

ELCS Celebrating Tenth Anniversary Tenth Anniversary Thank Offering

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sudan grew out of persecution, forming during the ten years in which two million people died as a result of war. Pray that the current uncertain peace period becomes one that is lasting and that the Muslim rule be tempered with consideration for all Christians everywhere.

The Rev. Andrew Mbugo Elisa serves as the founder of the ELCS, which began with eight congregations and 1,000 members. After theological training at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, IN, he was ordained on August 29, 1999. On November 30, 2003 three additional men will be ordained as they graduate from Concordia Lutheran Institute for the Holy Ministry, established shortly after Andrew's ordination. Currently Andrew, with help from clergy in Kenya and Tanzania, is serving the congregations now numbering 41 with nearly 10,000 members.

The ELCS has used every avenue to try and generate funds for its operation. The church is now moving its central headquarters from the north (Khartoum) to the south (Baguga). The buildings on this site will include a guest house, a school for 800 students, a church, an office complex, a seminary, a translation center, and a publishing center. It is anticipated that the funding for all of this will amount to a mere \$100,000.00 because most of the labor will be provided by the members and some volunteers from the U.S.

Will you, your congregation or group consider a gift as a thank offering to God and in appreciation for the dedication of these Lutheran Christians as they move to become an established church in Sudan? Designate your gift as an **iELCS Thankoffering** and mail your gift to the address below. Supporting congregations and groups will be listed on the **iPlaque of Ebenezer** in the entryway to the ELCS church headquarters. We are hoping that the ELCS will be brought into LCMS fellowship at the July, 2004 convention. A special **ifirst phase** check will be presented at that time. Gifts will be received throughout the anniversary year starting in November.

Helping to Celebrate the Tenth Anniversary of the Persecuted Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sudan



Lutheran Heritage Foundation
51474 Romeo Plank Road
Macomb, MI 48042
800-554-0723 www.lhfmissions.org

MISSIO

No, the title is not a misprint. It is the name of a new organization that can be formed in your congregation. **MISSIO** is from the Latin and means **iI send.i** It is based on the Gospel of John 20:21. A **MISSIO HANDBOOK** is available that describes how elaborate or how simple the formation of a group can be. The first group to affiliate is the Adult Bible Class of First Lutheran Church, Harrison, Arkansas.



This effort began with the call for congregational liaisons representing LHF. Numerous requests for a more formal affiliation led to the creation of **MISSIO**.

Each year the LHF will host a World Mission Congress featuring a mission speaker focusing on what constitutes a genuine mission program or activity. The first of these is scheduled for November 9, 2003, at 3:00 P.M. in the Macomb LHF World Mission Center with the Rev. Dr. Wallace Schulz as speaker. The LHF will provide short Bible studies and other devotional material.



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51474 Romeo Plank Road
Macomb, MI 48042
1-800-554-0723

Title & Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

E-mail _____

____ Please send me, free of charge, the video **iUpon This Rocki**.

Please send information about:

____ being the LHF MISSIO representative for my church/area

____ involving children and youth

____ requesting a speaker or preacher

____ requesting print materials

____ exploring mission project support

Celebrate Our Heritage

Back To The Word Out To The World

Vol. I, No. 2

Lutheran Heritage Foundation

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Newsletter For Congregations and Pastors



by *The Rev. Dr. Robert Rahn*

Back to the Word, Out to the World (BW,OW) is a newsletter we are using as a vehicle to reach out to congregations and Pastors. This is our second edition and it announces an event that has been made possible only by the grace of God.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church In Sudan (ELCS) will be celebrating its tenth anniversary with a kickoff dedication event on November 30 and continuing throughout 2004. The ELCS is using the theme **iEbenezer**, the same used by the LHF in its celebration activities in 2002. **iEbenezer: Hitherto the Lord has helped us** is especially true in regards to the history of the ELCS. This church grew out of the crucible of suffering and pain that was inflicted at the hands of Muslim extremists. Over two million Christians lost their lives during this ten-year-period when the ELCS was formed.

On August 29, 1999, the Rev. Andrew Mbugo Elisa was ordained as a Pastor of the ELCS. The church at the time numbered eight congregations with 1,000 members. Today, under a steady pattern of growth, the church has 41 congregations and nearly 10,000 members. Most groups are still worshipping under the protection of trees; although the LHF has been instrumental in helping to build six structures that are in the \$5,000.00 construction cost range.

Not only is Andrew Pastor of the congregations, he is also President of the ELCS, Pres. of the Concordia Lutheran Institute for the Holy Ministry and manages the St. Paul Lutheran Clinic. The church is also active in a variety of social projects for those in the church and in the community. A small hospital is now being established to supplement the St. Paul Clinic.

Pastors, congregations, and groups supporting the LHF mission also receive our regular newsletter: THE WORD AT WORK, released on a quarterly basis.



Digging the foundation of the guest house in Baguga.

THE CHURCH MOVES SOUTH

The ELCS headquarters was established in Khartoum, the capital city of Sudan. Many people fled from the south to the north in order to escape persecution and ended up in refugee camps. These camps are located all around the perimeter of the city and have miles and miles of walls.

With the peace initiative taking hold, the church has decided to move its headquarters to the south. It is anticipated that a town will spring up around the facilities being built in Baguga. Included in the building plans are the headquarters for the ELCS that

will also house the Seminary. Plans call for a school with a capacity for 800 students. This school is already in session with split shifts in outdoor settings. A guest house was the first phase of the complex to be started. The final phase of the project will entail the building of the **icathedral**, as Rev. Elisa calls it. That means it will have the advantage of a zinc roof instead of the usual straw.

The Love Of Christ Compells Us – 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 by The Rev. Dr. Wallace Schulz

Fifty years ago, following World War II, the religious section of a bookstore typically had one Episcopal book, one Catholic book, one Jewish book and two or three titles that today would probably be classified as self-help or spiritual. This according to Lynn Garrett, a religion editor at *Publishers Weekly*. That was then. Today, religious book sections in mainstream US bookstores have ballooned to encompass entire floors, or at least a few hundred feet of shelf space, and are divided into several subcategories. According to information from the Gallup poll organization, the number of religious books people read is a kind of primitive barometer of American spirituality.

Printed materials are also very much on the front line of evangelistic work in foreign countries. The University in Beijing, China, recently learned that most Chinese who become Christian, do so, not as a result of friends or church, **but through reading literature.**

This revelation has a powerful message for the staff and all who support the global work of the Lutheran Heritage Foundation. The Lutheran Heritage Foundation now works in 80 regions of the world and 90 languages. Over the past ten years it has produced 300 different publications and over 3 million pieces of literature all given away free of charge.

Christ-centered, Reformation-oriented books, pamphlets, etc., published by LHF are being read worldwide, including by those living under very oppressive governments. No matter what fences people put up, the printed word has a way of getting through. And, since the intellectual and academic part of many of these societies **prefers** the written word, this is a way to reach those who will be leaders of tomorrow.

After starting only a decade ago and, based on its vast influence, the Lutheran Heritage Foundation would surely be considered a success in the business world. However, LHF has no shareholders and neither does it pay dividends. Then why, you might ask, do countless volunteers assist LHF activities throughout the world? Because these same prayer and financial supporters, and volunteers, are driven by the conviction of St Paul that **the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, THAT THEY WHO LIVE SHOULD NO LONGER LIVE FOR THEMSELVES, BUT FOR HIM WHO DIED AND ROSE AGAIN ON THEIR BEHALF**(2 Corinthians 5:14-15).

Staff, volunteers, financial and prayer supporters of the Lutheran Heritage Foundation are not motivated by the flesh. Rather, by the Spirit's prompting and power, they join in chorus with St Paul saying **we have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me**(Galatians 2:20).

Religion Materials for Russian Children


Two of the three-part religion series being developed for 5-7th grade Russian students by Rev. Scott Benjamin, written in cooperation with Russians and funded by several LWML districts, were field tested with Russian children this July at two different camps. The lessons were taught by Russian Lutheran pastors and teachers. Eight American youth and adults also participated in the camps.

Rev. Arvo Soito taught the Old Testament lessons to children in orphanages during a one-week camp at Tichavisty, a very small village 60 km south of St. Petersburg. These children had no Bible knowledge at all. Pr. Soito gave the lessons an excellent review. The lessons have been taught at previous camps over the last two years, so no further revisions were needed. They are now being distributed throughout the Lutheran Churches in Russia.

The Life of Christ lessons were tested for the first time at a second camp held at a large state school in St. Petersburg. Rev. Alexander Kudriavstev and Helen Davidova taught

the lessons to two different groups. Revisions are now being made. Plans are for the lessons to be published and available by the end of August.

Remembering The Rev. Elmer Sedory
June 30, 1923 - August 2, 2003



Elmer Sedory served as a Founding Member of the LHF Board. He resigned his position in order to become an Independent Regional Promotional Representative for western Michigan. Health problems the last two years limited his activity. He not only was a dear friend, but a great ambassador for the LHF cause, Rev. Rahn stated.

Tenth Anniversary Offering For The ELCS

As the church moves its headquarters to the South and begins building its complex of school, headquarters, clinic, guest house and church; there will be expenses that the LHF budget cannot handle or expenses that do not qualify for funding. But, you might ask: **if** thought LHF's purpose is to translate, publish and distribute Confessional writings? The history of healthy Christianity shows that where people are led into the Word the worship of God is inevitable, they want a place where they can, together, worship Him of whom they have now learned. One automatically follows the other, but the first is to know Him as He wants to be known and worshiped. Because of this we are appealing to you on behalf of Rev. Elisa and the membership of this growing church body. I am asking you to consider an offering or Tenth Anniversary gift. The ELCS update below can be reproduced and used to provide information to your congregation.

As part of the tenth anniversary celebration the ELCS will ordain three graduates from the Concordia Lutheran Institute for the Holy Ministry, a seminary owned and operated by the ELCS and located in Khartoum. It, too, will be moving to the south to be part of the headquarters building. Ten more students are continuing their study for the ministry and 13 others are studying for leadership

roles in the church. The church is already conducting education classes for 500 elementary students and the school being built will be a facility to accommodate 800. All buildings are being constructed with bricks made by the members of the area congregations. They are made the old fashioned way, the way the children of Israel made them under Pharaoh.

The LHF recently published the second edition of a hymnal in the Zande language that is used in the seminary and throughout the church. Luther's **Small Catechism** with questions and answers has also been recently released in Zande. The Arabic edition was completed a year ago.



Rev. Andrew Mubugu Elisa at the construction site where a foundation is being laid for the facilities in Baguga.

Update On The Cost Of Being A Christian

In our last communication we reported on a young lady we named Vidya for the sake of anonymity. Vidya was beaten in the face and had her teeth knocked out because she refused to disavow her Christian faith. She received medical help and protection in our Nairobi office compound.

We are pleased to report that after Catechism instruction she and two other Somalis are Lutheran. They were confirmed on Easter Sunday and Vidya took on, as custom, a Christian name. She is now known as Sarah. Eleven of her fellow Somalis are now in the Catechism class preparing to become Lutheran. The Somali Lutheran Church meets in the LHF Nairobi office compound.

This is a reminder to us to pray for the Christians who are being persecuted around the world.

Books continue to come off the presses around the world. A hefty volume with the title **Loco Theologici** by Martin Chemnitz is actually the second volume completed. This is a commentary on Melancthon, the chief author of **The Formula of Concord**. A children's book, by native Latvian author Laila Cakare, is titled **God Makes Me His Child in Baptism**. An earlier volume in the series was titled: **God Comes To Us In Worship**. Another volume off the press is a **Hymnal** in the Zande language of Sudan and the **Augsburg Confession** in the Setswana language of South Africa. Many volumes will be finding their way to presses around the world this fall. It may take a special intermittent release schedule to keep up with the funding required as these works are all distributed free of charge.

MISSIO (from the Latin meaning **to send**, and based on John 20:21) is the name of a new organization being formed by the LHF. The letters stand for **a Mission Supplication, Support and Intercession Organization**. Write or call for the **MISSIO HANDBOOK** with suggestions for forming a **MISSIO** group in your church.