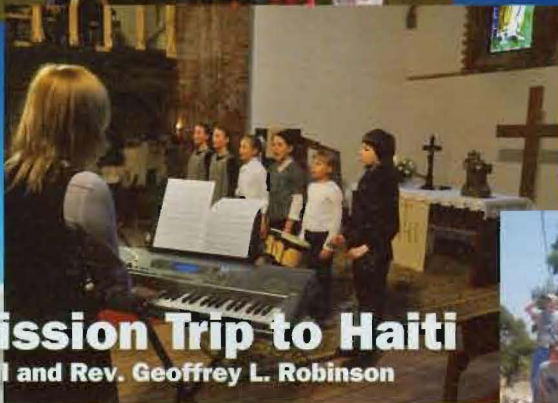
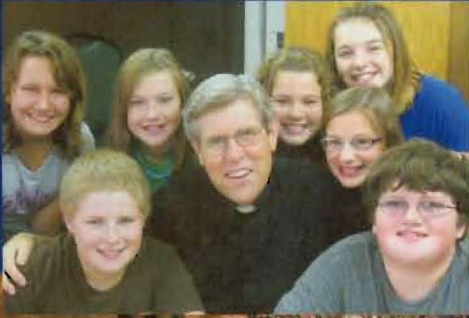


# For the Life of the World

## Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne

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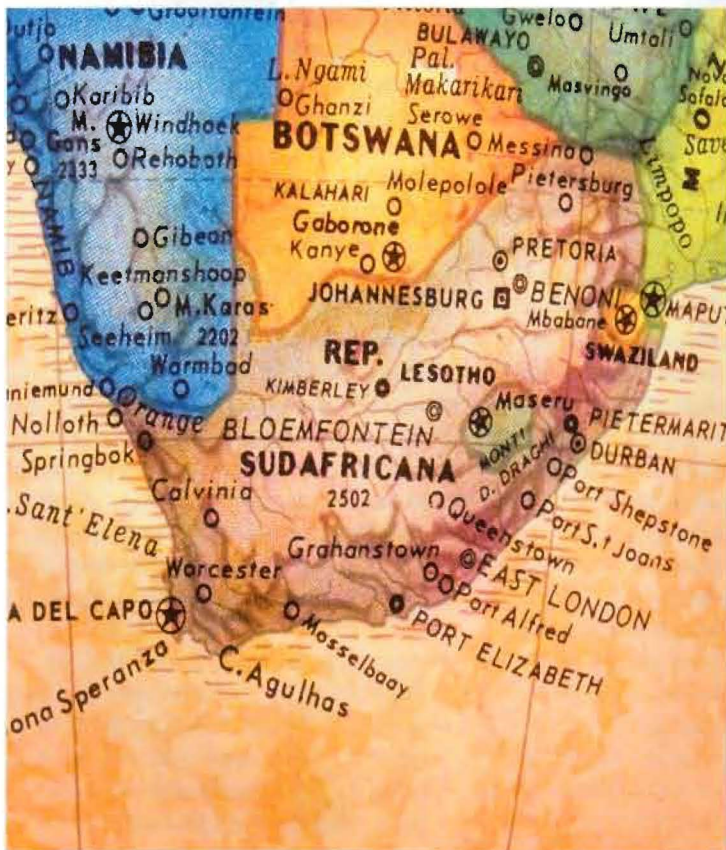
Dr. K. Detlev Schulz



# My Mission in Africa

Dr. K. Detlev Schulz

**Working in Africa** brings many surprises and anxieties—even today where economical development and Western expansion have reached almost all areas of the continent. I recall the incident when my daughter Julia slipped and broke her right arm. We hastened to the village clinic, a hospital. After a few hours waiting in line, we could not be helped. The electricity was off, the X-ray machine wasn't there, and so we sped off again from Serowe to Gaborone, the capital city of Botswana, four hours away to the south, where the excellent medical service quickly put Julia back on the mend.



*Map of South Africa*

Having been born in South Africa and having been exposed to mission work for most of my adolescent life at the mission station Enhlanhleni—my father worked as missionary in South Africa for 38 years—I thought myself to be well acquainted with all that Africa offered. Thus after completing my theological studies in Germany and the United States, I considered going back home. I remember signing off on my contract rather nonchalantly. When, in 1993, we met with our mission executive director of the Lutheran Church Mission (MLC)—or what always had been called the Bleckmar mission—he asked us how many years we were willing to commit ourselves to serve in Africa, six or ten years. We—my wife, Cornelia, and I—chose ten years instead of the six looking forward to an exciting time in Africa where two of my siblings, Ulrike and Eckart, still lived.

But the twelve years of absence from South Africa, involving theological studies both in Germany and the United States, had brought many new changes to that country. Apartheid and its policies were gone. Nelson Mandela, who had been imprisoned for being a member of the prohibited African National Congress (ANC), was the President of the Republic of South Africa, and on TV the faces of the cricket and rugby players had all changed.

In addition, there was much to learn, including Setswana, a language spoken by over two million people. To prepare me for my assignment in Serowe, a large village in northeastern Botswana bordering the Kgalagadi Desert



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*Dr. Schulz with students at the seminary in South Africa.*

and home to the Bamangwato people, we stayed in the village of Thamaga for three months before we moved north to the place of my work for the next few years, the village of Serowe.

Surprisingly, Botswana is politically stable and economically wealthy. It has many diamond mines and many beautiful, wild sanctuaries that attract a large number of tourists. The government redirects the revenue from the diamond industry and tourism to address aggressively the huge widespread disease called AIDS. Botswana leads all countries in Africa in treating the AIDS epidemic. In the mid-1990s, when AIDS came to the fore, many African politicians belittled it, framing it as a white man's disease. Sadly, this disease could not be left unnoticed for long. It came with such a force that after a few years our village's cemetery below our church building had increased by two-thirds.

What you saw were not only the graves of elderly people, no, young children and teenagers lay there. I recall one late afternoon when members came to my house all anxious about something. It turned out that they had a teenage girl in a wheelbarrow pushed all the way to my house asking for some solution to this problem. This girl had AIDS. On another

occasion, I drove past a member's house. Upon seeing a gathering of women in the yard, I asked what had happened. I was told that one of our teenage members had lost her child of six months and had buried her already in her bedroom under her bed—a common custom for

babies who died under one year of age. Yes, next to alcoholism, malaria and now criminality, Botswana and much of all of the Southern African States struggle with AIDS, and missionaries like me were caught in the midst of it. But the joys of church planting surpass its challenges. To see conversions and baptism come about on an almost weekly basis truly was a privilege for me. Botswana, Indian traders

and even white settlers all found solace in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Since I left for Fort Wayne in the fall of 1998, I look back at productive years in the Lord's harvest field. In a recent update on the churches I planted and served in Botswana, I was assured that all is well and an indigenous pastor and missionary now serve that area.

In the years after leaving Botswana, I have returned to South Africa a number of times. The occasion for my coming has changed. Now Concordia Theological Seminary has a strong working relationship with the bishop and principal of the seminary in Tshwane/Pretoria. At regular intervals our professors travel to the seminary to teach a two week course ranging from exegetical courses to ethics and missions. The audience for such classes is students from a number of countries in Africa, but also pastors from the Lutheran Church in Southern Africa and from the sister Synod the FELSISA, the Free Evangelical Lutheran Synod of South Africa. These assignments are mutually enriching both for our professors and for those who are taught.

Africa needs theological education. Yet, there is no Lutheran seminary in Africa that has been accredited and raised to a level where CTS is comfortable to start an exchange program between the students. Seminaries, however, are the pillars and backbone of any church. Some naysayers may suggest we choose other mission fields since South Africa is saturated with foreign aid and mission workers. However, it all goes back to the quality of education and the need for it. And, hopefully, if resources remain available, our CTS mission to Africa will continue for many years.

The reader should note that CTS has provided an education to three of the professors currently teaching at the seminary in Tshwane, South Africa: Former Bishop David Tswaedi and Nathan Mntambo graduated with a Master of Sacred Theology (S.T.M.) and Elliot Sithole has nearly completed a Ph.D. in Missiology. CTS has therefore a vested interest in the future of the seminary and its well-being within the larger church of the LCSA. Dr. Wilhelm Weber, a personal



friend of mine, had been its principal for ten years. Now he has been elected as the bishop of the Lutheran Church in Southern Africa. We are awaiting the news of who will now serve as the new principal of that seminary.

Through generous donations and ongoing support from two LCMS districts, the Southern Illinois District (SID) and the Rocky Mountain District, the seminary in South Africa was able to demonstrate some resilience against many odds. Students who attend come from many other parts of Africa to complete their undergraduate degree. The seminary is also located next to a large university, the University of Pretoria. Both institutions are working on a new partnership. The university is willing to accommodate a Lutheran Chair on their campus who will teach students in the Master's Program. The designated professor to serve in that position is Dr. Werner Klän from our partner church's seminary in Oberursel, Germany.

Since our seminary's involvement in South Africa began, many professors, in addition to myself, have gone to teach there. They include Dr. John Nordling, Dr. Lawrence Rast Jr., Dr. Timothy Quill, Dr. Cameron MacKenzie, Dr. Arthur Just, Prof. John Pless.

Just recently I preached at St. Augustine, the African Immigrant Mission congregation in Fort Wayne. I started my sermon by describing the beautiful African mornings. The sun rises in its full red color, the air is crisp, tainted with a slight smoky smell of food fires on which the morning tea is brewing and *bogohe* (a grits-like texture of ground sorghum) is boiling. There was a deep sigh among the members sitting in the pews. They knew exactly about what I was talking. We all miss the African sunrise and morning. I can't wait to return. 🏡

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## Taking Care of Body and Soul

By Dr. Arthur A. Just



Taking care of body and soul captures what we learned by working alongside the deaconesses in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Kenya. The Kenyan deaconesses taught us what it means to embody Christ's mercy and love as they take care of both the bodies and souls of the saints who are

suffering in their parishes. *Diakonia* embraces the whole person. They enter a place of suffering with singing, expressing joy in the midst of suffering. They read and interpret God's comforting Word to those they visit, pray for healing, pray for God to be present in suffering and they always bring a tangible expression of mercy, a bag of maize, cooking oil, medicines for ailing bodies. By their very presence, Christ is present, offering to His poor and suffering ones a concrete expression of His mercy.

When Concordia Theological Seminary began its Deaconess Program in 2003, Rev. Matthew Harrison of World Relief and Human Care (WR-HC) encouraged us to visit Kenya and learn from the deaconesses in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Kenya. We went to teach them from Scriptures and our rich confessional tradition, yet it was they who taught us how deaconesses take care of body and soul. Together we learned that the only healing that matters comes from our communion with the flesh of Jesus through baptism, God's Word and the Lord's Supper. By giving them the book *Visitation*, we helped them connect people to the suffering of Christ. We taught them how to use *Visitation* to enrich their visitations with Scripture and devotions that comfort those who are suffering.

Through the generous donations of agencies like WR-HC, Friends of Mercy and congregations in California, Michigan and Indiana, we were able to bring the 50+ deaconesses together for a week or so of teaching and learning. Our visits are the only time they are able to come together as deaconesses, a reunion for them, a retreat from their diakonal duties. Our meetings with them always address the suffering and death they encounter from the impact of HIV/AIDS in their congregations. How do we take care of body and soul in Christ as we visit His poor and suffering ones? Although we spend a week in theological instruction with them, teaching such things as palliative care, grief seminars and home-based care, we spend two weeks making visitations with them to widows, orphans and others who suffer from HIV/AIDS in both the rural communities and in such districts as Kibera and Kawangware in Nairobi.

Through our five visits to work with the deaconesses of Kenya, there has been mutual learning of what it means to be servants of mercy. They have many needs, both personal ones and needs for the saints they serve. We are committed to continue to support them with tangible expressions of Christ's mercy by helping them develop capacities to provide for themselves and for others as they take care of body and soul. 🏡

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