

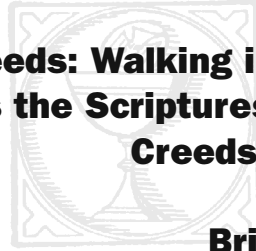
For the

LIFE of the WORLD

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CONCORDIA
THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY
 P R E S S

Bringing Christ to the Sudan



By Rev. Scott Stiegemeyer

“Whoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.” *Matthew 10:32*

Jesus warned his disciples that it would be difficult to confess Him before men. Though we proclaim free salvation in Jesus Christ, many will reject Him and us. They prefer to remain in their sins. The encouraging news is that Jesus promised to be with us as we live in Him and to confess us before His Father in heaven.

As challenging as it is to proclaim the Gospel clearly and courageously in our own country, some seminarians from other parts of the world have known even greater difficulties for their confession. This year, Concordia Theological Seminary is pleased to have among its students Mr. Andrew Mbugo Elisa Kitogbere. Andrew is from the Sudan in Africa.

Perhaps for some of us, the Sudan is little more than a faceless word from the newspaper. For Andrew it is home and the place where he labors to bring God’s word to people in tremendous need. There is much suffering in the Sudan. For sixteen years, their country has been ravaged by civil war, the complexities of which most of us are not able to grasp. The predominantly Muslim north is in conflict with the predominantly Christian south. The tension is ethnic, political and religious. Andrew estimates that 1.5 million people have been displaced within the Sudan by the fighting. Another one million people are refugees. Over 500,000 people are



Over half a million people are starving to death in the Sudan.

starving to death. It is to these precious people that Andrew is determined to announce the blessings of Jesus Christ.

Born into an Anglican family, Andrew grew up and became very involved in church work as a layman. He studied communications briefly at Daystar University in Nairobi, Kenya and began working as a newspaper reporter. In 1989, he was recruited to be the press secretary to the Anglican Archbishop in the Sudan. He soon came to hold a variety of positions and was given additional responsibilities including being sent by his Anglican Communion as their representative to the World Council of Churches Central Committee.

In 1993, Andrew met Lutheran pastors from neighboring African countries and was impressed with their teachings and their zeal for evangelizing the lost. After careful study he determined that his desire for a church that professed sound Biblical doctrine was fulfilled in Lutheranism. II Timothy 4 became increasingly meaningful to Andrew. “Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.” The Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Sudan (ELCS) was born.

From the start, Andrew received counsel and support from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya, the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania. He began to meet many important Lutheran leaders. In March 1994, the Rev. Dr. Robert Preus, the late president of Concordia Theological Seminary, arrived in Nairobi to attend the Second International Lutheran Confessional Conference. Andrew’s acquaintance with confessional Lutheranism was strengthened. The Rev. Dr. Anssi Simojoki, a Finnish scholar and missionary in Kenya, provided needed



Andrew Mbugo Elisa Kitogbere, his wife Linda and their daughters.

initial instruction in the teachings of Martin Luther's Small Catechism. Dr. Simojoki, incidentally, is working with the Lutheran Heritage Foundation (LHF) on their project of translating the Book of Concord into Swahili. This connection with the LHF has been extremely beneficial to the new Lutherans in the Sudan. Rev. Robert Rahn, Executive Director of the LHF, has provided the ELCS with funding, office equipment, hymnals, catechisms and other religious books. A seven-day orientation in the Augsburg Confession and Luther's Small Catechism was organized and financed by the LHF. The Lutheran doctrine was taking deeper hold in the Sudan. LHF funds are also helping to make it possible for Andrew to study theology at Concordia Theological Seminary.

By God's grace there are now over 1,000 Lutheran Christians in the war-torn Sudan. They are organized into three congregations and one mission start with yet another mission in its infancy. They have no ordained pastors of their own and rely upon the Church in Kenya to offer ministerial services. Andrew is the de facto leader of these congregations. His studies at Fort Wayne will prepare him to return and be called to serve as bishop and pastor to the Lutherans there.

Andrew's people ask us to pray for peace in the Sudan. Pray that the God of peace may be known and trusted by all. Pray that the Triune God may be confessed there clearly and without fear.

Pray that the Christians may be strengthened and invigorated through the steadfast preaching of the forgiveness of sins and that the sacraments may be rightly administered.

The plans of the ELCS are bold and courageous. Their hope is to establish Lutheran congregations throughout the land, especially in the south where the Christians move most freely. Many believers live now in the Muslim north but this is only because their villages have been destroyed in the conflict. It is expected that they will return to the south when peace is regained. The church knows that it must be prepared for that day. The long civil strife has left thousands of young people without education. The church plans, with the help of God, to open a number of kindergartens and primary schools. They believe that Christian schools can serve as an avenue for outreach and teaching the confessions of the church. One of their greatest needs is for well-trained workers. The goal is to eventually have a strategy for the preparation of pastors, teachers, deaconesses and other kinds of lay-workers.

In a report to LCMS representatives, the ELCS states its position without equivocation. "As a young church, it is important for us to accept the true teachings of Martin Luther and avoid what may divert our stand from the real Gospel. Our stand is to be confessional Lutherans and to teach Lutheran doctrine as expressed in the Book of Concord." Our brothers and sisters around the world need our love and encouragement. Let us always be mindful of their struggles. The Lutherans in the Sudan can teach us many things about carrying the cross of Jesus Christ.

Concordia Theological Seminary is honored to have Andrew as a student. For the months that he is in the United States, he leaves his family at home in the Sudan. Andrew and his wife, Linda, have three daughters ages 9, 7 and 5. May God bless his studies at the seminary and use him as His instrument in the Sudan to bring the Truth to those that know Him not.

The address for the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Sudan is P.O. Box 11902, Khartoum, Sudan. Rev. Scott Stiegemeyer is an Admissions Counselor at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind.



What is the Lutheran Heritage Foundation?

The foundation grew out of the global vision and the personal contacts of the late Dr. Robert Preus, who also was its first chairman.

The aim of the foundation is to support a genuine, biblically and confessionally faithful witness worldwide. The special contribution of the Lutheran Heritage Foundation (LHF) has been, and continues to be, the provision of translations of important literature. For example, the foundation has published a provisional version of the first Russian translation of the *Book of Concord*, together with many other Russian books and shorter works. A Ukrainian translation is on its way or has already appeared. Latvian, Estonian, and Lithuanian versions of the *Book of Concord* are also well underway. Of high priority also is the work in Africa, with the first Swahili edition of the *Book of Concord* being prepared by Dr. Simojoki of Nairobi. Work is also being done in the Sudan, Nigeria, and elsewhere. The LHF will also support the burgeoning work in Haiti. The importance of the availability of good theological literature can hardly be overestimated.

The foundation is supported by mission-minded confessional Lutherans of several conservative Lutheran churches. Headquartered in Detroit, Mich., LHF is in the process of acquiring its own office building. The president is Mr. Richard Hallgren and the Rev. Robert Rahn serves as the foundation's indefatigable executive director. The foundation has applied for Recognized Service Organization status with the Missouri Synod. For further information, please write to the Lutheran Heritage Foundation at P.O. Box 46, Sterling Heights, MI 48311.

*Professor Kurt Marquart, Chairman
Lutheran Heritage Foundation*