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PROJECT TIMOTHY - KENYA

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Dear Friends in Christ,

This past week, we completed the fall semester here at Matongo Lutheran Theological College in western Kenya. Our students have all returned to homes and family, so the campus is very quiet – except for our neighborhood dogs, cattle, goats and chickens! As I write, heavy rains are falling with flashes of lightning and rumbling thunder overhead, very typical in this interesting climate.

At nearly a mile-high elevation, and temperatures ranging just between 65 and 80° F, this is a lovely environment for a university and the quiet setting very conducive to the intense study of theology. The vegetation is lush, with amaryllis, hyacinth, bougainvillea and morning glories in continuous bloom. The banana trees in my back yard keep yielding their delicious sweet bananas.



DT 6 – November 18, 2008. I told them I wanted to take a picture of a good-looking group of bright, future African pastors and theologians. “Do you know where I could find some?”

When you live, worship and work together with fellow Christians, close bonds begin to form. I can see already I am someday going to miss these students from the “upper class” a lot – those getting their Diploma of Theology in May. They are scheduled to be ordained in about two years.

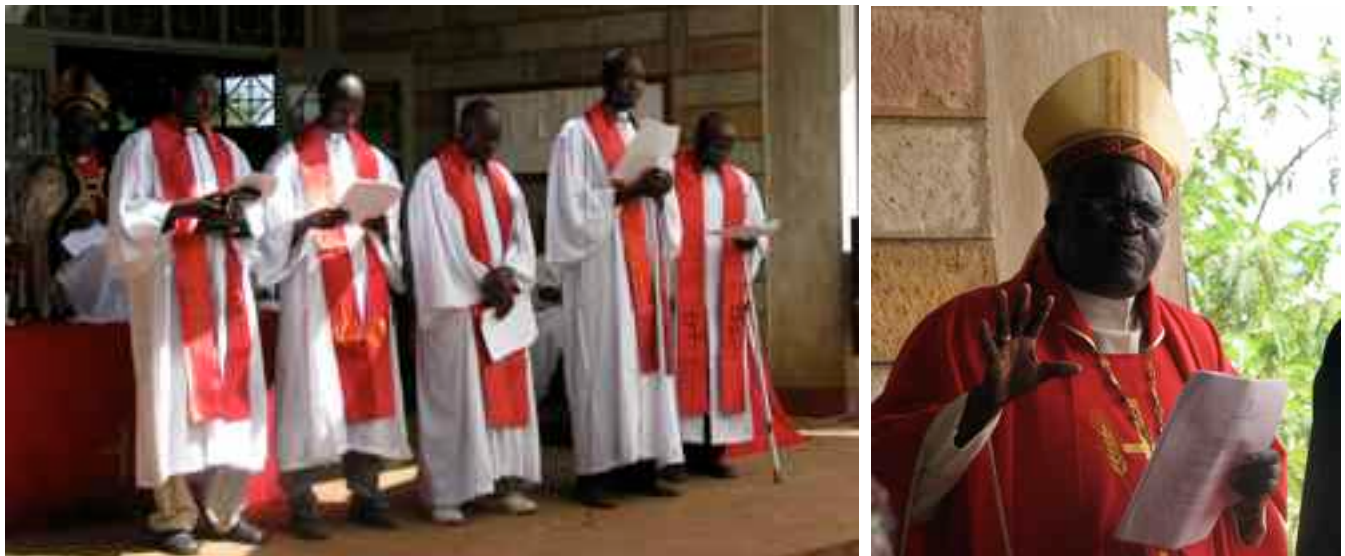
Many of our students are married with children. During this past semester, the wives of four gave birth and all were granted some leave to be with them during the time of delivery. It is often difficult for seminarians here as much as it is at home in the U. S. Not only do they face the strain of finances, but there is no married housing provided on campus and students are often away from home and family for many weeks at a time. Yet they share with me their joy in the Lord.



L to R: DT 6 student Boris Ogello with his wife Rosemary & their 3-month old daughter Joy at MLTC; in the Pajero en route to Kisumu – Paul Okeyo, George Odhiambo, Aloyce Okeyo, Jerim Onanda, Boris & Rosemary; Daddy’s little girl

Many of our students have been evangelists in their own parishes, to which they often return over the weekends to provide services. The need of the ELCK for trained pastors continues to grow. Congregations now number 700, with baptized membership over 96,000 and yet only 122 pastors to serve them. Just do the math! That is an enormous amount of responsibility for so few. Our task is vital to the spiritual well-being of much of East Africa. Just as in the U. S., the sects are strong. My sense is that many street preachers give false hope to those suffering from HIV/AIDS rather than delivering the only-saving message of Christ-crucified-for-us.

On December 7, the number of ordained ELCK pastors increased by five – praise God! In a large ordination service at the Lake Diocese Cathedral Church, Bishop Richard Amayo spoke eloquently about the meaning of ordination. He drew attention to a difference between the Eastern and Western branches of Christianity. The Western church leaves it lastly to the Bishop to ordain, while the Eastern church clearly teaches that it is God who ultimately ordains to the holy ministry.



Lake Diocese Bishop Richard Amayo ordains Evans Orori, Zablun Ogutu, Francis Ongonga, Samuel Awino, and Isaac Gaga. Presiding Bishop Walter Obare powerfully exhorts the ordinands to be the kind of pastor that he expects them to be – humble and faithful servants of God’s Word. There is a depth of biblical conviction in what these men bring to their office.

Each of the new pastors received a Bible and other signs of the pastoral office – a complete set of stoles, a ciborium (a silver container for communion wafers), and a chalice.

I have also been even busier than ever this past month, engaged in wonderful opportunities for sharing in the good and sacred things our Lord gives us. Besides MLTC, I have been preaching and teaching at synods in Rarieda, Mamboleo, Kisumu, and soon again in Matongo and Kenyoro. In addition, I have been helping MLTC Principal Rev. Dr. Joseph Ochola by preparing presentations and materials for development of Neema Lutheran University of Kenya and for support of Hope for the Destitute Kenya, an empowering program for widows/widowers and HIV/AIDS orphans.



Preaching the 3rd to Last Sunday of the Church Year, Lake Diocese Cathedral Church – November 9; speaking on “Forgiveness of Sins” at the Kisumu Synod, my student, Evangelist Paul Okeyo, translating (both occasions) – December 6, 2008

I am so thankful I will be able to be home with Mary and all of our children for Christmas! I leave from Kisumu on December 15. I will be preaching at Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church (AALC) of Deephaven, MN, December 21; and at Fairview Lutheran Church (LCMS) in Minnetonka, MN, December 28. I am also scheduled to make a presentation during the Bible class hour at St. James Lutheran Church (Independent) in West St. Paul, January 4. Then back to Matongo by January 9, for the start of spring semester. Mary and I look forward to hosting in our home our MLTC Principal Rev. Dr. Joseph Ochola a few days during his trip to the U. S., December 19-21.



A Matongo landscape – looking toward the NNE, Sondu on the distant horizon; the Nandi Hills left background; deaconess dormitory and faculty housing center; the main MLTC building with classrooms, offices, library and chapel on the right – December 10, 2008

I am happy to report the progress of The Saint Timothy Society that oversees the work of Project Timothy - Kenya. STS has now received IRS status as a 501(c) (3) non-profit corporation. The Board has applied to Thrivent Financial for Lutherans so that donors with policies can have their gifts matched by Thrivent. I plan to meet with the Board in about a week. We welcome as our new member, Mr. Tom Watua, of Edina, MN. Tom is a native of Kenya and so brings his knowledge of that context as well as his experience as a businessman to our work together.

The Saint Timothy Board of Directors:

Rev. Dr. Armand Boehme, President

Rev. Dr. Michael Albrecht, Secretary

Mr. Rob Severson, Treasurer

Mr. Tom Watua

The high poinsettia bushes in front of Moses Okoyo's home next door are a bright red, reminding me we will soon celebrate The Nativity of Our Lord. What joy is ours to know God has come so near to us, to be one of us, to be our Sin-bearer, the One who seeks us out, not en masse, but one at a time, each precious to Him. *"For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord"* (Luke 2:11). A blessed Christmas to you!

From the Kisii highlands of East Africa,
Your friend in Christ,

Rev. Thomas V. Aadland

Post-script: Project Timothy – Kenya is a commitment for a minimum of two years. But the work here will likely need five years to complete. In either case, I don't want to have to return home pre-maturely, before the task is finished. If you haven't already, may I implore you by the mercies of Christ to ask your missions committee in your own congregation to join in this effort with its support. God bless you!

A reminder: Please make checks in support of this ministry payable to:

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church

18360 Minnetonka Boulevard

Wayzata, MN 55391

Please note in the memo line **"For Project Timothy – Kenya"**. Thank you!

PRAYER REQUESTS:

- God's watchful care over my family and safety as I travel across the continents and ocean
- Physical health and stamina
- Continued civil peace and stability of government in Kenya
- Openness to the Gospel in Kenya
- Sustained support among donors, other congregations, and foundation grants
- Spiritual strength to withstand any attacks of the Enemy
- Resources to expand the facilities at Matongo for a growing student population
- Effective strategic planning for Neema Lutheran University of Kenya
- Travel safety for Rev. Dan Schmelzer, and Rev. Dr. Ochola
- A safe and reliable vehicle for MLTC Principal Dr. Ochola