

The Lutheran Society for Missiology (LSFM) is a society of Lutheran who are interested in the Apostolic mission of God in today's world. The Society was born on October 25, 1991, out of concern to promote Biblical attitudes for Missions. Among other things, the Society publishes a modest but very significant journal, *MISSIO APOSTOLICA*. To join or receive further information, please contact:



The Lutheran Society for Missiology
 Concordia Seminary
 880 Seminary place
 St. Louis, MO 63105

The Communicator is published twice yearly. Your mission news and announcements are welcome. Please send them one month in advance to:

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Mark Your Calendars!

Board of Directors Conference Call

Date

9:00 a.m. (Central Time)—January 14, 2009
 (dial-up information, pass code and Agenda to be provided)

LSFM Annual Meeting

Date

Noon to noon—May 7-8, 2009

Banquet

6:00 p.m.—May 7, 2009

Venue

Concordia Seminary, Saint Louis (Loeber II)

Website:

www.LSFMissiology.org



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Volume 13, Issue 2

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The Purpose of LSFM:

To be an instrument for communicating God's Mission to seek and to save lost people (Luke 19:10).

The Mission of LSFM:

To advance the discussion and study of God's Mission from a Lutheran perspective.

The Vision of LSFM:

That the Lutheran contribution to missiology (Ephesians 2:8-10) impact God's worldwide mission.

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What Determines a Successful Person?

—Robert J. Scudieri

I was reading an article recently about successful people. It seems there is a misunderstanding about who becomes successful. It is not, the article assured us, the brightest most talented people who are most successful. It takes more than brains. In a follow up of highly successful individuals it was determined that, yes, they were talented in their areas – but the characteristic that separated the successes from the not so successful was initiative.

Those who succeeded, in other words, were less afraid of failing than the failures. One example cited was that of an executive vice president for Apple. He had an important development task assigned to him and a team he could recruit himself. In approaching potential team members he told them each that he had been given a very important assignment, but there was no guarantee he and the team he was recruiting would be successful—in fact there was every reason to believe they might fail. He did say that if they were to succeed they would remember this as the most important and satisfying undertaking of their professional lives. He only accepted those people who immediately and enthusiastically said yes. This was the team that invented the iPhone.

Those involved with mission initiatives know that there are many mistakes, yes, failures along the way. There are times, as Jim Vehling likes to remind us, when the first person into a new area may spend their whole ministry “just moving rocks—before any seeds can be planted.” That is the way

it feels sometimes. But a longer view is needed.

Look at Pastors Khurram and Farrukh Khan. When they began outreach to Muslims in the United States they had to cross many hurdles. Today that ministry is held up as the exemplary outreach to Muslims in the country. The same could be said for Steve Cohen and the Apple Of His Eye Jewish mission society. Or Jotham Johann, a Korean immigrant, and His Center for Asian Mission and Evangelism. The list could go on. Initiative—sometimes it is lonely, sometimes dangerous, sometimes there is success.

Of course it is all possible because the Lord God took initiative and sent His Son to demonstrate how deep His love is for us. He came to us without our knowing or even asking. As Stuart Townsend wrote in his hymn, “How deep the Fathers’ love for us, How vast beyond all measure, That He should give His only Son, To make a wretch His treasure. How great the pain of searing loss, The Father turns His face away, As wounds which mar the Chosen One, Bring many sons to glory.”

Where have you seen the Father taking initiative to make His love real in your life? What initiative is He allowing you to take?



Bob Scudieri

Articles of Mission News and Reflection Needed

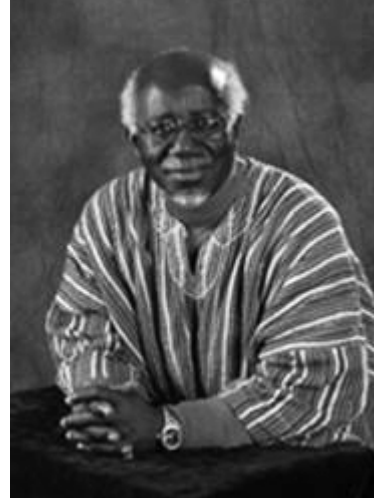
The Communicator is published twice yearly. Please remember to submit articles, mission news items, announcements, or other pieces appropriate to the purpose of the Lutheran Society for Missiology to the editor. Photos are always welcomed. —The editor

Dr. Kwame Bediako In Memory

Dr. Kwame Bediako passed away in June of this year. He had a surpassing level of scholarship (two doctorates—one in English and one in French). He had a range of knowledge of the history of the church in Africa (and Europe) that could keep us spell-bound for hours just listening to his stories. And he had a most profound understanding of the relationship between the gospel and African culture. He also had a huge passion to bring African Christians together to affirm their Christian identity in authentic ways that would overcome some of the worst legacies of the colonial era. And yet he wore all this learning with such a light touch. His twinkling eyes and sparkling humour and laughter were a constant tonic.

The Akrofi Christaller Memorial Centre for Mission Studies, that he established at Akropong, Ghana, has a fine record of research and publication in African Christianity and contextual theology, and just recently got its charter from the government of Ghana for the awarding of degrees including doctorates.

Concordia Theological Seminary Ph.D. candidate Gabriel Massa commented: "Kwame Bediako has been one of the leading African theologians. His books have been of great inspiration.



We are glad he has left a legacy that will stay on for many generations to benefit from it; the reservoir of his knowledge he has stored for many years. We will use it and pass on to others. May his family be blessed and comforted by the Lord whom he loved and served."

Dr. Bediako, a historian and theologian from Ghana, was one of three theological advisors for the *Africa Bible Commentary* published by Zondervan. Dr. Kwame Bediako held doctorates from the Universities of Bordeaux (French Literature) and

Aberdeen. He was an ordained minister of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, Founder/Director of the Akrofi-Christaller Memorial Centre for Mission Research and Applied Theology, Akropong-Akuapem, Ghana, and Founder Secretary of the Africa Theological Fraternity. He was a Director of the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies and Honorary fellow of the Centre for the Study of Christianity in the Non-Western World, New College, Edinburgh. He was also Honorary Professor in the School of Theology, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa. Dr. Bediako was author of *Christianity in Africa: The Renewal of a Non-Western Religion*; *Jesus in Africa: The Christian Gospel in African History and Experience*; and

Theology and Identity: The Impact of Culture upon Christian Thought in the Second Century and Modern Africa.

To see a clip of one of his last speaking engagements, go to: <http://zondervan.typepad.com/zondervan/2008/06/kwame-bediako.html>.

Brazil: IELB Starts TV Broadcasting of Divine Services

-ielb/selk-news

In the 104th year of its existence, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Brazil (IELB) undertook a further step in the media world: beginning 22 June 2008, divine services are recorded in the chapel of the Lutheran University of Brazil (ULBRA) and broadcasted by the ULBRA TV channel.

The program is called "Touch of Life—Sunday special" and is broadcasted every Sunday morning from 8:00 to 9:00. Four million people in the states of Rio Grande do Sul und Santa Catarina are able to receive ULBRA TV and thousands more in all Latin America via satellite and the internet.

"Touch of life" is a six minutes program broadcasted daily by ULBRA at 8:00 am and 11:50 pm. This program is now extended by a one hour long divine service on Sundays. The IELB has 225,000 members in just under 1,400 congregations.

Hispanic Outreach Coordinator

Luz Guerrero recently served with the Oswald Hoffman School of Christian Outreach (OHSCO) as a deaconess intern. Following her successful internship and her graduation from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Concordia University St. Paul issued her a call to serve as Hispanic Outreach Coordinator. Luz has accepted that call, though her service is pending a successful visa application. This partnership effort has received generous support from Woodbury Lutheran Church in Woodbury, MN, and from the Minnesota South District of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

It is anticipated that Luz will continue working with leaders of the Minnesota South District, Lutheran Inter-City Network Coalition (LINC), and other agencies in the Twin Cities, in order to plan and carry out a more intentional outreach ministry to Hispanic/Latino people, who make up a growing part of the Twin Cities community. Your prayers on behalf of the visa application process would be most appreciated.

MACO Update

Oswald Hoffman School of Christian Outreach's (OHSCO) Master of Arts in Christian Outreach (MACO) program has been "retooled" for a new generation, who are looking for distance education and a more direct path to completion. This masters program provides expertise and experience in areas of Christian outreach leadership, including the mission of God, cross-cultural awareness, and application of outreach principles within a parish setting. Whereas the "old" MACO required three summers of two-week intensives, the new look requires an initial

two-week intensive. In "old" MACO, 75-80% of the class work was delivered in face-to-face settings. With the new MACO, some 75-80% of the course work is delivered online.

In addition, while the path to graduation for some may weave through a thesis, the option of a portfolio (dealt with through the University of Minnesota eFolio website) will provide a more direct route to completion. Each new student (beginning with the cohort that started in June of 2008) will establish an eFolio site, to which a number of key pieces will be posted. This website belongs to the

student and is portable. It may be made available to potential employers or others interested in the sort of work experiences has had and some creative endeavors the student has produced.

Pastors or other parish leaders seeking models to equip leaders within their own parish setting would do well to consider subsidizing MACO participation for promising local outreach leaders. For more information, please call and speak with Mark Press (OHSCO Director, 651-641-8830) or Norm Piatti (MACO Program Coordinator, 651-641-8224).

Ablaze! Connection Phase One Pilot Concludes

-LCMS World Mission

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) World Mission's Ablaze! Connection pilot has been in the beta testing phase over the last several months with "learning centers" in twelve LCMS congregations nationwide. It has strived to offer exciting and diverse ways for members to learn how to link Jesus to their daily lives and connect their faith to the most important aspects of their world - home, work, church, and community.

The feedback and participation in this Phase One pilot project have provided valuable learning which will be of great use as LCMS World Mission begins to work on Phase Two of this project. Phase Two decisions will be made in close consultation with the Board for Mission Services after the results of Phase One have been carefully analyzed.

The Ablaze! Connection Web site (www.ablazeconnection.com) will remain online and the resources produced to date will remain accessible. As steps are being taken to prepare for Phase Two, there will be limited new programming while LCMS World Mission gathers and processes data, makes decisions about what to start, stop, and continue, and draws up plans to go forward again.

103 LCMS Congregations Pledge to Plant Churches

-LCMS News

Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) congregations have completed orientation to become Ablaze! "Covenant Congregations," pledging to start up to four "daughter" churches each over the next decade.

The short-term goal is ten percent - or 600 - of the LCMS' 6 000 congregations seeing themselves as "mission outposts," according to LCMS World Mission executive Rev. Yohannes Mengsteab. "The long-term goal is that every congregation will become a planting congregation," he says.

As Covenant Congregations, congregations will have access to funding, assessments, and training from LCMS World Mission, Lutheran Church Extension Fund, Church Development Partners, the Center for U.S. Missions, and the two LCMS seminaries.

"I think congregations are excited about it," Mengsteab said. "In the past, church planting was the responsibility of the districts, but now congregations are seeing this as their responsibility, as they are increasingly realizing that they are in the mission field."

IELB: United Mission Efforts For Latin America

Lutheran churches in South America want to cooperate more strongly in mission and evangelization. This was reported by Rev. Mario Lehenbauer, vice-president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Brazil (IELB) after a meeting on 7 and 8 December 2007 in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Together with Lehenbauer, Alceu Figur (Paraguay), Guillermo Herigert (Uruguay), Edgardo Elseser (Argentina) and the representative of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, Dr. Jorge Groh, took part in the meeting. In future the experiences of the respective missionaries will be exchanged, the needs of the missionaries jointly analyzed and their preparation coordinated. The aim is to reach a concerted action when preparing missionaries in Latin America.

LCC Mission Agencies Form New Association

-ielb/selk-news

Following the Convention of the Lutheran Church-Canada (LCC) in June this year, representatives from ten of LCC's twelve mission-oriented Listed Service Organizations and three auxiliaries met to create an umbrella organization focusing on supporting LCC's mission and ministry. Under the name CLAIM (Canadian Lutheran Agencies in Mission) the group's vision is to "work together in unity sharing the concern of reaching the lost with a love and concern for all people." They also committed to "co-operating, for the sake of the Gospel, in assisting Lutheran Church-Canada in engaging and deploying its members to proclaim more effectively the triune God."

Heading the organization on an interim basis are Rev. Dr. Edwin Lehman, Rod Ludke (executive director, LAMP) and Rev. Dr. Glenn Schaeffer, mission executive for the ABC District. The district and synod mission executives are part of the organization in an advisory capacity.

Five Receive Ph.D. in Missiology Degrees at Concordia Theological Seminary

During the May commencement at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana, five Ph.D. in Missiology Degrees were awarded. They are:

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Chulwoong Kim | Dissertation: The Impact of Contemporary Christian Music for Young Christians in Korea on Their Five Experiential Domains of Meaning |
| Jasson Kalugendo | Dissertation: The Bonding and Bridging Social Capital among Immigrants in the United States: A Study Reconciling Homogeneous and Heterogeneous Principles as a New Paradigm for Reaching Out to a Racially Disjointed Community |
| Saneta Maiko | Dissertation: The Impact of Slavery, Colonialism, and Tribal Resistance on Foreign Methodist Mission Work in Kenya 1862-1967 |
| Michael K. Rodewald | Dissertation: Observing Sacred and Profane Animist Worldview |
| Alan D. Scott | Dissertation: Finding What Helps: Recovery from Traumatic Experiences in the Lives of Missionaries of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod |

Missio Apostolica is Going Bilingual

—Victor Raj

As usual, Missio Apostolica is making new strides in the area of missiological publications. In the series of theme issues, in May this year the journal featured a number focusing on Lutheran mission and ministry among the Hispanic/Latino population. Thanks are due to the Rev. Dr. Leopoldo Sánchez, Assistant Professor of Systematic Theology at Concordia Seminary St. Louis, and a generous grant from the Center for Hispanic Studies that he directs on campus. This was indeed a team effort. That team deserves our hearty applause.

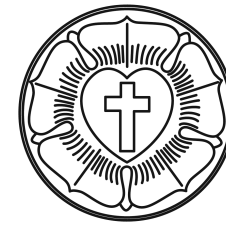
The contributors to this issue, as our readers have already noticed, are either Hispanic/ Latino immigrants themselves or have dedicated their life time of ministry among Hispanic people abroad as well as at home. For the first time in our fifteen year history the journal has gone bilingual. A synopsis in English is presented with those articles, mission observes, and book reviews that are originally in Spanish, and correspondingly a Resumen is provided for the English originals. The journal is intentionally incarnating cross-cultural mission and ministry.

In November this year, the journal will present a miscellany of articles by scholars and practitioners in mission. These will address the opportunities the Christian Church has

even in these United States to present Jesus Christ among those who follow other paths and feel content in their own religious persuasions and spiritualities. It will demonstrate how Christian leadership applies to mission and how theological education in the traditionally non-western cultures serves as motivation for Christian witnessing.

LSFM Executive Director Allan Buckman and the Director of Immigrant Ministries Dr. Johannes Mengsteab have collaborated to publish a Lay Leadership special issue that will appear in May 2009. Here again competent contributors will bring a wealth of information on how the Word of God reaches the hearts of many people, bringing them to the foot of the Cross through the lives and services of ordinary men and women many of whom are brand new in the faith, if not brand new in their formal theological education.

The Lord of the Church showers His blessings upon the ministry of our modest journal: to exchange ideas on mission, to discuss Christian faith, life and mission on the basis of Scripture and Lutheran theology, and to foster the Apostolic Mission of the Triune God in the world. These are exciting times!



Membership of Lutheran Churches Increases to 71.8 Million

An Additional Two Million Members in Africa's Lutheran Churches

LWI - Africa's Lutheran churches saw their total membership increase over the past year by just under two million, boosting the total membership of the Lutheran churches worldwide to over 71.8 million. Lutheran churches in Asia registered an increase overall, while slight decreases were again recorded in other world regions.

According to the latest LWF statistics, membership in the organization's 140 churches, 10 recognized congregations, and one recognized council in 78 countries worldwide rose by a total of 1,640,700, to reach 68,322,299, an increase of 2.5 percent over the previous year. In 2006, LWF member churches had some 66.7 million members worldwide.

Over the past year, the total membership of all Lutheran churches worldwide rose by 1,623,024 to approximately 71.8 million (71 823 423), an increase of 2.3 percent. In 2006, all Lutheran churches worldwide counted some 70.2 million members, up from 69.8 million in 2005. The number of Lutherans in non-LWF member churches fell by 17 676, or 0.5 percent, to reach 3,501,124.

Over the past year, LWF church membership in Africa rose by 1,926,407 or 12.7 percent to reach a total of 17 129 230. The membership of non-LWF Lutheran churches in Africa remained unchanged at 56 069.

With an increase of 368,861 members, or 8.2 percent, to 4,869,157, the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus now becomes the second largest Lutheran church worldwide. The Church of Sweden remains the world's biggest Lutheran church with 6.9 million members.

Among African churches, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, the continent's second largest Lutheran church, recorded the highest membership increase, 32.4 percent, with an additional 1,132,480 new members to reach a total

of 4,632,480, making it the fourth largest Lutheran church in the world.

The total number of Lutherans in Asia rose 101,439 in 2007, an increase of 1.22 percent. Membership in Asia's largest Lutheran church, the Protestant Christian Batak Church (Indonesia) remained steady at 3.75 million.

Over the past year, the total membership of Lutheran churches in Europe fell again by 292,117, or 0.78 percent, to reach 37,177,468.

Membership in the world's largest Lutheran church, the Church of Sweden, remained nearly unchanged over the course of 2007, with a slight drop of 0.03 percent to reach 6,893,901. The fifth largest LWF member church worldwide, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, saw its membership drop by 22,983, or 0.5 percent, to 4,533,629.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ingria in Russia recorded a 25 percent membership increase or 3 000 new members to reach 15 000, while the Lutheran Church in Great Britain grew by 18.6 percent (440 members) to 2,810. The Evangelical Lutheran Church - Synod of France and Belgium, a non-LWF church, recorded the highest percentage increase in Europe by a two-thirds' rise (400 members) to 1 000. The Protestant Church of the Augsburg Confession of Alsace and Lorraine (France) increased by 10,000 members, or 4.8 percent, to 220,000.

In 2007 the total number of Lutheran Christians in Germany was 12,627, 746, reflecting a decrease of 105,245, or 0.83 percent. Germany continues to be the country with the highest number of Lutheran Christians in the world. Lutheran churches there had 12.7 million members in 2006 and 12.9 million members in 2005.

The total membership in Lutheran churches in Latin America and the Caribbean fell last year by 14,053, or 1.26 percent to reach 1,104,194.

While most Lutheran churches in Latin America and the Caribbean reported little change in their membership statistics, the region's largest Lutheran church, the Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil, registered a 2.3 percent decrease or 16,756 members to reach 703,000. Declining membership was also reported by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia and the Argentina-based Evangelical Church of the River Plate. The non-LWF Evangelical Lutheran Church of Brazil reported 230,215 members last year, a rise of 5,692, or 2.5 percent.

Total membership in North American Lutheran churches fell by 98,652 or 1.23 percent in 2007. Of a total 7,940,686 Lutherans, 4,958,203 belonged to LWF member churches. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the LWF's third largest member church, recorded 4 774,203 members in 2007, a decrease of 76,573, or 1.6 percent.

Decreases were also recorded in non-LWF churches, the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod (USA and Canada), with 2,417,997 members, for a loss of 22,867 or 0.9 percent, and the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, down by 1.2 percent, to 396,000.

Membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada remained relatively stable in 2007, falling by a mere 0.03 percent to count 174,500.

The LWF membership statistics are based on information received from the LWF member churches, recognized congregations and council, as well as from other Lutheran churches, organizations, mission bodies and congregations.

A one-page summary of the 2007 LWF membership figures is posted in PDF version on the LWF Website under: www.lutheranworld.org/LWF_Documents/LWFStatistics-01-2007.pdf. Full details can be found under: www.lutheranworld.org/LWF_Document

Ph.D. Students Attend the Missiology Conference April 19, 2008, at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Illinois

Early Saturday, April 19, 2008, seventeen Ph.D. students and Drs. Rutt and Schulz left Fort Wayne in two vans to attend the Missiology Conference at the Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, located north of Chicago. Those who attended came from near and faraway places. There were missionaries, professors, pastors, missiologists and Ph.D. students. One of the Ph.D. students, Robert Bennett, an LCMS pastor in Benzonia, Michigan, was a presenter and spoke on “The Missiological Impact of the Mpiandry Movement upon Theological Education in the Malagasy Lutheran Church,” and Dr. Rutt presented on “Lessons Learned for Global Mission: Missiological Reflections after Ten Years of Experience.”

One particular highlight of the Conference for our students was a meeting with the great missiologist and prolific author, David Hesselgrave. The exchange of ideas with Ph.D. students from other institutions and the thirty-eight presentations on that day provided great stimulus to all participants. Representing the largest single body of attendees at the Conference our seminary was made conspicuous to all participants and many inquired who they were and what Concordia Theological Seminary’s Ph.D. in Missiology offers.



CTS Ph.D. students at the Missiology Conference

Dr. Rutt’s presentation can be found at www.LutheranMissiology.org. Rev. Bennett’s a[er] will soon be published in *Missio Apostolica*.

103 LCMS Congregations Pledge to Plant Churches

—LCMSNews - No. 7 - 103

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The short-term goal is ten percent—or 600—of the LCMS’ 6,000 congregations seeing themselves as “mission outposts,” according to LCMS World Mission executive Rev. Yohannes Mengsteab. “The long-term goal is that every congregation will become a planting congregation,” he says.

As Covenant Congregations, congregations will have access to funding, assessments, and training from LCMS World Mission, Lutheran Church Extension Fund, Church Development

Partners, the Center for U.S. Missions, and the two LCMS seminaries. “I think congregations are excited about it,” Mengsteab said. “In the past, church planting was the responsibility of the districts, but now congregations are seeing this as their responsibility, as they are increasingly realizing that they are in the mission field.”

LBTC has New Leader

—ielb/selk-news

Rev. Dr. Glenn Schaeffer, Board Chair of Lutheran Bible Translators of Canada (LBTC) announced that the call to lead the organization has been accepted by Rev. David Maffett of Halifax.

Rev. Maffett served as an evangelistic missionary to Togo (West Africa) for twelve years. He learned the local language and culture, planted churches, trained leaders and worked very closely with a Wycliffe Bible translation team. For most of those years, he was the field supervisor helping to establish the Lutheran Centre for Theological Studies in Dapaong, Togo which trains French speaking pastors from seven African countries.

Lutheran Bible Translators of Canada is a Christian charitable organization with the goal of helping to bring people to faith in Jesus Christ through Bible translation and literacy work. It is recognized as a listed service organization with Lutheran Church–Canada and as having an agreement of understanding with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada and other Lutheran church bodies in Canada.

Ipili New Testament Dedication

—Dr. Marshall Gillam, Executive Director for Lutheran Bible Translators

“I don’t like to fly through clouds that have rocks in them!” Well, he got my attention. The speaker was missionary pilot and LBT Associate Missionary Jonathan Federwitz. The occasion was cruising along at about 9,000 feet over the breath-taking but desolate terrain of Papua New Guinea—and flying through some clouds that had no rocks!

The occasion for my flight was to attend the dedication ceremony for the Ipili New Testament in the town of Payam in the highlands of Papua New Guinea - a region that is distinguished by utterly awesome terrain and, at times, brutal tribal conflicts.

There were two choices—fly for an hour or drive for two days! The choice was simple.

The area that I visited is also the center for a massive gold mining operation. As one might expect, the mining operation has been a mixed blessing for the community. Mining, of course, means jobs for many people. The mining company has built a large sports facility (where the dedication ceremony was held) and one of the most attractive local market facilities that I have ever seen. But along with the jobs there is an increase of crime (all of the banks in the immediate area are closed due to robberies!) and an increase in HIV/AIDS.

The Ipili are a large language group by Papua New Guinea standards – approximately 26,000. But they are located in the Enga Province, and the Enga people have quite the reputation for oppressing the Ipili. So the stage is set for tension and conflict – and that can arise with little or no warning.

But the Gospel is being proclaimed among the Ipili. There are several denominational groups, including Lutherans, who are ministering among the Enga and the Ipili. This Gospel witness will be significantly enhanced as the New Testament, in the Ipili language, receives ever increasing exposure among the people.

I came home with some profound impressions from my visit to Papua New Guinea (PNG).

- I had never been a passenger on a missionary aviation flight before. I was profoundly impressed in my four flights with four different pilots. They are good! They read the clouds and wind currents; they can spot the smallest holes in the clouds; they know where the mountains are and where the passes are (and which clouds have rocks in them); and they can bounce those little Cessna airplanes down on rough airstrips with consummate skill and safety.

- One of the many things that I had not anticipated was the role of missionary aviation in medical evacuation. While it was a but unusual, there was a medical evacuation flight almost every day of my visit – from the aviation center to Port Moresby and from Port Moresby to Australia.

- The entire dedication celebration – start to finish – was arranged and planned by an Ipili committee. There were parades and banners, music, speeches (and more speeches!). One of the highlights of the event was the arrival of the “first copy” of the Ipili New Testament delivered into the sports arena by Rev. Terry Borchard, the translation advisor for the project. And Terry was delivered into the sports arena on a helicopter provided by the mining company! What a spectacle!

- Perhaps one of my most vivid impressions came part way through the ceremony. The earlier speeches & sermons (including mine) were either given in Toc Pison or translated into Toc Pison. But when Terry began to speak to the crowd, he spoke in Ipili. There was an incredible murmur through the crowd (and it was a very large crowd) when they heard someone speaking their heart language. An orderly crowd became instantly more attentive and engaged. And once again I was reminded of the importance of God’s Word in the heart language. It makes all the difference in the world for understanding and engagement.

- And finally the Ipili New Testament itself. When time came to sell the New Testaments a very eager crowd gathered quickly. The people at the tables where challenged to keep up with the demand – nearly 300 New Testaments in about 45 minutes! The Ipili New Testament has a green cover – new life in Christ; a prominent gold cross – the cross of Christ; and gold edging on the pages – to remind the people that the real gold is not that which comes from the local mine; the real gold is eternal.

Yes, there are many impressions from my trip to PNG – chief among them an affirmation that the mission of LBT – to help bring people to faith in Jesus Christ by making the Word of God available to those who do not yet have it in the language of their heart – is still God-pleasing, God-honoring, and God-blessed, and urgently needed.

Concordia Seminary’s First DIT Student

—Concordia Seminary News, St. Louis

On 22 April, Concordia Seminary’s first Deaf Institute of Theology (DIT) student, Alan Rork, along with approximately 150 candidates for the pastoral ministry and five deaconess candidates, received his first call to serve in The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod (LCMS), USA.

The Deaf Institute of Theology (DIT) provides an alternative route to ordination for deaf and hard of hearing members of the

LCMS. The seminary-level program was created in 2004 to provide an opportunity for a deaf person to become a pastor. The curriculum provides the necessary broad foundation for missionary pastoral students. The DIT seminary-level program uses online classes with sign language video clips and mentoring by a local pastor. Annual on-campus seminars are also required. Beginning winter 2008, there will be ten DIT students.