance to the church is closed. Thanking the Lord for this wonderful news this morning!

Matt

Report from a visit with Sudanese Lutheran Mission Society and Sudanese Lutheran Women's Missionary League Annual Conference in Omaha, Nebraska - October 20-21, 2018

Total number of participants: 34

States Represented at the meeting: [Nine] (Alaska, Iowa, South Dakota, Nebraska, Minnesota, Washington, Illinois, Tennessee, [plus] Washington D.C.)

Countries represented: Four (U.S.A, Canada, Ethiopia, South Sudan)

Leaders: Rev. Matthew Both (president), Rev. Wichiang T. Wetnyangran (secretary), Vicar Simon Gatluk Lul Reat (treasurer)

Friday, Oct. 19, 2018: I arrived in Omaha at 8:30 p.m. and checked in at the New Victorian Inn and Suites for a stay overnight.

Saturday, Oct. 20, 2018: I drove to the meeting place at Our Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church/International Friendship Center-LCMS. I met with leaders and set LHF display in the narthex. Meeting started at 9:30 a.m. with traditional Sudanese worship service followed by a Bible study with Rev. Dr. Gray Roosevelt. At 12:00 (noon), I conveyed LHF's greetings to the assembly and did my presentation introducing LHF Nuer books (Luther's *Small Catechism with Explana-*

tion and *Child's Garden of Bible Stories*) that I brought with me from Nairobi for distribution. At 6 p.m., I left the meeting and went to spend the night [with] an Ethiopian LCMS pastor (Adefris Makasha) in Omaha who translated the first Luther's *Small Catechism with Explanations* into Amahric that the CPH published in 2007.

Sunday, Oct. 21, 2018: I preached at the Omaha Mekane Yesus Lutheran Church that gathers at the same place as the Sudanese Lutheran Church. Sunday afternoon, on my return trip, I stopped over in Brookings, South Dakota to visit with Dr. Gemechis Djira, professor of statistics in the University of South Dakota and leader of the Oromo Lutheran congregation in Sioux Falls to follow up with the distribution and use of the newly printed Oromo *Small Catechism* in his congregation. I spent the night with his family and returned to Minnesota on Monday, October 22, 2018. Some observations from participation and conversation with leaders and pastors at the Sudanese Mission Society Annual Gathering in Omaha, Nebraska:

Participants (pastors and deaconesses) indicated that they still need more [of the] Nuer *Small Catechism* and *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* [books] for distribution and use in their respective congregations. Some pastors who have been using the above-mentioned Nuer resources in the past have shared with me the fact that both resources need major revision both in terms of content and form. These pastors, some of them [graduates] of CTSFW, are also willing to help in this regard.

The Sudanese Lutheran Mission Society actively supports the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Sudan and South Sudan particularly in the areas of pastors' training, church building, evangelistic outreach. This is demonstrated clearly in their financial report where I noticed their financial contribution, for instance, toward a round trip and accommodation of Rev. Peter Anibati's visit to Gambella earlier this year. The leaders of the Sudanese Lutheran Mission Society have expressed their gratitude, on behalf of the assembly, for the invaluable service that the LHF renders to the church in Sudan/South Sudan and Sudanese Lutheran immigrants in the U.S. They also promised to support LHF's work.

Peace and joy,

Rev. Dinku Bato

LHF-Africa Coordinator

OCTOBER 25

This was the first report from LHF's newest staff member:

LHF Activity Report:- Rev. Rod Benkendorf

Planned Discussions Had re. LHF with 25 individual pastors and lay people placed in my file.

LHF Sundays:

10/14/2018 – Zion Lutheran, Bunker Hill Illinois

10/21/2018 – Immanuel, New Wells Missouri & St. John's, Pocahontas Missouri (TAALC – The American Association of Lutheran Churches)

Conventions/Conferences/Circuit Meetings

9/30-10/2/2018 – Missouri District Pastors' Conference

10/10/2018 – Ellisville Circuit, circuit meeting

Chapels:

10/3/2018 – Immanuel Lutheran, Altenburg Missouri

Actions:

9/19/2018 – Email sent to all Missouri District circuit visitors requesting facetime at circuit meeting

9/25/2018 – Dropped brochures and business cards off at English District Regional Conference

10/3/2018 – Visited new LWML offices at St. Louis Seminary & thanked them for support

Continue working on updating Missouri District congregations & pastors in LHF database.

OCTOBER 30

Readers may recall a previous passage concerning the assault on Rev. Gurhan.

From: Mohammed Gurhan

To: Matthew HeiseCc: William Utech; Jeff Rahn; Robert Rahn; Jen Bagnall; Dinku Bato

Subject: Re: Court case and attack

Dear brothers in the Lord,

On 27th September, I went to Jigjiga for a court decision related to my property against two Islamist mullahs. On Wednesday, 3rd October, the court reached a verdict in favour of me. Around 12 p.m. when I left the courthouse, a mob of mullahs attacked me with stones and wounded me severely. I lost a lot of blood and was hospitalized for three days... Although I recovered and feel much better than last four weeks, still I sometimes feel dizziness and get tired.

The judges advised me to build a wall around the property as soon as possible to avoid more trouble. To build a wall of hollow blocks with a stone foundation will cost me about US \$3,800 which I can't afford by myself unless I am assisted. Three of those mullahs who attacked me are now in police custody waiting for a court trial, but we are praying for them and I am considering to ask the judiciary to let them go. Revenge is His.

The property was being used as a safe house to accommodate those who run away from persecution and in need of temporary shelter. Currently there are one family and a single man. Islamists intention, which is to eliminate Christian Somalis from the city, made the property one of their first targets. Therefore, I would like to request you to raise or seek the above amount from your congregations and any other sources possible. I hope that you will consider my plea. Please pray for my health and the safety of the believers in Jigjiga. I sent you this email more than three weeks ago but found out that it never went through.

Blessings.

In Christ,

Rev M. Gurhan

OCTOBER 31

From: Matthew Heise

To: Mohammed Gurhan

Oh, Mohammed, it pains me greatly to see this. God be with you and protect you from the evil foe. It is what we sing in A Mighty Fortress on Reformation Day, but you are living in this danger constantly. I am traveling right now with Bishop Peter Anibati of South Sudan but will consider your request. God keep and protect you from all harm!

From: Matthew Heise

To: M. Gurhan

Cc: William Utech; Jeff Rahn; Robert Rahn; Jen Bagnall; Dinku Bato

Subject: Re: Court case and attack

Dear Mohamed,

As I have been thinking about your situation, I wanted to ask you a few questions regarding the mullahs. Are they repentant for their actions? If not, perhaps it is time to allow the Law to do its work upon them? If they are not repentant, they could repeat the same action against another Christian. Maybe it is good to allow the government to restore order and punish the wrongdoer, according to the First Use of the Law? These are just some thoughts of mine, and you, of course, know the situation best as to whether they would be open to the Gospel by your act of mercy. My prayer is that God guide you, protect you from further

harm, and give you wisdom in this situation. I pray for you daily but will now redouble my prayers.

God's peace be with you and the faithful in the Somali community.

Matthew

Dear Rev. Heise,

Thank you very much for your prayers and advice. The mullahs are not repentant. Today, each of them was sentenced to two years of prison.

Blessings.

Rev. M. Gurhan

NOVEMBER 2

From: Jeff Rahn

To: Derek Mathers

Cc: Robert Marshall

Subject: RE: The Farsi Catechisms have Arrived!

Greetings Rev. Mathers,

We have sufficient copies on hand to meet the 300-copy [Farsi *Small Catechism*] demand and more if needed. I believe you originally requested softcover and we will have those ready for you. If you would like more, we can provide more or if you would also like some hardcover copies just let us know. Do you anticipate any problem in carrying that many books across the border? I know this has caused some difficulties for others traveling back to Canada.

Looking forward to your attendance next weekend.

In Christ,

Mr. Jeffrey R. Rahn

From: Derek Mathers

To: Jeff Rahn

Subject: RE: The Farsi Catechisms have Arrived!

Greetings,

I cannot express the excitement I feel knowing that a week from tomorrow I will be on my way back to the fellowship with these new Farsi language *Small Catechisms*. Bob Marshall has been in touch with me and I shared with him that ½ and ½ soft and hard is great with us. But to be honest, it doesn't matter soft or hard... it is the word of God explained and now available to a people group hungry for the teaching of God's word. Bob also asked me to be the mule, bring some copies to the Seminary in St. Catharines, Ontario. I am glad to do this.

Looking forward to seeing you next Saturday.

God bless you, Derek

Bishop Peter Anibati arrived from South Sudan. He flew to St. Louis where Rev. Heise was waiting for him then began a whirlwind tour of all Lutheran entities in that fair city with Matt Heise and Rev. Rod Benkendorf. Matt and Rod introduced Peter to the president of the LCMS, various LCMS mission personnel, KFUEO radio, Concordia Seminary officials, Concordia Historical Institute, and Lutheran Hour Ministries. St. Louis was just the beginning. The bishop proceeded to Fort Wayne where he toured the CTSFW campus, met the president and various faculty members, discussed his enrollment in the Doctor of Ministry program possibly starting in September. From there, Peter, Matt, and Rod made stops at Concordia University-Ann Arbor, MOST (Ministry Opportunities Short Term) Ministries, and the Michigan District president's office.

NOVEMBER 7

From: Larry Rockemann

To: LHF Executive Staff

Just a few words of report and reflection from my work this past year with LHF (hopefully without lots of repetition).

District Conventions—Excellent opportunity to connect with both pastors and lay folks, especially lay folks! Also good opportunity to talk more extensively with DPs (district presidents) and offer our work/books for outreach/missions within their districts. Also good to underscore how LHF can be of great service for district/congregation's mission trips.

LWML Conventions—What's not to like?! Mighty mites with the mighty might of the Word and a tremendous passion for missions. However, we've got to find a way to gain grant dollars from those LWML Districts (i.e., Missouri, etc.) where we can't directly apply for grants. Marlene [Herzog, Jen Bagnall's PR assistant] is working hard on this, and I have some ideas/thoughts to share with her. We've got to begin in those districts early, though, because we need to help a congregation(s) utilize our materials for their outreach—or help them to begin thinking about doing so. Also, I'm wondering if our "giveaway" might be something more directly related to actual missions (i.e., "If you win the drawing, LHF will send 1,000 copies of *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* to country of your choice" or something similar)

Higher Things—There's no doubt that LHF is very, very much appreciated (and known!) by Higher Things folks/pastors/youth/chaperones/etc. We've got to stay in this saddle. We are "raising up" a solid base of support. Our breakout sessions (that we've done over the last three years) are very much appreciated. Fortunately, the Lord has blessed/enabled the technology that makes this happen well. We've learned lots about that, etc. along the way. Five Higher Things conferences planned for Concordias in 2019—we've got to be there!

Synod's Youth Gathering—We ought to be there now. Things have changed for the better. Not “perfect” yet and never will be, but the cap on the attendance will enable us to have more of a recognized presence. I would want us not to have a “recognized absence.” LHF has a lot to offer to those who chose to attend the gathering. Need to bring the large convention display and have several of us to handle it.

LHF Mission Sundays—Our “bread-&-butter.” My experience in doing these throughout the years has taught me several things and I'm wondering if our other IRPRs/staff have had similar experiences. It might be wise to share more extensively about our work with congregations/pastors.

Lots more to offer about other aspects of my work with LHF, best done “around the table,” however. One thing's for certain: LHF is celebrating 25 years of blessing from our good and ever-gracious Lord. Wow! Alleluia! We've been aging well and are poised to walk ahead into the next 25 years with lots of learning/experience/people/etc. No longer is LHF the “two-man garage operation.” Worldwide partners we have as part of a strong, committed, professional team in the office and “on-the-road.” Communication remains critical, though certainly now more challenging with staff and partners everywhere in the world. What a joy these challenges are!—The Lord leads us onward with the promise of His blessing as His Word is proclaimed faithfully and cheerfully!

See ya'll soon.

Rev. Larry W. Rockemann

From: M. Gurhan

To: Matthew Heise; Robert Rahn; Jeff Rahn; Dinku Bato; Tuomo Simojoki; Anssi Simojoki

Subject: Jiggiga congregation

Dear brothers in the Lord,

The congregation in Jiggiga, Ethiopia, is growing faster than previous years despite the persecution and Islamists' campaign to eradicate Christian Somalis from the city. In July and August, two and five new converts joined the congregation respectively. In October, three new converts either contacted me directly or were introduced to me by other believers and this week I received two more seekers making the total number of new converts/seekers 12 since July.

This week, I started catechism classes for the first group of six seekers to prepare them for baptism during the Christmas. This group is probably the boldest Somali seekers I have ever seen. One of them, a camel herder, is determined to take the message of the Gospel to his nomadic community in the heart of Somaliland. The other group of six will start classes in January next year.

Last Sunday, 18 baptized congregants and three seekers attended a eucharistic

mass I celebrated in my property. The service in which some of the congregants had their Holy Communion for the first time, was blessing to all of us, though we couldn't sing loudly for the sake of our security.

Christian literature, particularly Luther's *Small Catechism* is our greatest need though Mr. Dereje Tilahun told me that the books will arrive in this month.

Since July, my proposed relocation to the States disrupted my ministry to the Somalis in Ethiopia as I was making preparations for the move. Indeed, my heart and mind were in Minnesota than in Ethiopia. Now, I am reorganizing my ministry here, leaving the rest to Him who called me to serve. If relocating to America is the will of God, surely He will make it possible sooner or later.

Brother Ali Sharif (68), one of the elders of our Addis Ababa congregation, went to the Lord on 13th of October. Ali was working with me on the translation of Lutheran hymns. Please pray for his widow and their three children. Please continue praying for me and for the congregation in Jigjiga.

Blessings.

In Christ,

Rev. M. Gurhan

NOVEMBER 8

From: Nicholas Salifu

To: Robert Rahn

Subject: ELCG membership

My brother, I just discussed it this morning. I will write to all regional pastors for the true picture. The current membership is a little over 27,000, six congregations, 55 preaching stations and 50 pastors.

Half a dozen international workers attended a meeting at the LHF Global Headquarters. Discussion centered on the recently published Gospel booklet, "Jesus Never Fails." It would eventually be translated and published in approximately 50 languages. To make the publication more helpful for Muslim outreach, the group discussed the addition of a short segment explaining Jesus as the one true prophet and Son of God. To counter the works-righteousness of Buddhism and Hinduism, dominant influences in Southeast Asia, a page emphasizing Jesus as the Savior of the world was also suggested. Those present expressed overwhelming support and appreciation for this short booklet and its strong Gospel message. The group also covered several other topics: forming a Hmong translation team, exploring greater involvement with MOST mission teams going abroad, logistics of combining book shipments from Bangkok, the "Farsi phenomena of Germany" as explained by Rev. Hugo Gevers, and the need for devotion books and how they might be constructed.

NOVEMBER 9

From: James May

To: Bishop Peter Anibati, Dr. Robert Rahn

The students of CLIHM did very well and were diligent in their studies. Time only permitted us to complete the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, and Holy Baptism. Therefore let us call this Catechism One of two courses. Nearly all the students were able to memorize all those parts with explanations. They also completed 17 lesson outlines so that they can teach the catechism in their home congregations.

I am very eager and willing to go back to Yambio when I have another professor filling in for me at the LST as I did this time or if it is during the session break. I must give one word of caution that the outrageous inflation prices would indicate that there is still a lot of instability in the region. We pray that peace prevails and that there will not be any wars or fighting in the country.

Yours in Christ,

Rev. James May

From: Japheth Dachi

To: Rev. James May

Thank you very much for precious time that you took with us at CLIHM. The exam papers are already in the envelope for Nairobi.

Yours in Christ,

Rev. Japheth Rabach Dachi,

Out Going Principal, CLIHM.

From: Japheth Dachi

To: Robert Rahn

Cc: Nicholas Louis; Peter Anibati; Jeff Rahn; Matthew Heise

Subject: Re: Seminary Calendar

Rev. Dr Robert Rahn,

I have gone through the seminary schedule for next year and I say that for me as the out-going principal, I said my opinion and what now remains is to announce to the students that their reporting dates are from 7-9.02.2019, and that the official opening service is on 10.02.2019 and orientation on 11.02.2019. Classwork 12-28.20.2019 by Rev. Rob Roberts and Eileen. Thank you for reminding us that the complete schedule and basic information on the seminary program can be found on the LHF web page.

The Out Going Principal,

Rev. Japheth Rabach Dachi,

Yambio, South Sudan.

From: Peter Anibati
To: Japheth Rabach Dachi; James May
Cc: Robert Rahn; Jeff Rahn; Matthew Heise
Subject: Re: THANKING YOU.

Dear Rev. May,

I am pleased to hear from you and grateful that you were able to go to Yambio. Thanks for teaching our students and we look forward to having you again next year when you have time. It is true as you have said there are high prices in town and this has been a challenge for us especially in running the seminary because prices are not stable. We pray that the recent peace agreement will hold so that the situation can change.

Blessing+++

The Rt. Rev. Peter Anibati Abia

From: Japheth Dachi
To: Rev. Dr. Matthew Heise

Greetings in the name of our only Saviour Jesus Christ. I beg to honourably tender my resignation to your esteemed office informing you that I will not be the principal of CLIHM, Yambio, South Sudan as from 01.01.2019. I wish to thank all the servants of the Lord with whom I worked for their support, love, and encouragement. At times as the principal, I was hard on some matters of administration and would have been thought of as unfair. But indeed that is what leadership entails.

In Detroit, USA, I served with Rev. Dr. Rahn and Anssi Simojoki who were my mentors in this responsibility. Following was Rev. James E. Fandrey, Mr. Jeff Rahn, and Rev. Dr. Mathew Heise. In Nairobi, I served with Rev. Dr. Anssi Simojoki, Rev. James May, and Mr. Herbert who served my family adequately well. My family did not want, not even for a day, because Mr. [Herb] Gore was sending the finances as required. Thank you and this has brought a good image on LHF. In South Sudan, I served with the late Bishop Andrew Mbugo, Rev. Edward Nzeme, myself when I was the interim president, Bishop Noah Rule, Bishop Peter Anibati Abia, Rev. Nicolas Kumbo and Rev. Elinama respectively who were my long-time staff members, and the late Rev. Joseph Otto.

I thank the LHF and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sudan for their support and pieces of advice that made it possible to teach and lead. Where I wronged you, I say sorry and where you wronged me I forgive, as this will help us to forge ahead with the ministry in love. I requested to continue with this class up to 2022, but the LHF found it hard as they said that it is upon the church to employ me but there was no reaction from the church.

Lastly, I came to serve in South Sudan as a Confessional Lutheran and also going back to my home church in Kenya as a Confessional Lutheran. My theological stand is well known to my staff members, the former and the current students, and same to the Christians here. In my country, Kenya, the government does have a programme where they prepare those who are to retire not to be afraid of their retirement, I therefore request the LHF Detroit to do the same with me as from January 2019. I will be coming to teach at CLIHM and also attend their graduation together with my wife if the Lord will still give me time to live. God bless you all.

Yours faithfully,

Rev. Japheth Rabach Dachi,

The Out-going CLIHM Principal, May 2008-December 2018.

From: Robert Rahn

To: Peter Anibati; Japheth Rabach Dachi; James May

Cc: Jeff Rahn; Matthew Heise

Subject: RE: THANKING YOU.

Dear Brothers,

In wonderful fashion we are coming to the close of the seminary year. The Rev. Dr. Bernie Lutz will “put the finishing touches” to that year. Thanks to all who participated in one way or another. We are working on the schedule for the 2019 year and hope to report on that after the festivities here recognizing 25 years of blessings from the Lord... [Dachi’s comments and] resignation letter have been duly placed in the history annals ready to be fashioned into Volume 2 of *Jesus Never Fails*, a history of the ELCSS/S and CLIHM. It is so amazing to see what the Lord has done. After our celebration I will share some of the thoughts I’ll be sharing at the anniversary banquet tomorrow. Today it is somewhat quiet here as we have given all the international visitors a day of freedom to visit historical sites of Detroit. Thanks again for all your labors in the Kingdom.

In Him,

Rev. R. Rahn

NOVEMBER 10

Some 300 LHF friends, board members, staff, donors, and LCMS officials gathered for a 25th anniversary banquet elegantly served at the Mirage Banquet Hall in Clinton Township, Michigan. Mr. Mel Machemer, director of music at St. John Lutheran Church-Fraser, provided pre-banquet piano entertainment. Mr. and Mrs. James Shields served as event photographers and Mr. Konstantin Komarov of Riga, Latvia, served as videographer. Table decorations were done

by Marlene Herzog, Karen Floyd, and Jennifer Bagnall. Rev. Walter Otten, chairman of the LHF Board of Directors, gave the opening remarks and a prayer for the banquet. Executive Director Rev. Dr. Matthew Heise and Assistant Executive Director Mr. Jeffrey Rahn served as masters of ceremonies, introducing special guests and bestowing awards for years of service to board members and staff. Rev. Dr. Nicholas Salifu of Ghana and Rev. Dr. Bishop Slavik Horpynchuk of Ukraine were featured speakers. I made these remarks when introducing Bishop Horpynchuk:

There are many words that might describe the mood for this day as we mark 25 years of history. One, however, comes to the forefront as we review the journey we have been on by God's grace. That one word is "Thanksgiving." And there are many passages that come to mind: O give thanks unto the Lord for He is good; for His mercy endures forever—Ps. 118. O give thanks unto the Lord, call upon His Name; make known His deeds among the nations—Ps. 105:1. Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to Your Name give glory for Your mercy and Truth's sake—Ps. 115:1.

Our journey wound through Chicago. We had already reached the Promised Land that we thought was Montana and we were called back to a land of challenge. The looming question was WHY?? We discovered the truth once again as so often found that the Word works, even if you thought it couldn't be found in an obscure place like 2 Chron. 15:67: "Be ye strong therefore, and let not your hands be weak: for your work shall be rewarded." This is not the time to lay down the mantle with the question of Moses: "Behold the sons of Israel have not listened to me; how then will Pharaoh listen to me, for I am unskilled in speech?"—Ex. 6:12. The Lord would be with him, gave Aaron as spokesman. One was 80, the other 83, they were just beginning the journey.

What shall we say about all this? Much could be said, but tonight you are seeing the evidence of a successful journey and the glory belongs to God. It is best said by the prophet of the Lord, Samuel, after the Lord helped defeat the Philistines and Samuel took a stone and set it between Mizpah and Shen, and called the name of it Ebenezer, saying, "Hitherto hath the lord helped us." We have laid a stone in our pathway to the nations that notes this date and our 25th. Each of you here tonight can carry a stone from LHF that says, "Hitherto the Lord has helped us through the people he sent to our side." We are here tonight to lay a stone of gratitude for you as we thank the Lord for you helping us. What a stone it is and what a journey it has been.

That stone of remembrance of help was first laid in the former Soviet Union; early stones were laid in places like Russia, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Belarus, and Ukraine. These are 25-year places along with Sudan. Tonight, we want to say Ebenezer in Ukraine and in continuing on our journey, I'm pleased to introduce a

25-year-veteran of the cross from Ukraine, whom I had the privilege to see ascend from the ranks of young pastors to become the Bishop of the Lutheran Church in Ukraine. Even though he, too, might have stated, “but I am unskilled in speech,” I would suggest that he, too, found Ebenezer, help from the Lord through difficult times. He discovered the truth that Jesus Never Fails. Our man of the hour in Ukraine and for the people of Ukraine—the Rev. Bishop Slavik Horpynchuk.

Slavik then presented a special gift of a Ukrainian cross to me in appreciation for work done for the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ukraine. The cross was later hung on the wall of the LHF World Mission Center.

Rev. Matthew Heise introduced Rev. Nicholas Salifu and spoke of the collaboration between LHF and Salifu’s church and work, highlighting Concordia Preparatory School that Rev. Nicholas organized. At the time, 700 students were enrolled, and with the addition of two more grades the following year, total enrollment would grow to 1,000. Rev. Nicholas talked about LHF’s translation work and the close connection between the Lutheran Heritage Foundation and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ghana. Rev. Nicholas is recognized in the northern region of Ghana as a church planter. His evangelistic style and strong preaching of the Gospel has led many people to the Lutheran faith by the power of the Spirit working in that preached Word. We anticipate that there will be continued growth of the Lutheran presence in northern Ghana.

Richard Hallgren, John Wittenmyer, Lloyd Wittenmyer, Jeffrey Rahn, Linda Leinhos, and I were all recognized for 25 years of service. Each current member of staff was awarded a special glass plaque. I summed up LHF history and encouraged attendees to contribute to a newly established 25th anniversary “Go Forward” endowment fund. Dr. Rick Nuffer from the Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana gave the closing remarks and benediction. Each guest received several keepsakes, including a photo book of 8”x10”s, one picture for each of the 25 years. The packet also contained a copy of the “Jesus Never Fails” booklet and the current publications list of 993 titles.

NOVEMBER 11

Pastor Robert Rahn, Pastor Matt Heise, Mr. Jeff Rahn, Gentlemen,

The 25-year celebration for the Lutheran Heritage Foundation at the Mirage was beautiful, elaborate, and a joy-filled gathering of many supporters and well-wishers. Each of you spoke with pride, dignity, and from deep within your being so that I as a listener felt the urgency to keep this very important mission organization MOVING FORWARD.

Thank you for the lengthy amount of time spent on honoring staff members. At first it seemed to overshadow the time needed to hear the guest speakers. Yet, Jeff took time to share each person’s type of work at LHF instead of reading the

job title. (I was quite moved by that portion of the evening.) It was an honor to receive a substantial desk plaque to remind me that I'm appreciated, my work is important, and now it's time to get back to work and MOVE FORWARD! Thank you so much for the gift. Thank you also for giving the attending guests the privilege of hearing the international guest speakers. I could have stayed all evening listening to them tell their story, share their needs, and profess Jesus as Savior over and over and over—it was chilling! Giving God praise and glory for each of you!

Joy in the Journey,
Marlene Herzog

A circuit mission rally was held at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Cass City, Michigan by Rev. Steve Bagnall. Most of the international guests from the anniversary banquet attended and the meal had to be served in two shifts to accommodate the crowd of 300. While the first group dined, Dr. Nicholas Salifu of Ghana talked about his work. As the second group dined, Bishop Dr. Slavik Horpynchuk from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ukraine spoke on the Lutheran presence there and its challenges. While attending the 25th anniversary festivities, he closely monitored their newly dedicated church in Kiev. It seemed that the mafia wanted the location for themselves. Police had been stationed outside to safeguard the building, but hoodlums had bribed city officials to turn off the water supply. Not entirely deterred by the persecution and to combat the lack, congregation members began carrying water into the building for meetings and services.

A free will offering was taken at the rally and a sizeable gift was presented to the LHF for translation activities. The entire congregation, circuit, and Bagnall family were thanked for their tireless efforts in successfully spearheading the 25th anniversary celebration.

NOVEMBER 13

From: Walter Otten
To: Robert Rahn
Subject: the 25th

Dear Brother Robert,

I did not know to whom I should send this, but Robert Rahn was the first person I thought of when I reflected upon the 25th anniversary of LHF. We thank God for sending us Dr. Matt Heise, a wonderful blessing, but Robert Rahn did get LHF started 25 years ago. It's what was done 25 years ago that brought us together Saturday evening.

There are those of us who can still remember mission festivals. A rural or some-

times urban or suburban congregation would find it possible to have an overseas missionary preach in the morning and afternoon. After the morning service there was the festive meal and then church once again. Saturday evening was the ultimate mission festival. It was a joy to be a part of it; it will be most memorable. It was obvious that those who planned and executed the day worked hard. It was a blessing to be a part of it. Brother Stechholz, who had been in St. Louis, conveyed to me greetings from President Harrison, perhaps he did the same with you. What a blessing it would have been if Harrison could have been with us Saturday evening. He would have seen and experienced the heart of LHF. Many thanks for the beautiful gift. It is seen by anyone who enters our home. "GO FORWARD LHF."

Blessings,
Walter Otten
LHF Board Chairman

NOVEMBER 14

From: Robert Rahn
To: Bernhard Lutz
Cc: Matthew Heise; Jeff Rahn; Dinku Bato
Subject: RE: James May email to Robert Rahn and Bernie Lutz

Bernie,

Some concerns have been voiced in regard to the transparency of expenditures by the [ELCSS/S] bishop's office and I have talked to the bishop about this. One of the areas in question is the funds brought in by the internet center. I found out that, according to Peter, the cost for the internet per month is \$850, so that needs to be covered by the income. Peter indicates that the income from the computer center is cited in their church budget. Peter is aware of the usual complaints about where money is spent. The problems with the internet or lack thereof makes it impossible to communicate with some pastors in the distant parishes in order to give them the same reports the pastors around Yambio get...

From: Robert Rahn
To: Board & Staff
Subject: FW: the 25th

Greetings,

We are starting to come down from the mountain; although there are still some mountaintops being scaled. This morning I took Bishop Peter Anibati to St. John in Fraser to speak to the school children and faculty and visitors. Jeff took Dr. Nicholas Salifu to St. Peter up the street for their school chapel and tour of the school. Dr. Matt Heise has carted Bishop Slavik Horpynchuk to Trinity

Lutheran School, Sturgis, Michigan, for a school chapel there.

I was going to forward Walter's message from November 13 to Matt and Jeff but decided it was a good tribute for all of you to hear giving a general overview of an historic event at the 25th anniversary banquet. Then we had these three days of meetings that was like a reconstruction of the Tower of Babel in a good sense, not for a confusion but for a transfusion of the Word into the hearts and minds of people in their own language.

The wonder of the event lingers on and you'll probably hear more of it as weeks go by. Thank you, Walter, for representing the board. Not only did Dr. David Stecholz [president of the English District] bring word from President Harrison, but he shared greetings sent from Dr. Al Collver and from all members of the Mission Dept. that just had a meeting and talked of our event and their appreciation of our work.

R. Rahn, Founder

From: Peter Anibati

To: Jeff Rahn; Matthew Heise; Robert Rahn; Dinku Bato

Cc: Benjamin Ogiki; Friday Gardino Yoere

Subject: Translation projects

Dear Jeff,

I am writing to inform you about the following projects which are ready for printing in December: 1) "Jesus Never Fails" in Acholi, Nuer, Dinka 5,000 copies each. 2) *Augsburg Confession* in Zande 3,000 copies 3) *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* 6,000 copies 4) *Good News About Jesus*, 5,000 copies 5) Nuer *Small Catechism with Explanation* (Rev. Simon will give the number). The full Acholi catechism is ready and is going under review, we intend to print it next year in Feb.

The 2019 projects will include: 1) *Augsburg Confession* into Nuer, Acholi, Dinka, and Arabic (3,000 copies each to be printed); 2) Balanda Viri catechism (3,000 copies); 3) Updating Zande hymnal (translation of Lutheran hymns, Athanasian Creed, ordination/installation services, dedication, etc.) 10,000 copies; 4) *Apology* into Zande. (3,000 copies); 5) Atoro/Arabic prayer book (5,000 copies each); 6) Shuluk *Small Catechism* (3,000 copies); 7) Sunday school teachers' guide into Zande and Acholi. (3,000 copies each).

At the moment \$1,520 is required for the translation, edit, review and layout of Zande *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* and *Good News About Jesus*. 1) *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* \$1,144 USD; 2) *Good News About Jesus* \$376 USD. It will be appreciated if these funds are included in the next wire for the anniversary.

Blessings+++

The Rt. Rev. Peter Anibati Abia

To: Simon Gatluak
From: Robert Rahn

Simon,

Well, well??? Any progress? We only have silence and have no idea about the project. By now water should be running from the well and I don't know if it is even started, although funds have been sent to get started. I'm now hoping we haven't lost the money invested. It would be tragic. Please report before Peter leaves this afternoon so we can determine how to proceed or abandon it.

RRahn

From: Simon Gatluak Geng
To: Robert Rahn
Subject: Re: Well

Greetings in Christ name

The water should be running by now as you said and we all know. The Gambella situation is making the work of the well to be complicated. The first problem was when the government increased the prices of the materials and after that the fighting between the Anuak youth and Nuer youth. The fighting came as the result of governor changing and many lives have been lost, even yesterday two South Sudanese refugees were killed by Anuak.

The government in Gambella failed to send the car for mechanic and their men to work. The situation is very hard now in Gambella.

We have the money and our hope is to have water for the church members here in Gambella. In fact we did not respond very fast due to the Gambella networks. Most of the time government closed the internet for security reasons. We wait for the new government to get started and security gets improved so that the work can get started and we pray that peace can return to Gambella.

In Christ,
Simon

To: Simon Gatluak Geng
From: R. Rahn

It was good to hear from you even though no movement on the well seems to be taking place. When will the new government take its place? What does it mean when you say, "the government failed to send the car for mechanic and their men to work?" Isn't the well drilling operation done by a private firm or is it a government run operation? If there is any further price increase, we will abandon the project and ask for the money we provided to be returned for a project elsewhere. While we regret the conflict going on, it would be unwise to begin

a project in that kind of unstable situation. We, too, desire peace come to the land, but there is a limit to the time we can wait. Keep us posted on the situation and please answer the above question so that we can understand the situation we are facing. God keep you safe.

By the way, is it safe for the Roberts to come back to Gambella in that kind of unstable atmosphere? This, too, is a concern as we do not want to be responsible for sending people into areas where conflict is brewing at all times.

From: Simon Gatluak Geng

To: Robert Rahn

Subject: RE: Well

In our Christian life hope is our strength in every situation. The new government of Gambella will start working next week. The security of the area understands the federal government of Ethiopia. I mean the Gambella government did not send the car that carries the machine for drilling and the men who are working for drilling will not come to the site until peace return to the area. The drilling should be done by the government company. I hope the prices of the drilling will not go beyond or increase. We have high hope that when the new government starts working life will return to normal and if there is no change completely then I will advise accordingly. We will keep informing you about the general situation of Gambella. Jesus never fails, and if He is not in the plans water will not be drilled.

In Him forever,
Simon

From: Rev. Jerome Teichmiller

To: Robert Rahn

Subject: RE: Randolph application

Hi Bob,

Just a follow up to let you know that a Texas foundation approved a grant [to LHF] on Monday... Checks should be mailed out about Thanksgiving— a day or two either before or after. Looks like the 25th celebration was a big success. Praise be to God!

NOVEMBER 15

These next communications involve Andris Smilgdrivs, one of our first main Latvian translators. Because he was so good, the government picked him up and sent him to Brussels where he did interpretation and writing for international agreements.

Dear Friend Andris,

What a piece of great Advent news to hear that you are in the translation mode once again with LHF. What wonderful news. I have so much I want to know but will have to reserve the many questions until next week as I must work today on a family Christmas letter. I just want to make sure the address I entered is correct. The full Latvia team is back!!! Praise God!! Too bad it wasn't learned just a little earlier for we would surely had you in our 25th celebration. Welcome back to Riga, Latvia and to LHF translation work.

R. Rahn

From: Andris Smilgdrivs

To: Robert Rahn

Subject: Re: Resurrection

Dear Bob,

I am also very happy to hear from you again! As you can see, this is still my e-mail address, although sometimes it has pretended not to exist. It feels like I've been in wilderness for a while and now it is time to get back home.

My years in Brussels have been a bit of a mix: interesting, challenging, occasionally rewarding but also depressing and disillusioning. Above all, it never really felt like home, no matter how hard I tried. And so, I am returning not only to my beloved beautiful city of Riga, but (at least partly) to the good old LHF stomping ground! I am still staying in Brussels until Easter; there are things to take care of etc., and also the rest of the next year will be spent between Riga and Brussels. The plan is to ultimately move back for good as of 2020. In the meantime though, I already started working on the Latvian translation of the *Lutheran Study Bible*. I will finish most of the New Testament section by the end of the next year.

I have been away for too long and I am really, really glad that we're in touch again. I hope to hear more from you after Christmas, when things calm down a little.

From: Robert Marshall

To: Robert Rahn

Subject: RE: the 25th

The Lord be with you, Dr. Rahn.

I've started a few replies to your email which included everyone, but these weren't quite the right 'tone.' First, what a wonderful five days with you all! Uplifting, praise-worthy of Him Who sent you, sustained you and LHF through the years, and to see the fruits of these labors... Secondly, I'm thankful and glad that our international visitors were able to get out to congregations on Sunday, then to

the schools near and far this week. Thirdly, thanks for passing along the greetings from those in the Holy City who could not attend. It's this third item that caused me to dispose of a few replies. For my own satisfaction, did LHF receive letters of congratulation from on high? If so, did I miss their being announced due to my defective hearing ability and being at the back of the hall?

Now that our visitors are on their way from LHF, I pray that you and the staff can breathe more deeply, get re-charged physically, yet be buoyed up by the Spirit, rather than being let (pulled?) down as we return to the plain from the mountain.

Here, it's onward to Trinity/Davison for the weekend on behalf of LHF. This is the last scheduled LHF event for 2018, although I have a few supplies where I shall speak of LHF in the announcements.

Thanks, again, Dr. Rahn, for inviting me to represent LHF nearly six years ago. The mission adventure in bringing Christ to others in their own languages continues to move me and inspire.

Christ's peace, joy, blessings,
BobM

From: Dinku Bato

To: Matthew Heise; Robert Rahn; Jeff Rahn

Subject: RE: Subject; THANKING YOU

Dear Matt,

Thank you for your message. Earlier, I shared some of my thoughts about the seminary and the church in South Sudan with Rev. Rahn on our recent trip to Iowa. The overall situation, as I saw it, is good where the seminary is running smoothly (all students attending class and teachers doing their work according to schedule). This is in contrast to what I have seen at some other international seminaries.

Yes, I also heard issues about lack of financial transparency among leaders from three pastors whom I get a chance to talk with at dinner. As a result, the pastors further told me, that their trust in the current leadership is being eroded gradually. I believe that gathering all pastors together for discussion where financial report could be presented by the treasurer and/or the bishop of the church. I think this would help in mending the small cracks before they develop into a deeper rift. The pastors' gathering could also be a time to hold some refresher courses/continuing education for pastors by possibly Dr. Lutz and introduction of some of our materials in the Zande language.

Regarding the exorbitant price for internet services at the internet café that some mentioned, I was wondering if the café maintains separate rates for different groups of people. In my case, I paid 700 South Sudanese pounds (around \$5) for two hours of internet. Of course, I heard complaints from pastors (former

students of CLIHM) that students are not allowed to use the internet café. This also needs to be addressed in a different way where seminarians may get internet access at the seminary's library that, to my surprise, usually remains closed (we all know that a seminarian needs to spend a significant portion of his day reading and researching in the library).

The instability in South Sudan has affected the seminary and the church adversely including the disappearance of two Nuer seminarians (one is believed to be killed in the vicinity of the seminary). This has created suspicion among many other ethnic groups who still feel that they are not safe studying and working in the area. This and the rising rate of inflation, I hope, will improve as the peace process that recently began with the return of the opposition leaders to the country to stay. Our biggest contribution here will be upholding the country continually in prayer for we believe that God is able to change the situation for the better (I also believe that it would be helpful to include some practical courses like peace and reconciliation, conflict [resolution], etc. in the CLIHM's curriculum help our seminarians lead and contribute to the sustainable peace building process in their war-torn nation with rising ethnic tensions).

After all is said and done, I believe that CLIHM, with all the challenges facing it today and in the future, is the one seminary that has great potential to serve the region (including Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sudan, Uganda, Burundi, Rwanda) in the coming years.

Please let me know if have any questions or concerns.

Blessings,

Dinku

LHF's involvement in Rev. James May's project of building the Lutheran School of Theology south of Nairobi had been under discussion for several years. This conversation stemmed from LHF's presence in the Nairobi area for the previous 20 years or so under the leadership of Dr. Anssi Simojoki, and more recently under the leadership of Rev. James May. Administrative arrangements had changed since Rev. May organized Lutherans In Africa, a group primarily providing continuing education for pastors from around the region. LHF received a request for help in building a library. At the time, LHF felt that if it could house our translation and distribution activities and provide an office for our Africa translation coordinator, the Foundation could help in gathering books and funding the library. I contributed my theological library toward the cause.

From: James May
To: Jeff Rahn; Matthew Heise
Cc: Dinku Bato; Herbert Gore; Robert Green; Tuomo Simojoki
Subject: Library grant
Hi Jeff and Matt.

We are now ready to install electricity in the library and have gotten the quote from the Center for Alternative Technologies... Would you be able to include this amount in the next wire from the grant money you are providing? This will enable us to see the books better! We can also then use the library for translation offices and offices for Pastor George and others. Thank you!

From: Jeff Rahn
To: Rev. James May & Staff

Greetings Everyone,

My apologies for the slow pace but this has been an incredibly busy stretch over the last two weeks for us with the 25th anniversary festivities for LHF and related events. The last of our international guests are departing this afternoon and we will be able to catch up on various topics including the library/translation center grant. I will try to send half of this amount this week and the remainder by month's end so that the work can commence.

From: James May
To: Jeff Rahn
Cc: Matthew Heise; Dinku Bato; Herbert Gore; Robert Green; Tuomo Simojoki
Subject: Re: Library grant

Good morning Jeff. Thank you for this wonderful message to wake up to! I was just at the Lutheran School of Theology yesterday with the solar guys who were trying to make use of some old batteries we had and they were asking about the library. I will tell them we can move ahead ASAP. This comes at the perfect time since we are moving offices and we needed the power in the library for George to carry on his work.

I have also gotten information that we have a pastor from Togo, Rev. Charles Sakpani, who got his M.Div. from St. Louis and also has a Master's in Translation. He is willing to come to Kenya to help teach but mostly to help translate and edit resources in French! He can also do translation into the Moba/Ben language. As you remember, we started that project a LONG time ago with Rev. Bigbi. Now we have a professional who can push it through to the end. What great news!

Thanks be to God for opening all these doors!

From: Jeff Rahn
To: Robert Rahn
Cc: Matthew Heise; Dinku Bato
Subject: FW: Library grant

Maybe this Sakpani could also teach in South Sudan and also consult with Peter and Simon on translation work. Or maybe he could host a translation seminar at LST and we could bring in the various project leaders from around Africa. Would be a good way to utilize the library/translation center once the lights are on!

NOVEMBER 21

From: Matthew Heise
To: International Workers
Subject: A special thank you just before the American Thanksgiving holiday
Good morning, everyone,

I believe most of you are now back in your homelands unless your visit was extended in the United States. I just wanted to take a moment to thank all of the LHF staff who assisted in various ways, our guests from overseas, and all of you who helped transport our guests to various functions during the 25th anniversary events. Many thanks as well to Pastor Steve Bagnall and his wife Jen who worked so arduously to make the mission festival in Cass City a great success. Wherever I went and with whomever I spoke, it was noted that the speakers were very interesting and their content was excellent. Whether you spoke at an event or simply interacted with our sponsors, we are thankful to you for showing our fellow American Lutherans why we value your labors for LHF so highly. As Pastor Rahn so eloquently called us to “Go Forward” into the next 25 years, we do so gladly with you on the LHF team, no matter where you serve our Lord in the world!

It is an American tradition that as we celebrate our national holiday of Thanksgiving tomorrow, we give thanks to God for all of His blessings. I especially thank Him this year for all of you and the privilege to serve Him at the Lutheran Heritage Foundation, so that those who do not know our Savior, Jesus Christ, maybe brought to faith in Him.

God's blessings to you and your families!

NOVEMBER 24

From: Peter Anibati
To: Matthew Heise; Robert Rahn; Jeff Rahn; Dinku Bato; Jen Bagnall
Subject: Back in Yambio

Dear Brothers in the Lord,

Greetings to you from Yambio in Jesus! I arrived safely home, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for your hospitality. I am very

grateful that you invited me to the U.S. and paid for all the expenses. I very much enjoyed my time with you and had the chance to speak about the ELCSS/S to many people.

Here we are well but busy with the preparations for the ELCSS/S 25th anniversary coming up next week. I talked to the printer in Juba and they were not willing to reduce the price for printing the history book. Since we are running late, I suggest that the books be printed in U.S. and perhaps can be sent with visiting instructors next year. I will be sending the quotation for the other printing projects next week.

Yesterday was my son's birthday (Moses) and Dr. Lutz was the honored guest who preached at the occasion. I am glad I made it just on time.

Peter,

Glad you made it back in time for the little fella's birthday. It was great having you in the "snow belt." You can now better understand the Scriptures when it says "though are sins are like scarlet, they shall be white as snow."

It was a good day after Thanksgiving for the ELCSS/S. We had brunch with a donor who gave me a check for the balance for the well in Gambella. I haven't heard a response to my latest inquiry, which indicated there was to have been some action on the drilling a week ago yesterday. We will wait to see.

Peter will also be glad to hear that we also received a \$15,000 commitment for the wall to be completed. That gift will come to us at the end of January. I explained to the donor that we do not like to emphasize these kinds of special projects but keep our focus on books and materials, translation, publishing, distribution, and introduction. His response: "Oh, yes, we'd like to support that also, just let us know what the needs are." He is a new-found treasure with a full commitment to what LHF does. We thank God for these kinds of folks. If you find out anything about the well let me know.

Sorry to hear that the printer was unwilling to lower his price. He obviously doesn't have a good business sense as he should have been looking at more business down the road if he were cooperative.

From: Peter Anibati

To: Matthew Heise; Jeff Rahn; Dinku Bato; Jen Bagnall; Robert Rahn

Subject: Re: Back in Yambio

Thank you very much for this great news. I did talk with Simon when I returned and he promised he was going to have the well drillers start their job but he has not communicated anything yet. I am also still waiting to hear. We appreciate very much the generous donors who have given for the well project and also the wall.

This week is very hectic, lots of preparations for the guests. Tomorrow we will receive the first group of guests from Central and Eastern Equatoria (Juba and Magwi). Wednesday we will have those of Malakal and Khartoum arriving as well as the representatives in Western Equatoria. Thursday to Friday we will have the stewardship seminar with Dr. Lutz (morning to evening). Saturday will be preparations and Sunday the Big Day.

NOVEMBER 26

CPH Provides Special Gift to LHF

In recognition of LHF's recent 25th anniversary celebration, Concordia Publishing House (CPH), the publishing arm of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, has presented an incredible gift to the Lutheran Heritage Foundation: 500,000 English-language copies of *A Simple Explanation of Christianity* (*Small Catechism* enchiridion).

LHF will distribute the catechisms to mission contacts throughout Africa, Asia and Southeast Asia, and Europe. "We were overwhelmed by CPH's generosity in sharing this incredible gift to the world through LHF," said LHF Executive Director Rev. Dr. Matthew Heise. "Undoubtedly, these little books will be very valuable in sharing the Gospel with people in other countries who also speak and read English."

CPH is also celebrating a milestone with their 150th anniversary. "For 150 years, our goal has been to send the Gospel to all corners of the globe," says CPH President Dr. Bruce Kintz. "Our prayer with this gift is that through this partnership, the clear message of the Gospel will reach more people who need Jesus."

LHF has pledged to match CPH's gift with 500,000 catechisms translated into the languages of the world. "Since the earliest days of LHF, the *Small Catechism* has been the key to building up churches worldwide," said Rev. Heise. "With this gift and LHF's match, we have the opportunity to introduce a million new believers to the Savior!"

NOVEMBER 28

From: Dinku Bato

To: Jeff Rahn; Dereje Tilahun

Cc: Robert Rahn; Matthew Heise

Subject: RE: Books at Djibouti Port

Jeff,

I just finished talking with Kebede (Lutheran Church-Ethiopia) and Elias (clearing agent) about the books at Djibouti. Kebede told me that he has an appointment with government officials tomorrow at the Registration and Renewal

Office where he hopes to collect his renewed registration and hand a copy to Mr. Daniel Turago (official representative of LHF Ethiopia delegated by Dereje who currently is in the U.S.).

What is more, Elias told me that he has not received price quote as of yet for storage at Djibouti port where he sent email message a week ago. He promised to try again Thursday morning and return to me and Dereje with what he got. Let's continue praying that these books would be released from that port and get in the hands of people who look for them eagerly.

Blessings,
Dinku

From: Jen Bagnall
To: Jeff Rahn
Subject: RE: Needed for donor proposal

Could you also give me your list of anticipated translations (as it now stands) for the "Jesus Never Fails" booklet? Thanks.

From: Jeff Rahn
To: Jen Bagnall
Cc: Robert Rahn; Matthew Heise
Subject: RE: Needed for donor proposal

Jen,

From my notes I have the following for "Jesus Never Fails." DONE: English, Kusaal, Zande, Latvian, Russian. IN-PROGRESS: Thai, Chinese (simp. & trad.), Amharic, Oromo, Swahili, Vietnamese, Khmer, Bahasa Indonesia, Burmese, Karen, Korean, Japanese, Farsi, Komba, Akan Twi, Bimoba, Ewe. TBD: Hadiyya, Arabic, French, Spanish.

NOVEMBER 30

From: Hugo Gevers
To: Jeff Rahn
Subject: Parcels at Customs

Hi Jeff,

I just saw that the parcels are at customs. Customs Status Code: 1H. According to my reading means held; 1C according to my reading means released. Today I will be in Berlin Steglitz to hand out about 1,000 books to the Persians there.

Yours
Hugo Gevers (Missionary)

From: Jeff Rahn
To: Hugo Gevers
Subject: RE: Parcels at Customs

Hi Hugo,

Yes, the precious cargo arrived yesterday and it is currently on a customs hold. I worked with an agent to clear the shipment, but it is pending further inspection by Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) which I expect will happen today. If it is released, I will pick up later this afternoon. Please take lots of pictures if you are able of the distribution!

DECEMBER 1

From: Peter Anibati
To: Darin Storkson
Cc: Rev. Albert B. Collver
Subject: 67th Regular Convention of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod

Dear Darin,

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I was honored to receive the invitation to attend the 67th Regular Convention of the LCMS on July 20-25, 2019 and I am pleased to inform you that I intend to attend it and I will need help with the cost of travel, visa fees and lodging. Thanks for your partnership in the Gospel.

Blessings+++

The Rt. Rev. Peter Anibati Abia

From: Darin Storkson
To: Peter Anibati
Cc: Rev. Albert B. Collver
Subject: 67th Regular Convention of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod

Dear Bishop,

Greetings from St Louis in Jesus' name! We pray this finds you well. Thank you for your kind message. Regrettably, we are unable to provide any assistance with travel expenses. That should have been stated clearly in the invitation letter that you received. If it was not, please accept our apologies for the misunderstanding. I will record your answer as 'unable to attend.' We will contact you later to request a written greeting to the convention.

Your servant in Christ,

Darin

DECEMBER 2

Celebrating 25 Years in Mission and Ministry - Evangelical Lutheran Church South Sudan/Sudan

Dear Members, Pastors, Staff, & Friends of the ELCSS/S Celebrating 25 Years,

What's the word as we begin the celebration of 25 years in mission and ministry here in South Sudan/Sudan and even reaching into refugee camps in Ethiopia, Uganda, Congo and Kenya? My thoughts are with you and we are pleased to have Dr. Bernie Lutz carrying the official representation from the LHF in the U.S. God bless this historic event with much joy and dedication. There are many Scripture references that one could cite on an occasion such as this. The word I'm selecting comes from a familiar section of the Scriptures in the Old Testament, the Children of Israel's march into the Promised Land. They were in the middle of a dilemma. In front of them was the Red Sea, and when they looked back, they could see the dust rising from Pharaoh's army in close pursuit. They were of the opinion that there was only doom and gloom, no future, the end. They forgot God was fighting for them. Moses spoke first: "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will show to you today. The Lord shall fight for you."

Then God spoke: Wherefore criest thou unto me? Speak unto the children of Israel, that they GO FORWARD. And that's the word I'd like to leave you with today in regard to the ELCSS/S. I want to say this Word to the leaders you have put into place, to Peter Anibati, your selected bishop. To all the officers of this church, to the congregations and the general membership of the ELCSS/S, GO FORWARD. To all pastors, evangelists, deaconesses, seminarians, Sunday school teachers, teachers, elders, the word is: GO FORWARD. To all those engaged in translation, publishing, distribution, and introduction of books and materials, the word is: GO FORWARD. To all of you engaged in some activity of this church body, perhaps in the hospital work, in the humanitarian work, or handicap work, it's the same word: GO FORWARD. To special friends from other churches, government officials, and those who stand by you, the word is: GO FORWARD. The team is in place and we as the LHF are trying to fade into more of the background. You have prepared for the journey, but there have been obstacles ahead and behind, but you have heard the Word of the Lord to GO FORWARD. The history of the ELCSS/S has been recorded in a special volume that LHF is presenting to you and dedicated today as part of your thanksgiving celebration. God has blessed the fruit of your labors enabling us to have sufficient funds to meet growing demands. In that we wish to encourage you TO GO FORWARD.

But what about the future? To be prepared to GO FORWARD we commend

you to the grace of God Who has helped you in the past, and we know the hand of the Lord is there to guide you into the future. When the Israelites had safely passed through the Red Sea, they were told to gather 12 stones and set them as a memorial to their mighty deliverance. It's what we are doing here today. One of those stones has to be "the stone of Ebenezer," meaning "hitherto the Lord has helped us." I Samuel 7:12 In connection with this celebration you are looking to be able to GO FORWARD into the future. In this service we have had the privilege to stand still and we saw the salvation of our God being wrought through the hands and hearts God has provided.

This is the beginning of a new era and we invite you to GO FORWARD, all hands joined together. Let the Apostle Paul speak to us as we enter the next quarter century with these words from Philippians 3:13, 14: "Brethren, I count not myself to have laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." This is our call TO GO FORWARD with dedication and resolve in thanksgiving to Him for all He has provided. We will say our Ebenezer and with His help face the task before us. GO WITH GOD'S LEADING AND FEEDING. THANK YOU FOR THE PRIVILEGE TO WORK WITH YOU!!

With thankfulness to God,
Lutheran Heritage Foundation Leaders and Staff,
Rev. Robert L. Rahn, founder
Rev. Matthew Heise, executive director
Mr. Jeff Rahn, asst. executive director

DECEMBER 4

To: Nicholas Salifu
From: Jeff Rahn

Nicholas,

I hope you have caught up and warmed up after being in the U.S. for several weeks. I imagine you are enjoying time with your newest grandchild as well! I have good news! I believe that St. Peter Macomb is going to sponsor the finishing and furnishing of the translation office [in Upper East, Ghana]. They will also work to exceed this amount in support of the translation efforts. This may be in addition to other support they are and may provide in the future. It is the initiative of the principal, Phil Wargo, who we met after the chapel service. I will wire the \$3,000 this week for the finishing and furnishing so the work can begin and be completed right away.

From: Nicholas Salifu

To: Jeff Rahn

Cc: Matthew Heise; Robert Rahn

Subject: Re: Estimates for completing LHF office in Bawku

Jeff,

Thank you very much for your email. Oh! I caught up immediately I got out of the plane in Accra. It was a good welcome. From cold to hot weather. That weather took me home even hotter. I am doing very well and the family and the churches and the translation projects. This week I have been away from home. I attended a meeting at the University of Education, Winneba-Mampong. From there I proceeded to the seminary in Accra for the seminary board meeting. We discussed a lot and the most urgent one being the graduation of the four students on December 16th. I will have to go back on the 14th...

The Lord's richest blessing on you and LHF.

Pastor Nicholas Salifu

To: Robert Rahn

From: Dinku Bato

A snow shovel on wheels sounds interesting, I will see if I can find one around here. Last Saturday, we received a small Christmas tree (live and which we can plant later in our backyard) through our real estate agent (James Celkis) who is an active Christian in Cottage Grove whom I came to know through Rev. Ben Griffin (LCMS pastor and leader of LINC Twin Cities). My meeting in Woodbury was also connected to LINC that works with some of the Oromo churches in the Twin Cities where we deliberated on ways of helping pastors and leaders of these churches in their ministry. At the meeting, I came to realize that there is a huge need for theological books in the Oromo language among the Oromo leaders and pastors serving here and across the nation. Since we don't have such materials ready for use, I am working on forming a small team of translators from the Oromo Lutheran Theologians in Diaspora that could help us in expediting the translation of LHF theological books into the Oromo language. I covet your prayers.

Blessings,

Dinku

DECEMBER 5

Dear Herb & Joanne,

Cordial greetings during this Advent season. While this may be a more difficult Christmas for you in the absence of [your son, Paul, we can still talk about the "NEARNESS OF CHRISTMAS" as I do in my Christmas message this year. A

copy you'll be receiving next week via email.

Wanted to inform you that we are designating your memorial funds to the publishing of *Bible Stories in Pictures* in the Lao language, that's the language of Laos. It is scheduled for printing before the end of the year and when we get our copies I will send one to you as it will indicate it is sponsored as a memorial to Paul from you, relatives, and friends. I don't like to describe it as a comic book format but that is how the Biblical stories are presented and they are stunningly well received by those who have little Bible knowledge or are intimidated by a big book. We have done this in five or six languages thus far and have more requests.

You may remember "back in the old days" the Christian News running these pictures on the back page of every issue. We and WELS have assumed the copyright for this and formatted in a very presentable volume. I think you will find this to be a good item to serve in Paul's memory.

God's blessings and peace now and always.

R. Rahn

From: Herb Teske

To: Robert Rahn

Subject: Re: Sponsorship

Thank you, dear friend! You are very kind and Joanne and I appreciate the information re the *Bible Stories in Pictures* project. We will look forward to a copy. Would you please send an additional copy I may give to Paul's wife and daughters? We shall continue to support your work at LHF with our prayers and gifts. You're doing a terrific job! God's continued blessings!

From: Robert Rahn

To: Herb Teske

Subject: RE: Sponsorship

Herb, Joanne,

Gladly do so. Once they are published it may still take a while for copies to arrive here. We sometimes wait for five or six titles to be published in Bangkok and then combine a larger shipment to come here. On the other hand, sometimes one of our people might bring a half dozen for us to use before the big shipment arrives here. All in the interest of preserving funds. Most people probably don't know that we do much for our Southeast Asia, even printing for Africa in Bangkok because it is cheaper even with the shipping and we know we will get a quality job.

And we appreciate your loyal support. It's what keeps LHF going forward. And that was my challenge to everyone on the occasion of our 25th celebration

banquet—GO FORWARD. I took it from the Old Testament story of the crossing of the Red Sea, you know it well. God bless.

DECEMBER 7

Rev. Phillip Young, a member of LHF's Board of Directors, notified LHF that LCMS missionary, Rev. Dale Kaster, had completed the translation of Luther's *Small Catechism* in Dagbani and it was ready to print.

From: Nicholas Salifu

To: Matthew Heise

Cc: Jeff Rahn

Subject: Re: Introduction and Collaboration

Dear Dr. Heise,

Rev. Dale Kaster was a missionary in Tamale, the area Dagbani is the main language. Dale is no more in Ghana but one of the vicars will be called to serve the church in Tamale when he graduates on Dec. 16. I am aware that Rev. Kaster was working on the Dagbani Luther's *Small Catechism* and I am glad to hear that the translation is completed. Please, printing the *Small Catechism* in Dagbani would be a blessing to the Dagbani speakers in Tamale area.

Blessings and peace,

Pastor Nicholas Salifu

DECEMBER 10

Representing LHF, Rev. Matthew Heise and Rev. Robert Marshall made a joyful pre-Christmas delivery to the English District office in Farmington, Michigan. Rev. Marshall had previously contacted Rev. Derek Mathers, assistant to the bishop of the English District, relative to his work with immigrants. Rev. Mathers serves St. Luke's Lutheran Church in north Toronto, Ontario, Canada and he requested books in Farsi and Korean. Rev. Mathers picked up 300 books (Luther's *Small Catechisms* and *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories*). The following Sunday, he distributed copies to the families of 32 Iranians he would baptize.

DECEMBER 17

From: Nicholas Salifu

To: Robert Rahn

Subject: Re: Sudan Teaching Schedule Updated 12/7

Dear Rev. Dr. Rahn, Advent greetings,

I thank and praise the Lord for the wonderful work you and LHF are doing for us in sharing the message of the saving grace to the world. Your work in Sudan is extraordinary and I praise the Lord for the seminary. The bishop sent me his

message about the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the church there. What a blessing.

Yesterday, in Accra we graduated four vicars to become pastors in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ghana. Being the new chairman of the seminary board, I attended the commencement and it was a great one.

Our new president, Rev. John Donkoh, asked me to attend a seminar in the Philippines in October but I informed him about my trip to Sudan. He convinced me that my presence at the seminar would be very significant for Sudan and to the ELCG. I told him that I would discuss with you and possibly change my date of visit to Sudan. I hope September 5-19 has not yet been taken by another person. Also how about the topic? Or is there a much more preferred one? Your response will enable me to take a further action.

DECEMBER 18

The conversation below pertains to LHF establishing a translation office where translation work can be done by our Ghana translation team under the direction of Rev. Dr. Nicholas Salifu. He had set aside one fully remodeled and furnished room in his grade school in Bawku, Ghana. That school was begun by Salifu and each year he added two grades. The final two grades would be added the following year and the school would reach capacity with 1,000 students, many of whom are Muslim and receive Lutheran training with permission from parents. It is a testimony to the excellent reputation of the school. Salifu visited St. Peter Lutheran School, Macomb, and the school became interested in the office project.

From: Nicholas Salifu

To: Jeff Rahn

Subject: Work begins

Greetings,

I am pleased to report that the work has started on the LHF office in Bawku. I will send pictures as work progresses.

From: Jeff Rahn

To: Jen Bagnall; Matthew Heise; Robert Rahn

Subject: FW: Work begins

I am working with St. Peter Macomb to cover the cost of the translation office completion and furnishing (around \$3k) so the pictures you sent may be useful for reporting purposes in the future.

From: Nicholas Salifu

To: Ted NaThalang; Jeff Rahn; Robert Rahn; Matthew Heise

Subject: Fw: Jesus never fails

Greetings, I am glad to send the “Jesus Never Fails” in Ewe language to you. I hope and pray that it would be among the books to be printed for Ghana soon.

Blessings and peace,
Pastor Nicholas Salifu

From: Viola Fronkova

To: Matthew Heise

Subject: Viola news

Dorogoj brat Matus, (Dear brother Matt,)

For the *Quarterly Journal of the Institute of the Memory of the Nation* (archives and a research on files and documents of the secret police)—they asked me (well, I offered firstly several options) they have chosen 1/Pavel Uhorskai—at his 100 years anniversary (born 2 March 1919); 2/Suffering of Lutherans in Russia—this I can do basically from your dissertation—with an explanation, how this had influence on the persecution in the Eastern Europe, and in Czechoslovakia—what do you think?

Our dear brother Ivan Elko has been confirmed as the general bishop of the Slovak Lutheran Church. I would point out that he is a friend of the LHF mission. Praise the Lord! Brothers think to have the date of his installation for the 2 March 2019. Would it be possible for you to join? He can send an invitation to you. I have not spoken with him; it is only in my thoughts yet.

Blessed Christmas to you, to your father and all the family,
Your Humble Sister,
Viola

DECEMBER 19

From: John Loum

To: Jeff Rahn; John Loum

Subject: Re:: Gambia [Catechism] Project Wire

Dear Jeff,

Advent greetings, I can confirm that the transfer funds have arrived. We are grateful for your continued support. It is all happening at a time when we anticipate and await our Savior’s birth and his redeeming grace for all.

So, with the completion and printing of the Luther catechism it’s been quite an exemplary job for Gambian Lutherans, and I would add the nation on the whole. Please know that this is in many respects is historical in that it has never been done until now. Thanks to God. Because of this in the end, we would have a launching ceremony which in a small way showcases both our translation efforts and that of the Lutherans of the Gambia. To God be the praised and glory.

From: Jeff Rahn
To: John Loum
Cc: Matthew Heise; Robert Rahn; Jen Bagnall
Subject: RE: Fw: Gambia Project Wire

John,

Thanks for confirming receipt of the transfer and update on the Wolof catechism project. We rejoice with you that the Wolof *Small Catechism* will be ready in time for Christmas. Please take pictures of the launching of the book and be sure to bring back 15 copies when you return to the U.S. When is it that you will be returning to Saint Louis? Have a blessed Christmas and safe return.

In Christ,
Mr. Jeffrey R. Rahn

To: Matthew Heise
From: John Wittenmyer
Dear Matt:

As I discussed with you during your stay in Houston, I have decided not to stand for re-election to the Board of Directors of the Lutheran Heritage Foundation. I think it is time for me to step down and let some younger blood take my place. I have certainly enjoyed my 25 years of service to the Foundation and I will continue to be an avid supporter and advocate of LHF. Thank you also for the beautiful commemorative crystal that you sent to me. Best wishes to you and everyone with Lutheran Heritage Foundation for a merry Christmas and a joyful New Year!

God Bless,
John D. Wittenmyer
LeBoeuf & Wittenmyer, P.C.

From: Matthew Heise
To: John Wittenmyer
Cc: Jeff Rahn; David Eberhard; Robert Rahn
Subject: Re: LHF Board membership

John, we thank YOU for your long years of service! You have been a blessing to LHF! You are most welcome—we were happy to honor you in some way for your manifold contributions.

Blessed Christmas to you, Betsy, and the family!

The resignation of Mr. Wittenmyer brought a certain sadness to my heart as his service to the LHF was exemplary. His contributions to meetings were always

on target and he had a no-nonsense vision for our work. Even as we bade him farewell, we were pleased with his continued commitment to the LHF cause.

DECEMBER 20

Dear Dr. Rahn,

Your Christmas message is well received with thanks and praises to the Savior. So many things: very beautiful pictures of which I thank God I was present when those pictures of you receiving the plaques were taken during the 25th anniversary celebration. Yes, unto us a child is born, the Son of God to come and live among us and take away all our sins.

Dr. Rahn, the “Jesus Never Fails” booklet has been well received in Ghana. Several people have asked for the English version (those who cannot read the local languages), learning that soon Fante, Twi, Komba, Bimoba, and Ewe will be receiving theirs. Please is it too late to ask for 5,000 copies of the English version? One woman told me, “In my life I have received many failures and disappointments so if ‘Jesus Never Fails,’ why should I not go to Him.” A man also remarked, “If ‘Jesus Never Fails’ then I should rely on him always.”

The Lord richly bless you and that He will continue to give you strength and energy and wisdom to help LHF move forward.

Blessings and peace,

Nicholas Salifu

LHF Coordinator, Ghana

DECEMBER 21

From: Rod Benkendorf

To: Matthew Heise; Jeff Rahn; Jen Bagnall

Subject: Thrivent Action Teams

Good Morning All—

LHF is always on the lookout for ways to increase project funding and I just got some good news from my local Thrivent rep who I believe has quite a good feel for how the Action Team system at Thrivent works. She believes that if a group were going on a mission trip and taking our resources with them they could apply for an Action Team and donate the \$\$ to us. She believes the same would be true if a group here in the States was reaching out to Muslims, for example, and going to use our books that they could get the Action Team card and donate the \$\$ to us. She said some keywords to use are “team” and “outreach” and “Gospel” and “education.” So, and I am just making this up, but what she and I were discussing as a possible first paragraph for a mission trip (but could easily be tweaked for outreach here in the States)...

“Our Team is going to _____ to do _____. We want to share the

Gospel and teach them of God's Love in their own language. We will be teaching from and/or distributing Christian Literature in the language of the people. We want to make an impact by sharing the Gospel with others in their own language." Then as a second paragraph... "The seed money will be used to obtain Christian literature and education material that is in the language of the people. This will help facilitate our teaching from and/or distributing to the people the Good News of God's Love in their own language."

If you haven't applied for a Thrivent Action Team, there are two places where you have to write a paragraph. The first is what you will be doing and the second is how you will be using the seed \$\$\$. Carol (Thrivent rep) did not think it necessary to even mention LHF—although there would be nothing wrong with mentioning LHF. In my humble opinion, this could really work quite well for us. I just dropped off five books for a teacher about an hour from here. Conceivably, she could have applied for an Action Team and then donated the \$250 to us. I am headed to St Paul Lutheran High School in Concordia Missouri which has 35-40% international students. They requested a large number of books. I am going to look into seeing if one of their people would be willing to run this through and see how it flies. I may even try it myself if they aren't able to try.

Shalom – Rod

DECEMBER 31

From: Jeff Rahn

To: Peter Anibati

Thanks for sharing the pictures of the dump truck dedication. We pray that this vehicle will be a blessing to the ELCSS/S and provide a sustainable revenue stream to cover its operation and provide additional support for the church. I would strongly encourage that you keep a separate report for this asset of the church to track all expenses (fuel, repairs, drivers, insurance, registration, etc.) and the revenue related to its use. Will only certain individuals be allowed to drive the vehicle on behalf of the church? I assume you are not letting "customers" drive the vehicle.

Have a Blessed New Year!

Jeff

From: Matthew Heise

To: Jen Bagnall; Jeff Rahn; Robert Rahn

Subject: Article on Catechism instruction in Farsi (Denmark)

Here is a nice read (something for the next newsletter!) which explains how by memorizing the catechism, Iranians are coming to know their new faith. Translated from Knud Skov's German.

Refugees in Denmark Learn Luther's Catechism

(from the *Missionsblatt of the Bleckmar Mission, August-September 2018*), by Knud Skov

Introduction note: The Bleckmar Mission has worked together since 2016 with LHF and the Danish Balkan Mission. LHF is a North American foundation, which gives out true Lutheran literature in many languages and makes it available at no cost. The *Small Catechism* in Farsi was produced by LHF in coordination with the SELK project The Bridge (Missionary Hugo Gevers and Magdalena Küttner) and is also distributed in Denmark. Now there is a children's Bible story book in Farsi available (see page 13). Knut Skov, the coordinator of the Danish Balkan Mission, reports from the website of LHF.

Since 2015 streams of refugees and migrants have been coming (to Europe), and now hundreds of Iranians and Syrians have found themselves in Denmark. The Iranians (former Shiite Muslims) sought Christian community, and some of them came into our Lutheran churches. Recently Syrians and Africans (Somalis, Sudanese and those from the Berber countries [Libya, Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco]), most former Sunni Muslims, have been looking for churches.

Not many in the Church here can speak Farsi, so the Christian mission efforts of anyone who can help is carried out by every means available, especially literature. As soon as we had access to the Farsi catechism from LHF in Germany, we could let them read and comprehend for themselves. Since that beginning, the *Prayer Book* in Dari from LHF has arrived, which has been for many a wonderful help for prayer because Muslims come from their own tradition of prayer, and they find it extraordinary and different that they can pray to our Heavenly Father.

The books have been distributed from the large refugee centers (10 different centers) where everyone can attend Lutheran instruction. In a refugee center in North Jutland, around 100 Iranians have sought out the Church. Some had come from other church communities, and the churches there had no one who was prepared to give them catechism instruction. The locals asked for a few catechisms and gave them to the Iranians. They began to read in groups—they learn through memorization—, and as they come to know Danish better, they can express their faith and understanding of the contents of the Lutheran faith clearly.

But there are also refugee centers near Bording in central Jutland where Iranians wait to be sent back to Iran (however, they will take no compulsory returnees). Every Wednesday evening, there is a cafe gathering. The 50 men gathered there (women can remain in Denmark—they are not sent back) have more or less all read the Farsi catechism and some have come to faith. This has given these men hope, not only for asylum, but for the Hope that comes through faith in Christ.

One of the pastors has written to me that Luther's *Small Catechism* in Farsi has become the basic book for catechism instruction. It is a pedagogical masterpiece that has transcended time and culture.

Another man, an engineer who is a volunteer with the refugees, told me of an Iranian family who were in the process of being sent back to Iran. The father couldn't read, so he didn't know how he should prepare for the required interviews with the government authorities. In his interview, the father was asked whether he could explain the meaning of Easter and Pentecost and why he had joined the Lutheran Church. His answer illustrated how he had learned to memorize the catechism, because he replied that the Christian Church, first and foremost, is a place where love and loving people meet, not like in the mosque.

With regard to Easter, he said: "Perhaps I can't give my life for my own children, but I have come to realize that Jesus went to the cross and died for me, so that my sins can be forgiven." With regard to Pentecost, he said: "The spirit of Jesus has come and changed me, so that I am one with others who believe in Him." This man had memorized the foundations of the Christian faith ONLY because his family had read the catechism to him!

Knut Skov

END NOTE

God still has work for us. Generations are still left to be taught and won. The work is not done when we die; we must prepare for those who follow us! We must leave legacies behind for those who come after us.

The Lord Jesus built His church that way (Matthew 16:18), and the Lutheran Heritage Foundation was founded to use our witness around the globe. It is with these thoughts in mind that further LHF history will be written by future and current leaders of the organization, including Executive Director Dr. Matthew Heise and Assistant Executive Director Mr. Jeff Rahn.

An appropriate point here might be to simply state our Ebenezer—HITHERTO HATH THE LORD HELPED US (1 Samuel 7:12). Samuel's statement was and is particularly appropriate. The Ark of the Lord had just been returned to the Israelites and the hearts of the children of Israel were being turned back to the Lord. They put away the false gods, repented, and served the Lord only. But the Philistines once again appeared in battle against them. The people cried out to Samuel, "Do not cease to cry out to the Lord our God for us, that He may save us." Samuel cried out and the Lord heard him. "The Philistines drew near. But the Lord thundered with a mighty sound and threw them into confusion, and they were routed." (7:10).

"Then Samuel took a stone and set it up before them and called its name EBENEZER" (7:12). Let us place our Ebenezer. Yes, there have been challenges, even enemies rising against us, but we have learned to cry out to the Lord, and He helped us. He sent helpers to us: those who fought for us in prayer, those who stood by us on the plain with gifts of grace and goodness. With the Lord's help and the Lord working through His people, we were helped, and the victory became ours. To mark this victory and to honor Him Who helped us, we placed several pavers in our "Walkway to the Nations" reading: "EBENEZER" 1 Samuel 7:12 We have come a long way—ONLY WITH THE HELP OF THE LORD. Now we continue to move forward in His Name and with His help.

"The end" comes at an interesting and appropriate time. LHF's team of capable and dedicated workers have all done their important jobs. Some have been mentioned and some have not. It takes each LHF worker to keep the wheels turning. The unsung heroes work tirelessly in the background. These are people like Linda, database administrator (been with us forever), Gail (putting on the good front, receptionist and administrative assistant, Karen (the packager and stamp-er), Lisa (the keeper of the books), Marlene (working the LWML-tracking GPS), Anna (keeping the web page up to date, crisp and even), and Paige (stepping in part-time and entering addresses from the back log of yellow registration cards submitted at conventions and Bible class presentations).* After compiling this

volume, Marlene Herzog retired. Linda Leinhos, who provided 25 years of faithful service, also retired. Anna Zimmerman replaced Linda Leinhos and Rev. Rod Benkendorf came aboard in the area of Development, infusing energy and new ideas to the LHF staff, but returned to the parish after two years of service. Rev. Mark Moss has since accepted the call to that same position and is operating out of his home in Minnesota.

When talking about “wheels turning,” I can’t forget the driven members of the King’s Royal Order of Stuffers, the dedicated bunch of volunteers working with LHF’s mailings. Occasionally, someone comes up with the suggestion that we could outsource the job of preparing the mailings to a mailing firm. This would, I believe, take away the fellowship and special camaraderie this group has established as well as the highly appreciated bi-monthly pizza lunch. Donna Rahn keeps tab on these volunteers and is constantly recruiting retirees to come aboard.

And what about that which keeps our wheels turning, books translated, published, distributed, introduced. What is it? It’s people who have a heart for missions and gladly partner with us sending back the envelopes that the volunteers have included with each newsletter. Therefore, let this volume be dedicated to our workers, our volunteers, but above all, our donors.

“God’s work done in God’s way will never lack God’s supply.” — Hudson Taylor

The end. What more is there to say? A lot more, but it may have to be said by another author transcribing the LHF journey and where it leads. We know Who the Leader is, and it remains for those who follow to tread the path of the Lord’s leading. “The End.” It sounds so final, and I guess “it is what it is!” These pages have been with me for some 25 years. They contain much of what others have written and I have only compiled what I deemed historic and informative. There was much more that could have been included within this book. The journey has reported on some interesting places and has covered the proverbial mountains and valleys, but through it all we have seen how THE WORD WORKS, and we have the conviction that Jesus Never Fails. Deuteronomy 31:6 & 8

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This volume could not have been completed without the participation of many individuals, some of whom will be involved with all aspects of fulfillment.

Dr. Matthew Heise, LHF Executive Director

Mr. Jeffrey Rahn, LHF Assistant Executive Director

Miss Alannah Tuell, Editor, English Major at the University of Denver

Mrs. Jennifer Bagnall, LHF Public Relations, for review and layout

Ms. Anna Bagnall, LHF Public Relations Assistant, for review

Mrs. Karen Floyd, LHF Mailroom Coordinator

Mrs. Lisa Mancini, Bookkeeper

Mrs. Anna Zimmerman, Data Entry

Ms. Gail Schettenhelm, Administrative Assistant

Mrs. Donna Rahn, Volunteer Coordinator

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www.LHFmissions.org/publications

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ABBREVIATIONS IN THIS BOOK:

AC	<i>Augsburg Confession</i>
ACG	<i>A Child's Garden of Bible Stories</i>
ACSS	Anglican Church of South Sudan
AFA	Asia Focus Australia
ALI	Academy of Lutherans in Indonesia
ALMA	Association of Lutheran Mission Agencies
BKK	Bangkok
BNKP	Nias Christian Protestant Church
BOC, BofC	<i>Book of Concord</i>
BOD	Board of Directors
CBP	Customs and Border Patrol
CELCL	Consistory of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Lithuania
CHI	Concordia Historical Institute
CLCT	Concordia Lutheran Church in Thailand
CLET	Lutheran Center for Theological Studies
CLIHM	Concordia Lutheran Institute for Holy Ministry
CLS	China Lutheran Seminary
CLSPH	China Lutheran Seminary Publishing House
CLW	Council of Lutheran Women
CLWR	Canadian Lutheran World Relief
CPH	Concordia Publishing House
CSL	Concordia Seminary St. Louis
CTCR	Commission on Theology and Church Relations
CTSFW	Concordia Theological Seminary-Fort Wayne
CWML	Canadian Lutheran Women's Missionary League
DELCL	Delhi Evangelical Lutheran Church
DOW	Disciples of the Way Ministries
DPs	District Presidents
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
DTW	Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport (the Detroit airport)
EECMY	Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus
EELC	Ethiopian Evangelical Lutheran Church
EELC	Eritrean Evangelical Lutheran Church
EFT	Evangelical Fellowship of Thailand
EIIT	Ethnic Immigrant Institute of Theology
EKD	Evangelical Church of Germany
ELCC	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Cambodia
ELCC	Evangelical Lutheran Church of Cameroon
ELCA	Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
ELC CAR	Evangelical Lutheran Church of Central African Republic
ELCF	Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland

ELCG	Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ghana
ELCIMP	Evangelical Lutheran church in MP?
ELCITHS	Assam Evangelical Lutheran Church
ELCK	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya
ELCL	Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia
ELCS	Evangelical Lutheran Church of Sudan
ELCSS/S	Evangelical Lutheran Church of South Sudan/Sudan
ELCT	Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania
ELKB	Evangelisch-Lutherse Kerk in België
ELMDF	Evangelical Lutheran Mission Diocese of Finland
FL-GA	Florida-Georgia
FLM	Finnish Lutheran Mission
FLM	Fiangonana Loterana Malagasy - Malagasy Lutheran Church
FLOM	Finnish Lutheran Overseas Mission
GEO	Globally Engaged in Outreach
GHC	Ghanaian Cedi
GILLBT	Ghana Institute of Linguistics Literacy and Bible Translation
GKLI	(Indonesian Lutheran Church)
GKPPD	Pakpak-Dairi Protestant Church
GLC	Good News Lutheran Church
GLO	Global Lutheran Outreach
GNAJ	<i>Good News About Jesus</i>
GNGY	<i>God's No and God's Yes</i>
GNJ	<i>Good News Journal</i>
HKBP	Batak Christian Protestant Church
HKI	The Indonesian Christian Church
HKILC	Hong Kong International Lutheran Church
HT	Higher Things
IELC	Indian Evangelical Lutheran Church
ILC	International Lutheran Council
ISM	International Student Ministries
IRPR	Independent Regional Promotion Representative
ISM	International Student Ministry
JELC	Jeypore Evangelical Lutheran Church
JEMLS	Jonathan Ekong Memorial Lutheran Seminary
KROS	King's Royal Order of Stuffers
LB	Lutheran Brethren
LBT	Lutheran Bible Translators
LCC	Lutheran Church Charities
LCC	Lutheran Church Concordia
LCC	Lutheran Church—Canada
LCE	Lutheran Church in Ethiopia
LCK	Lutheran Church in Korea
LCMS	Lutheran Church Missouri Synod

LEAF	Lutheran Evangelical Association of Finland
LGH	Lutheran General Hospital
LH	Lutheran Hour
LHF	Lutheran Heritage Foundation
LHM	Lutheran Hour Ministries
LIA	Lutherans in Africa
LIMM	Lutherans in Medical Missions
LINC	https://linc.org/
LISA	Luther Institute Southeast Asia
LKM	Lutherische Kirchenmission
LSB	<i>Lutheran Service Book</i>
LSC, SC	Luther's <i>Small Catechism</i>
LSCA	Lutheran Church in Southern Africa
LSRY	Lansi-suomen rukoilevaisten vhdistys
LST	Lutheran School of Theology
LW	<i>Lutheran Worship</i> (hymnal)
LWF	Lutheran World Federation
LWML	Lutheran Women's Missionary League
MAF	Mission Aviation Fellowship
MCN	Mission of Christ Network
MELM	Middle East Lutheran Ministry
MOST	Mission Opportunities Short Term
MLP	Manipur Lutheran Church
MPLS	Minneapolis
MSP	Minneapolis-St. Paul
NASCC	North American Somali Christian Community
NEGST	Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology
NELCKYA	National Evangelical Lutheran Church of Kenya Youth Association
NGO	non-governmental organization
NLM	Norwegian Lutheran Mission
NLSW	National Lutheran Schools Week
NLTI	Niagara Lutheran Theological Institute
NT	New Testament
NTD	New Taiwan dollar?
OGT	Orphan Grain Train
OIM	Office of International Mission
ONM	Office of National Mission
OT	Old Testament
PNC	PNC Bank
PNGMS	Papua New Guinea Mission Society
POBLO	People of the Book Lutheran Outreach
RCA	
RSO	Recognized Service Organization
RTBWU	Reading the Bible with Understanding

RVC	Reina Valera Contemporánea
SALT	Higher Institute of Lutheran Theology
SEA	Southeast Asia
SELC	Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church
SELK	Selbständige Evangelisch Lutherische Kirche
SDG	Soli Deo Gloria!
SLC	Somali Lutheran Center
SLMS	Sudanese Lutheran Mission Society
SSELC	South Sudan Evangelical Lutheran Church
SSLMS	South Sudanese Lutheran Mission Society
STM	Master of Sacred Theology (academic degree)
TAALC	The American Association of Lutheran Churches
TCLC	Thailand Concordia Lutheran Church
TM	Trademark
TWTC	The Way of the Cross
ULC	Ukranian Lutheran Church
UN	United Nations
VBS	Vacation Bible School
WELS	Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod
WES	West Equatorial State
WFP	World Food Programme

