A man wearing a brown hat, a light blue checkered shirt, and dark suspenders is kneeling on the ground. He is smiling and looking towards the camera. In front of him are several young children, some of whom are looking at him. The ground is dusty and there are other people in the background, suggesting an outdoor setting in a developing area.

For the Life of the World

Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne

April 2008, Volume Twelve, Number Two



Out of Africa

Rev. Dr Arthur Just

There and Back Again

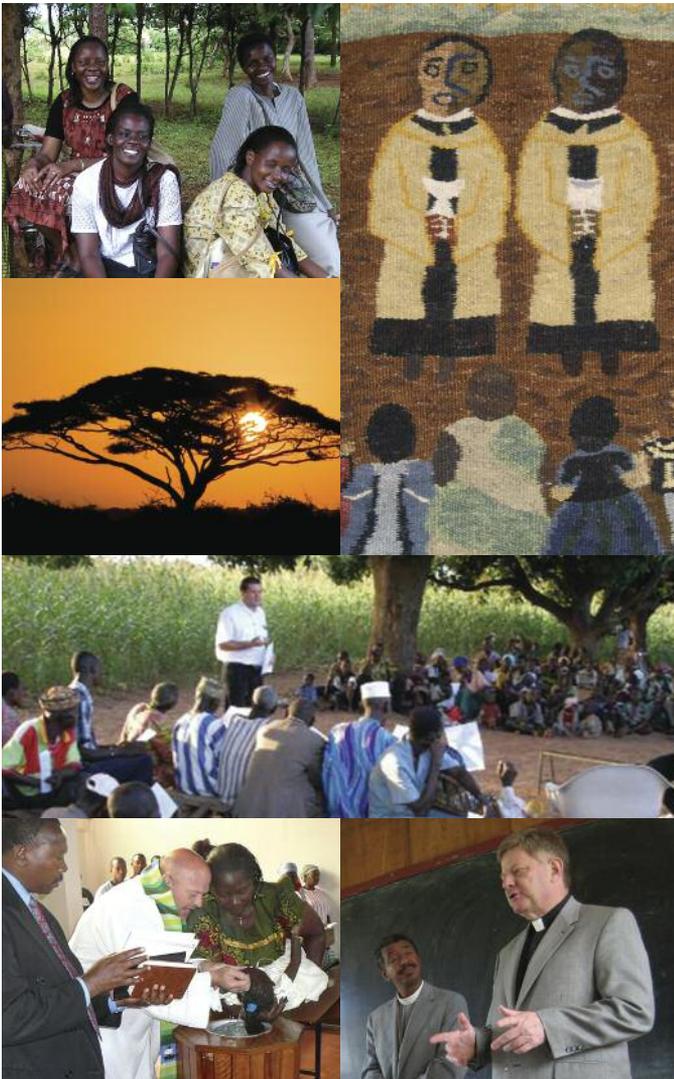
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For the Life of the World

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By The Reverend Dr. Arthur Just

The Concordia Theological Seminary deaconess program has been privileged to learn and receive mercy from the deaconesses in the ELCK. One of their leaders, Lorna Meeker, studied to be a deaconess at our seminary and now serves alongside her husband Dennis at a church in the Kibera slums of Nairobi that suffered much from the post-election violence.

12 There and Back Again: A Librarian's Tale

By The Reverend Prof. Robert Roethemeyer

Dr. Weber wanted this to be an investigative visit. "Come, Robert, and tell me what your eyes see and your mind thinks," he said. During what was the last two weeks of their summer holiday, I did just that. I sought to understand and then to provide options and models and solutions for a wide range of library, technology, accreditation, and utilization of space issues.

15 Starving for the Gospel

By The Reverend James May

In the capital of an African country, a white person stands out. Very frequently, people come up and say, "My friend, how are you?" The questions nearly always lead to, "Who are you, and why are you here?" I respond, "I am a Lutheran pastor, and I have been sent to teach the Word of God."

20 God Is Right There in Our Midst

By Adriane Dorr

In a country where poverty and deadly diseases are rampant, "what speaks the loudest to the people of Kenya is love. . . acts of love and mercy speak loudly and clearly," states Meeker. "It becomes an opportunity to proclaim Law and Gospel, to introduce them to Baptism, and confirm them in the gifts of the Eternal Feast of Victory."



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A red island, anchoring off the coast of Africa, has been catching the attention of Concordia Theological Seminary since a few years ago. Its name is Madagascar.

Some years ago, Dr. Timothy Quill went there while a Malagasy Lutheran student, Pastor David Rakotonirina, came to study at Concordia Theological Seminary. Two years later, I, the Dean of the Lutheran Graduate School of the Malagasy Lutheran Church, followed him to America.

I then invited Dr. Quill and Dr. William Weinrich to teach intensive courses at the Graduate School of Theology in Fianarantsoa, and Dr. Weinrich was able to go twice to teach.

Also, Professor John Pless has been leading a mission of mercy composed of six students into the Malagasy Lutheran Church for some years and went again in February of this year. What can this church offer Concordia Theological Seminary, and what can it do to help the progress of the Gospel over there?

The Malagasy Lutheran Church or *Fiangonana Loterana Malagasy* (abbreviated as FLM) is a young church. It was started by the Norwegian Mission Society (NMS) in 1866. The FLM is well-known for its fast growing pace. That growth stems from the lay involvement in the life of the church itself. The spiritual awakening or *Fifohazana* promotes this lay involvement. The *Fifohazana* is a department in the church. It was started by two lay persons and one pastor in the

FLM. The first was started by a man called Rainisoalambo at Soatanàna in 1894, about forty kilometers from Fianarantsoa. The second was led by another man, Pastor Daniel Rakotozandry, at Farihimena in 1946. Farihimena is a small village located about sixty kilometers from Antsirabe. The third one was initiated by a woman, Germaine Volahavana, known under the name Nenilava or Tall Mother, at Ankaramalaza in 1941. Ankaramalaza is a village situated about forty kilometers from Manakara. All three leaders of the spiritual awakening have died.

They were well known by the works that God had performed through them. In fact, what is cited and described in Romans 12, I Corinthians 12, and Ephesians 4 about spiritual gifts has happened in the works that God has carried through them. Following I John 4:1–6, the FLM had tested them long before accepting them to work in and for the church. Nenilava is credited with starting more than one hundred churches in Madagascar. She is also recorded as the one who started the Malagasy Lutheran Church in France (FLM/F). She went to Norway and to the islands surrounding Madagascar for the sake of the Gospel. She died at

The Madagascar



Ankaramalaza in 1998. I mention her in a particular way because I had the opportunity to work with her when she went crisscrossing the country doing evangelism in 1971 and 1972.

Unlike some spiritual awakening happening in the western or in the eastern parts of the world, the Lutheran Fifohazana Malagasy is working in the church. The FLM trains laypeople for two years to be commissioned as shepherds. They learn basic knowledge of the Bible, preaching, evangelism, work of a catechist, the Small Catechism, and elementary knowledge of a social worker. The Fifohazana is targeting the animist religion of traditional beliefs as the core of paganism in Madagascar. Exorcism and the laying on of hands are practiced by the shepherds in the animist context of deep trust in evil spirits.

Shepherds work as volunteers for their local church in certain periods of time that they set aside for their church. They do evangelism in their own area or in remote villages and bring those who want to join their church to their pastor. These new persons are mostly either pagans or non-practicing Christians. Some invest their time by weekly cleaning their church building, others by playing the organ during worship services, by leading the youth, by teaching Sunday School

children, by going with their pastor for home visits or hospital visits, or by working with him to hold healing prayers in their church twice a week. The door of a Malagasy Lutheran Church is daily open for activities, and new churches continue to be planted by such activities.

A group of shepherds under my leadership takes care of 253 rural poor street children at the Center of the Good Samaritan. Concordia Theological Seminary students, under the leadership of Professor Pless who visited the Center some years ago, sent some financial help for their schooling and monthly meal the following year. LCMS World Relief and Human Care even built a kitchen for them last year. And yet, we hope by the grace of God that still more can be done for this Center.

The Malagasy Church has much to offer. We, along with Concordia Theological Seminary, will continue to share our spiritual gifts by learning from one another and by helping one another as all we have are gifts from the very Gift and Giver Himself, our Lord Jesus. 🏡

The Reverend Joseph Randrianasolo is currently enrolled in the Ph.D. program at Concordia Theological Seminary.



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Dear Connection

By The Reverend Joseph Randrianasolo