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, some of whom are out of focus. The overall scene suggests a mission or outreach activity 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

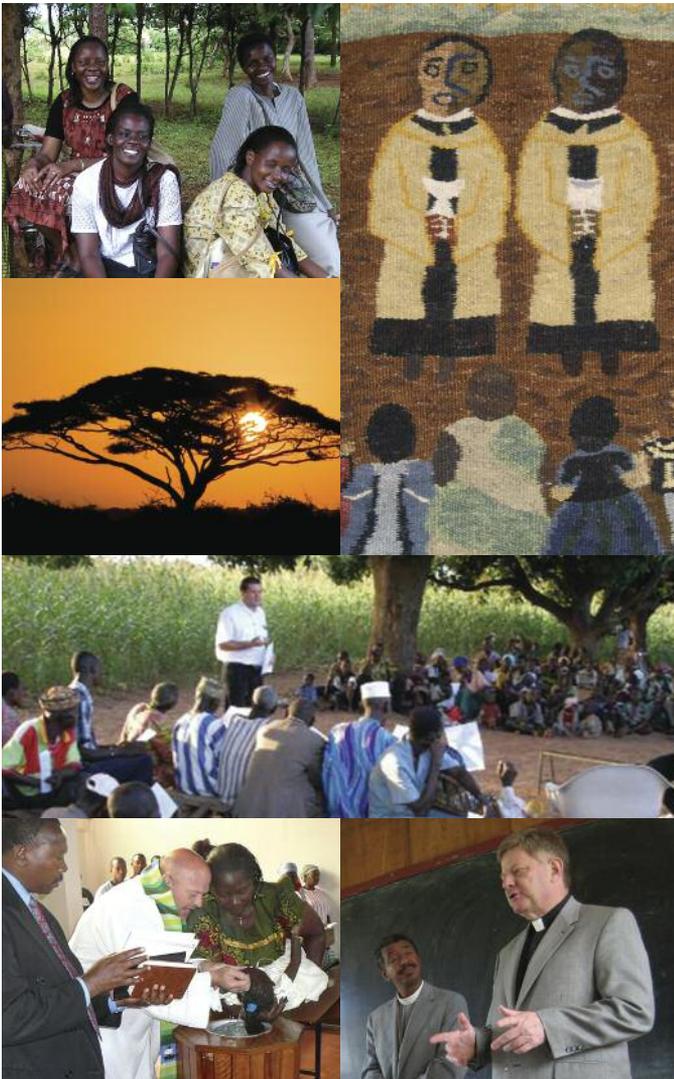
Rev. Prof. Robert Roethemeyer

Starving for the Gospel

Rev. James May

CONTENTS

Volume Twelve, Number Two



For the Life of the World

PRESIDENT
Rev. Dr. Dean O. Wenthe

PUBLISHER **EDITOR**
Rev. Steven Cholak Rev. John Pless

MANAGING EDITOR **ART DIRECTOR**
Adriane Dorr Steve Blakey

EDITORIAL ASSOCIATES
Rev. James Bushur ✕ Dr. Charles Gieschen
Dr. Naomichi Masaki

For the Life of the World is published quarterly by Concordia Theological Seminary Press, 6600 North Clinton Street, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46825. No portion of this publication may be reproduced without the written consent of the publisher of *For the Life of the World*. Copyright 2008. Printed in the United States. Postage paid at Huntington, Indiana. *For the Life of the World* is mailed to all pastors and congregations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in the United States and Canada and to anyone interested in the work of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

FEATURES

6 Out of Africa

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

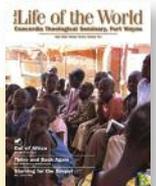
By The Reverend James May

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."



How to subscribe to and find . . . For the Life of the World

For your free subscription, please send your name, address, city, state, and zip code to: *For the Life of the World*, 6600 N. Clinton St., Fort Wayne, IN 46825. If you would like to see *For the Life of the World* on the World Wide Web, go to web site: www.LifeOfTheWorld.com. The current issue, as well as previous issues, can be found at this interactive portal.

Want more? Go to www.ctsfw.edu

Like to blog? Read www.seminaryblog.com

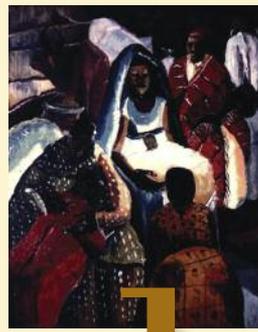
Questions about financial aid? E-mail finaid@ctsfw.edu

Questions about wellness? E-mail al.wingfield@ctsfw.edu

Questions about donating? E-mail development@ctsfw.edu

Questions for the registrar? E-mail registrar@ctsfw.edu

Starving for the Gospel



“Christ in the Manger,”
oil, by Francis Musango.
Contemporary African Art
from the Harmon Foundation

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.”

Our family arrived in West Africa in the fall of 2006. We expected there would be many challenges and things to get used to, and we were aware that culture shock would strike. Yet the uncalculated difficulty was surviving in a country without a church community. There was not one Lutheran church in the capital, Ouagadougou; neither would one be found in the entire country of Burkina Faso.



The largest religion is folk Islam, which mixes the Islamic tenants with traditional animistic practices. After this, there are many who still adhere to traditional practices that made their way over to America under the name of voodoo. The remaining 15–20 percent of the population claims affiliation with either the Catholic Church or the Assemblies of God.

The Catholic Church is very strong in French-speaking West Africa because it was the religion of the French colonists. It is also very attractive due to its grand cathedrals, excellent schools, and belief in sacred rituals. Ironically, the majority of well-to-do imams send their children to Catholic schools because the education level is higher there than at the

private Muslim schools.

The Assemblies of God has been in Burkina Faso since the early decades in the twentieth century and is also well established. Charismatic churches are very popular in West Africa. It may be a result of the fact that the emphasis on miracles and manifestations of power are very similar to the emphasis in their traditional beliefs.

As far as I know, there have not been any Lutheran missionaries ever sent to plant churches in Burkina Faso, a country of nearly fourteen million inhabitants. If there has been a Lutheran mission, it was not successful because no other presence has yet been found. It should be noted that the Lutheran World Federation does have an office in

Ouagadougou; in fact, it is their West African headquarters, but its stated goal is social projects and not church plants.

The goal of a missionary should be to proclaim God's Word, and in time, churches should take root. One might ask, "So what has proven successful? What evangelical tricks work in this environment?" There are many methods, perhaps too many. Sometimes they are not even necessary. The church started here in Ouagadougou apart from the intention of my efforts.

One day, I was in the city running errands. 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." Since there are no Lutherans in this country and very few in francophone Africa, the next question is, "Lutheran? Is that from Martin Luther King?" My response: "It is very similar. Martin Luther King was a pastor who fought for the rights of African Americans in the 1960s. But his namesake is Martin Luther from Germany who was born in 1483. He fought for the rights of the common people." I explain the history of indulgences and how John Tetzel was selling the forgiveness of sins and how Luther confronted this practice and preached the free forgiveness of sins won by Jesus Christ.

I have had this discussion dozens (possibly hundreds) of times. The history lesson and free forgiveness of sins is so interesting that they undoubtedly want to hear more. I suggest that maybe we could sit down in a group with some of their friends and talk about it and read God's Word together. This is how it all started. The teaching is unlike what they have heard, and they want to hear more. Honestly, there is more work than ten missionaries could do just in this in one city.

Locals have found Lutheranism to be very different from the religions in their country. Islam is Law-oriented, but Lutheranism is Gospel-oriented. Animism has many inferior gods, but Lutheranism proclaims the power of the

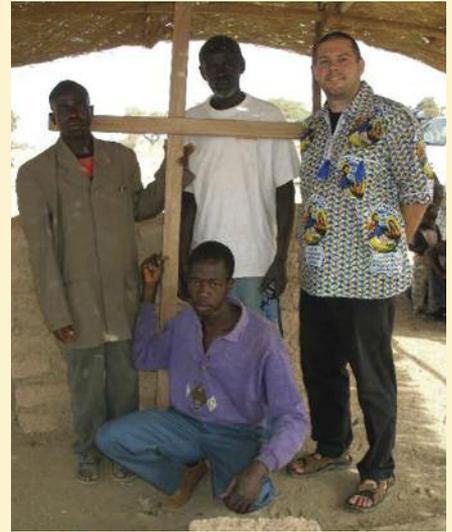
almighty God. Charismatic churches are focused on temporary miracles, but Lutheranism brings the miracle of eternal salvation. The Catholic Church charges for baptisms and their other sacraments, but the Lutheran Church gives freely.

These are conclusions the people have drawn after studying Luther's Small Catechism and Bible studies included in *Good News* magazines. The Bible is a big book and, at times, complicated. In fact, in the Bible, Philip asked an African if he understood what he was reading. The Ethiopian responded, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" (Acts 8:30-31).

Many Lutherans from all over the world have responded to this call and have sent missionaries, but there is a problem. There are large disparities among the Lutheran Church in English-speaking countries compared to French-speaking countries. Anglophone African countries such as Kenya, South Africa, Nigeria, Liberia, and Ghana have strong and growing Lutheran churches. This is in contrast to the francophone countries. The strongest Lutheran Church in French-speaking West Africa might be Togo, and this church, established in the mid-1908s, is still very young. Many countries have never been reached. There is a lack of missionaries and a lack of resources. The problem is coupled by the fact that there are relatively few Lutheran resources in French.

These obstacles are not insurmountable. This is not to take away from East Africa and in no way should this take away from the needs in East Africa. Rather, it is imperative to bring to your attention the need for your prayers and support to bring the message of salvation by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ to those who have never heard. There are people who are starving for the Gospel and need help. They need good theological resources in their native and national languages. They need servants to bring the news to those who have never heard (Romans 10:17). They want to understand, but how can they unless someone guides them? 🏠

The Reverend James May is currently serving in Burkina Faso, Africa. To learn more, visit www.mayfamilyintogo.com



There are people who are starving for the Gospel and need help. They need good theological resources in their native and national languages. They need servants to bring the news to those who have never heard (Romans 10:17). They want to understand, but how can they unless someone guides them?
