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World Missions Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod

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Greetings in the name of the Lord Jesus on behalf of the WELS World Missions Team in Africa, known as the One Africa Team (OAT). Our team has nine missionaries living in Zambia and Malawi. We work with partners, including individuals and church bodies across Africa. We collaborate with sister churches in Nigeria, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Malawi, and Zambia. Our goal is to help them build and sustain healthy gospel ministries. These ministries focus on shepherding local congregations and sharing the gospel with everyone.



Sister Church Bodies



OAT mainly conducts this work by providing training and guidance in gospel ministry. This training includes traditional seminary programs, workshops, seminars, and certification programs. We aim to equip

the saints for various forms of ministry. In short, we work with our sister churches to prepare them to disciple others.



This means we help develop programs and train people to serve as Sunday school teachers, catechism instructors, preaching elders, visiting elders, evangelists, deacons, and deaconesses, as well as vicars and pastors, even professors. We listen to our partners to understand their needs and provide timely training.

Often, our traditional training methods, which take four to eight years, are not practical. Local leaders have said, “We can’t ask people to leave their congregations for years. If we do, their congregations will die. We need them serving now.” So, we work with our partners to find ways to equip gospel ministers to serve now and in the future.

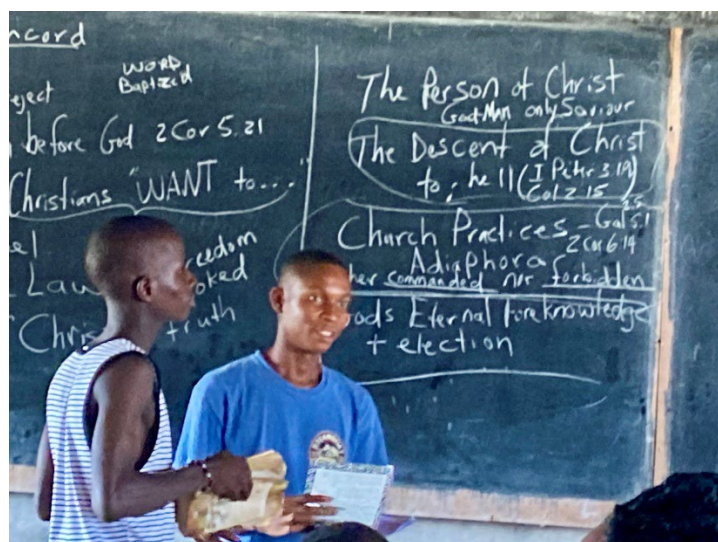
Think of this approach as apprenticeship training. It allows people to use their training immediately in their local congregations and communities. The way this training is implemented varies based on the needs of each church.

To ensure quality and maintain standards, we are developing a guide of ministry competencies with the Pastoral Studies Institute (PSI) of our Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. Together, we review and adapt PSI’s ministerial competencies to our context. This guide will help create quality, locally relevant, and sustainable ministry training across Africa.



Outreach

At the same time, OAT is looking for individuals and groups who are eager to disciple all nations. We currently have more than four advanced potential partners and many more in the early stages. This outreach work is coordinated with our synod's Commission on Inter-Church Relations. We follow the commission's four-stage process, which sets standards for developing relationships that may lead to declaring fellowship with sister church bodies. This process also guides our work with individuals and small groups identified through the TELL program of Multi-Language Productions (MLP).



Outreach involves discussions about doctrine and practice as well as discipleship and multiplication. Early in our interactions with potential sister churches, we offer workshops that review Luther's Small Catechism, basic Bible history, and confessions, while at the same time training participants to share what they've learned.

OAT has greatly benefited from MLP's TELL program, which helps identify potential partners and serves as a training method we increasingly use.

Other Languages

Another exciting aspect of our outreach is our improved ability to work with churches where French and Swahili are the main languages. We have two men able to teach in Swahili and three in French. Historically, African missionaries served using local languages. Now, with a pan-African focus, we need team members who can communicate in key languages like French, Swahili, and eventually Portuguese and Arabic. While we can use translators, understanding and speaking these languages will enhance our connections across the continent.

Teamwork

Africa is vast—three times larger than the USA, including Alaska. A 5½-hour flight, such as from New York to Los Angeles, is routine for us, often just a part of longer trips. After traveling, we usually have a week or two of meetings, teaching, and visits before returning home.

Travel has always been part of an African missionary's life. It used to involve 4WD trucks on rough roads, but now includes airports, airplanes, and various forms of public transportation. Team members often spend 20-24 weeks on the road each year.

At home, we maintain regular communication with sister churches and potential partners. We also handle necessary administrative tasks and team meetings to coordinate our work. Balancing this with family responsibilities is a privilege we cherish.



By God's grace, we carry out this important work, and we are grateful for the honor our synod has given us as African missionaries.

We thank God for the WELS members who give generously to support our work. We are grateful for our brothers and sisters in Africa, with whom we share our faith and efforts. Finally, we thank God for our families, both in Africa and those we've left behind. Their support and understanding are vital to our mission.

In Christ's Service,

Rev. Howard Mohlke, One Africa Team leader