

# Lutheran Theological Seminary in Tshwane

*Training Lutheran Pastors and Deaconesses for Africa*

## LTS NEWS

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### Seminary in last Quarter



Surely these are exiting times & we're part of them. South Africa has opened up to the rest of the continent and as a result our Seminary has been able to train Lutheran pastors from all over the African continent for the past decade. Thanks to significant support from friends and members the Seminary grew exponentially in the past years. Whereas previously 10-15 men from Southern Africa were trained, this number was more than doubled by significant expansion of our facility with additional classrooms and more student accommodation. More than 100 pastors serving Lutheran Churches today in Liberia, Nigeria, South Sudan, Uganda, Kenya, Zambia, Botswana and others were trained at our Seminary and recall this privilege with joy.

Huge financial challenges face Seminary training today. Helpful fundraiser are often limited to 1-3 years, whereas the average formal training of a student from Africa takes at least 5-6 years. These time frames are very much in line with worldwide standards – even if our initial prerequisites are below global benchmarks. That is why our students

need to catch up considerable lost ground during their years of study before they are on par with graduates from elsewhere. The studies at our Seminary are so very intensive, because they attempt to take our students from the backwaters of the Church to the forefront and cutting edge of theological studies amongst Lutherans worldwide.

Students start with a bi-annual bridging course at pre-graduate level to acquire academic skills, learn the biblical languages and familiarize themselves with the Bible (*Bibelkunde*) as well as the basic tenants of the Lutheran faith in Luther's Catechisms and the Augsburg Confession.

Our students have a remarkable aptitude for languages—most of them know 3-5 languages before they come to Seminary. This is one of the great strengths of our training program.

In our main course of Lutheran theology at Bachelor's level students go

*(Continued on page 2)*

### Join our Prayer

Lord, we thank you for theological education that is bound to the holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments and founded on the Lutheran confessions as their truthful, authoritative and binding exposition here and in many churches around the world. In your mercy call and send even more suitable servants into your harvest.

Grant that we trust you to provide good, solid and faithful training and finally appropriate deployment also to promote your Church throughout Africa and abroad.

In your mercy let all the teaching, learning and confessing flourish according to your most holy will and gracious promise at the Lutheran Theological Seminaries across the globe and also here at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Tshwane (Pretoria, S.Africa).

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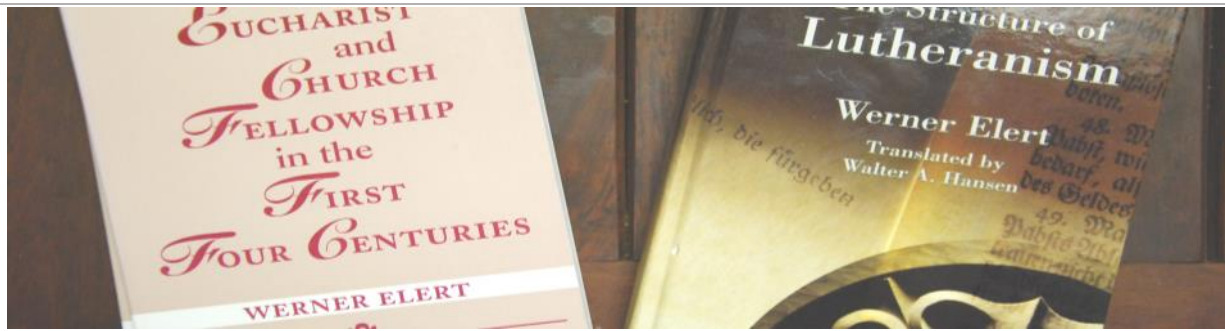
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through the intensive studies of biblical, historical and pastoral theology with a strong focus on mission and outreach of the Lutheran Church in our rapidly changing world.

Our program aims towards a specialization in Lutheran mission theology at post-graduate level (MTh). In the past five years more than 10 men have successfully graduated at Masters level and our Church has 4 Doctors of theology whilst 5 are currently enrolled at that (PhD) level.

This brief overview shows how lengthy such an advanced theological program really is. If we consider the enormous challenges facing the Lutheran Church on this continent – and worldwide – it is highly unlikely that simple solutions to such complicated issues will be easily found. Serious research, hard work and lots of dedication will probably be required to come up with more or less suitable strategies to address growing challenges effectively. No short cuts can be expected. Just as Rome was not built in one day, Lutherans in Africa will almost certainly need to come up with considerable effort, time and countless mercies and blessing from on high too. Obviously we don't need to have every student finish off with a PhD. Yet it remains a great blessing to our church and huge step forward that such academic qualifications can be achieved at our Seminary in accredited partnership and formalized cooperation with the University of Pretoria (UP).

Our outreach into Africa is just one side of the story. The other part of the story is that Africans are streaming into South Africa at an unprecedented rate. This is due to the seemingly endless possibilities down South. It is the most innovative and entrepreneurial who go the distance and come all the way. Nearly 10 years ago Angus Lukeeta made his way all

the way from Uganda to join the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Tshwane. Up to date there have been over 15 students from Uganda following him and more than 100 students from this continent, who have sought out our Seminary and completed the program here successfully.

Lately the Evangelical Lutheran Church Mekane Yesus has applied with the Lutheran Church in Southern Africa to have their coordinator Pastor Tefera Muzein based at our Seminary in Pretoria. He is to coordinate the pastoral care of more than 25,000 members of his church living in our country. Exiting prospects and if we consider that we are already training Ethiopian Lutherans at our Seminary, they become even more so, because they are most likely the suitable evangelists, missionaries, pastors and teachers to work amongst these immigrants. A similar story could be told for growing congregations from Congo, India, Madagascar and Tanzania in South Africa – and we have students from these areas enrolled at our Seminary.

Our church needs to adapt quickly to the changing landscape in Southern Africa. Rural areas are becoming increasingly devoid of people, whereas urban areas are bursting at the seams. It's happening across the globe and we're part of these changes. Future pastors will face and accommodate more people from diverse backgrounds, nationalities, races and religions even while applying Lutheran doctrine faithfully in their ministry and service. This is already happening in various places today. For example in downtown Durban on the coast our vicar Eric Gboto (MTh) from Liberia is serving francophone Congolese refugees. In Gaborone (Capital of Botswana) the Rwandan Frank Kainerugaba (MTh) is serving expats too. Here in Pretoria the Ugandan Enoch Macben (MTh) is teaching Greek Grammar to the students from across Africa at our Seminary.

The excellent work at our Seminary in Pretoria has attracted many students. To maintain and hopefully expand this work of the Lutheran Church, we will need a functioning facility. Yet more than anything else we will need to recruit qualified and even excellent teachers, who are willing and able to serve for long terms doing relevant research, publishing their papers and ground-breaking studies for the benefit of the Lutheran Church and its growing numbers in Africa as faithful and confessional Lutherans. This is our greatest challenge. Those who have the potential and qualification for this work are a very precious asset and gift to the Church at any time and everywhere.

Help us to train faithful Lutheran pastors for Africa and the future of our dearly beloved Lutheran Church. Join our daily prayers to the Lord of the Church that he send faithful laborers into the harvest and that he provide the sufficient means and facilities to train them well and employ them as is most beneficial to his Church as a whole. If you do have the means and willingness to help, please do so – in the name of our Lord and saviour Jesus Christ. +



Rev. Tefera Muzein from the Evangelical Lutheran Church Mekane Yesous (ELC Ethiopia) is now stationed at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Tshwane (Pretoria, South Africa) to serve members of his church living in this part of the world. We pray that his time here will be a blessing to him and the Lutheran Church +

**You want to support missions in Africa?  
Here is how you could do it effectively.**



Support to LTS directly benefits the spread of the Gospel in Africa. LTS trains pastoral and deaconess students from more than 10 African countries to faithfully serve the Church and its people according to all the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ and his faithful servant Dr. Martin Luther.

In the U.S. it is especially the LCMS districts of South Illinois (SID: President Timothy Scharr) and the Rocky Mountains (RMD: President Allan Anderson) that continue to support the LTS significantly and fervently. The newly founded St. Philip Lutheran Mission Society has joined this effort to support the Seminary in Tshwane, South Africa. We Seminarians at the LTS here in Pretoria are very grateful for this support and daily praise the Lord most thankfully for it!

In Germany it is the *Lutherische Kirchenmission* (LKM) of the SELK, which through the local institution of the Mission of Lutheran Churches (MLC) faithfully supports the LTS regularly and meaningfully.

Financial support can be deposited directly into the LTS bank account. The banking details are on the back of this newsletter.

South African supporters are reminded that Lutheran Theological Seminary in Tshwane is a registered Public Benefits Organization. *Donations to LTS can be deducted according to the rules of Section 18(a) in the South African tax laws.* Please contact the Seminary office for further information: +12 344 2302 or via email:

[LTS in Tshwane](#)

## Student Ashenafi Desta about himself



On Feb 20, 1984 I was born in a village called Homecho located in Hadiya zone, Gibe Woreda, Ethiopia. This is a remote village 27km north of the zonal capital town Hosanna. It is populated by farmers with large families and small plots of land. Banana, teff, maize, and wheat farming as well as coffee are major sources of income.

My parents are traditional farmers. But as time went on, my parents moved into restaurant business. Luckily I was born in the days when education was becoming accessible. A mission clinic became operational in the area.

From an early age, I had great hopes to achieve good results and attend a university as a means for a better life. It was my ambition that made me a hardworking student. Besides schooling I helped my parents on the farm. This dominated my childhood. But at the age of 14 the whole family encountered a great sorrow as my mother passed away. After the death of my mother, the whole family went through hard times. Life without her became almost impossible. Economic instability was one of the main factors. The hardships and struggle made us dependent on God. My mother was a devoted Christian. She was the first to become Lutheran in our family.

After the death of my beloved mother I had frustration and anger which I could neither explain nor get

rid of. I felt insecure with feelings of hopelessness. This was the first time in my life that I personally got serious with the church as a child. I went to high school in Hosanna where I was exposed to the life of the seminary. My elder brother who graduated from Mekan Yesus (The Ethiopian Lutheran Church) Seminary in Addis Ababa was already a teacher at the seminary. Having the opportunity to stay with him exposed me to learn more about the church. I participated in daily devotions. It was during this time that I started to learn God's word.

After completing high school successfully, I started engineering at the university. But it wasn't what I wanted to study, and I left the university after a year. In December 2009 I came to South Africa to join the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Tshwane (LTS Pretoria). I was sponsored fully with school fees, food allowance, and accommodation. It had been in my prayers to join a Confessional Lutheran seminary. When I came to the LTS, it was like a dream coming true, as I was longing for the proper Lutheran doctrine.

Life at LTS was not so easy as I was new in the country. A lot of things changed. English was one of the main problems, but also the cultural shock. Biblical languages, Greek and Hebrew are compulsory at the seminary, which was new for me. But with lots of help at the seminary, I got over all those challenges. During this time got to learn so many things.

Through daily devotions and participation in the Lutheran church in Arcadia (our campus church), I gained a new direction in my life. I was the first Ethiopian student who was from Mekan Yesus Church in the history of the LTS in Pretoria. I believe my coming to the LTS helped both churches. The LTS sponsored 3 other Ethiopians currently. Evangelist Mulatu Zeleka was my youth pastor in Hossaina and is in his 2nd year at the University of Pretoria (UP). Tariku Baku Lemma and Chernet Arficho attend the bridging course at LTS.





From the left: Tariku Baku Lemma; Chernet Arficho; Rev Tevera Muzein; Ashenafi Desta Gonemo;

We are busy establishing a Mekane Yesus church in South Africa for Ethiopian migrants who are from the Mekane Yesus. All this would not have been possible without LTS.

Studying theology at LTS helps churches both in Ethiopia and South Africa as they need more trained pastors than ever. The church needs to keep her teaching sacred as it was from the beginning. This is only possible if pastors are well trained and equipped.

My academic performance so far is good. I completed the seminary courses successfully and then I was sent to UP because of my academic records and LTS is in formal partnership with UP. Hopefully by the end of this year 2014 I will have successfully completed the Bachelor's Degree.

I am striving to help spread the gospel of Jesus Christ through Lutheran churches wherever I may go in the world.

What I have mentioned above wouldn't have been possible if it wasn't for the support of the Lutheran Church in Southern Africa and the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Tshwane. I am very thankful to those who supported me in everything so far. I have many reasons to thank the Lord because he sent his people to support me while I was student.

You don't know me, but you supported me for the sake of the Lutheran Church in Africa. May the almighty God, who blessed you with everything you have, keep it growing.

Now we are nurturing plans for the coming year 2015. If it is God's will I will be attending Concordia Theological Seminary in Ft. Wayne to further my studies at Masters level.

I will appreciate it, if you can find it in your heart to let me come to your congregation as an ambassador for the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Pretoria to thank you, and tell you more about the great work that is being accomplished at this institution.

Yours in Christ:

Ashenafi Desta.



**TRIP REPORT :** Professor J.T. Pless (CTS Ft. Wayne) was invited to teach a two-week course for fifteen ministerial and deaconess students on "Theology and Spiritual Care" at Lutheran Theological Seminary during the last 2 weeks of August. Here is the syllabus:

Date	Topic	Assigned Reading
8.18	Using God's Word: Law & Gospel	"Word: God Speaks to Us" LS, 9-40
8.19	Telling the Truth: Confession	"Confession" LS, 77-112
8.20	Spiritual Care of the Anxious & Distressed	ML, 43-54
8.21	Spiritual Care for Doubt & Despair	ML, 55-64
8.22	Spiritual Care and Vocation	"Vocation" LS, 183-216 ML, 65-72
8.25	Spiritual Care for Marriage	ML, 73-80
8.26	Spiritual Care for the Poor, Persecuted, and Needy	ML, 81-88
8.27	Spiritual Care for the Sick & Dying	ML, 89-108 "Suffering" LS, 113-152
8.28	Spiritual Care of the Grieving	ML, 109-118
8.29	Spiritual Care for Care-Givers	"Promise" LS, 253-284

Prof Pless writes: We covered the fundamentals of spiritual care, including the connection between theological anthropology and spiritual care, the use of the Scriptures for diagnosis and response (Law and Gospel), and the relationship of spiritual care to the means of grace. Specific "case studies" were drawn from Luther with application to contemporary issues faced by pastors and deaconesses.

I think the students resonated with Luther's approach to spiritual care and its timeliness for their work in Africa. For example, Luther's advice to Pastor John Hess in 1527 on whether or not Christians may flee in a time of plague was applied to the Ebola crisis. Likewise Luther's care of the sick, the dying, and grieving seemed especially potent for our students and the settings from which many came from and will return to as pastors and deaconesses. Each student taking the class for credit wrote an essay on "Insights from Luther for Spiritual Care."

In addition to teaching each day, I preached at Matins each Thursday while on campus and enjoyed numerous opportunities to visit with students regarding their work in various programs of theological study at the University of Pretoria and to help them locate Lutheran resources to use in their papers and theses. Dr. Oswald Bayer has tentatively accepted our invitation to give public lectures in the 2017 Luther year in Pretoria. Dr. Weber and I are in conversation as to how this event might be co-sponsored by

the University of Pretoria and have maximum impact on both the academic and Christian communities in Pretoria.

Copies of the texts for the course, my *Martin Luther Preacher of the Cross: A Study in Luther's Pastoral Theology* and *Lutheran Spirituality* were provided for each student thanks to funding from the Southern Illinois District of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. With gifts from other donors we brought the following books for the LTS Library: *Lutheran Bible Companion* (2 Volumes), *Concordia Commentary on Mark* by James Voelz, *Sin and Free Choice* by Johann Gerhard, *Wilhelm Loehe: History and Theology* edited by Dietrich Blaufuß. We also brought multiple copies of *The Lonely Way Volume 2* by Hermann Sasse and *The Structure of Lutheranism* by Werner Elert for students in other classes. In addition we provided ten copies of *Blessings and Prayers for College Students* for use by the Lutheran Campus Ministry at the University of Pretoria.

One of the highlights of this trip was teaching three Bible studies (Vocation, Two Kingdoms, and Law/Gospel) for the Lutheran Campus Ministry at the University of Pretoria where CTS alumnus, Jacob Corzine is campus pastor. Pastor Corzine was ordained and installed in Pretoria in April. The campus ministry working under the auspices of the Arcadia Lutheran Mission Association is off to very positive and promising start with strong student participation.



The student morale at the seminary seems good. While I was on campus, workers were busy with a number of painting and repair projects that will enhance the campus. I met with Enoch Macben who will spend the fall quarter in Fort Wayne, "shadowing" Dr. John Nordling in the beginning Greek class. Mr. Macben teaches Greek at LTS and his time at CTS will hone his capacities for this work. Funding for Mr. Macben's time in Fort Wayne is provided by the Southern Illinois District.

I am grateful for Dr. Weber's support, the eagerness of the students to learn and also to Pastor Martin Paul and Pastor Jacob Corzine who provided me with housing in their homes this trip. It was a productive and enjoyable trip on all counts. I look forward to returning to LTS for another course over the CTS Spring break in March. In the meantime, I give thanks to our Lord that His Word has free course in Pretoria and pray His blessings on the faculty, students, and pastors who labor there.

(J.T. Pless 2014)

## Day-Care gets going

Dear Friends: For some time now, there has been a need for a Day Care centre to be established at the Tshwane Lutheran Seminary in Pretoria, South Africa. The Seminary serves students from all over Africa; some of whom are in residence with young children. We are thankful that such a Programme is now up and running.

To establish the pilot project, we were kindly given the use of a rather dark and dingy garage, which through the willing help of the Seminarians, Deaconesses and kind donations from several young mothers of the St.Pauls congregation in Pretoria, has been transformed into a sunny, colourful and happy classroom!

Under the leadership of Ms Thuli Bengu, a retired teacher and the assistance of the Deaconesses, our first group of children is being taught on the Seminary campus. Having recently enrolled in an Early Childhood Correspondence course, the Deaconesses now have the added advantage of getting hands-on experience to complement their studies.

We are very grateful to several volunteers for their help and to Marit Paul, who has been instrumental in getting the children started on her wonderful online reading programme, [Time2Read](#).

In the New Year, we hope to grow our Programme with a move to larger premises so that we might accommodate more children. In order to realise this goal, we are fervently looking for donations to help with the financing of this project and welcome any and all support! Many thanks and God bless! (K.Niebuhr)





*Training Christ's disciples as  
pastors, teachers, evangelists,  
missionaries, bishops and  
deaconesses for faithful  
service in the Lutheran  
Church of Africa*

## **Lutheran Theological Seminary in Tshwane**

Arcadia Street 790  
P.O. Box 12547; Hatfield 0028  
Tel/Fax: 012 344 2302  
Email: [LTSinTshwane@gmail.com](mailto:LTSinTshwane@gmail.com)

Banking Details:  
Bank: ABSA Hatfield  
Branch Code: 335 545  
Lutheran Theological Seminary  
Account number: 860 5100 30  
BIC: 33 55 45

OUR WEBSITE:

[WWW.LTS.ORG.ZA](http://WWW.LTS.ORG.ZA)

YOU CAN FIND US ON FACEBOOK:

**LUTHERAN THEOLOGICAL  
SEMINARY IN TSHWANE**

## **A new kitchen planned ...**

It has been a few years now that I prepare lunch for the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Tshwane. This is mainly to help students and their families have more time to study and get a warm, balanced meal with fruit & vegetables at least once a day, but it also helps staff and the occasional visitors like the Church Councils, Women's league and others, who regularly convene at the Seminary. The Seminary does not have a suitably equipped and big enough kitchen to cook for more than 25 (sometimes over 50!) people. So I cook at home and bring the meal to the seminary.

Seminarians eat outside in the LAPA and thanks to the mostly good weather in Pretoria this is possible—even if the space there too is rather limited. That is why, I think it would be wonderful to build a well-equipped kitchen with cafeteria and dinning hall for this purpose on the seminary campus. For this purpose I would like to start a fundraiser. Would you care to help and support this project? Please consider this request prayerfully and share it with your friends or members of your congregation or your women's league. Would the women guild in your congregations support this project? Would you introduce me to a suitable person, who would be the spokesperson for this project in your congregation? If you are interested, I will send further details. Please be enthusiastic about this project. You may share this freely. Contact email: [rmstraeuli@gmail.com](mailto:rmstraeuli@gmail.com)

## **Coming up:**

- 4-7. Nov: Kantor Phillip Magness on "Lutheran Liturgy & Worship"
- 26. Sept—6.Oct: St. Michael's
- 6-24 Oct: Rev James May on Luther's Catechisms
- 27.Oct-7.Nov: Deaconess Grace Rao on Deaconess Studies
- 27.Oct-5.Nov: Final Examination
- 6. Nov: Thanks- and Pricegiving
- 7. Nov: Start of Summer holidays
- 3.Feb: Start of 1st Quarter 2015

Lutheran Theological Seminary offers confessional Lutheran education in preparation for service as Lutheran pastors and also deaconesses in Africa.

LTS has trained students from African: South Africa, Botswana, Swaziland, Zambia, Madagascar, Tanzania, Congo, Kenya, Uganda, Ruanda, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Ghana and Liberia.

Students of the Lutheran Theological Seminary (LTS), who

qualify may pursue a Bachelor of Theology (BTh) and proceed with post-graduate studies with our official partner University of Pretoria (UP).

Prospective students require recommendation and support of their home church to be considered for enrolment at the LTS.

For more information contact LTS directly using the details at the top of this page.

## **STUDENT ENQUIRY MOST WELCOME !**

