



Confessional Lutheran Institute

mid-April–July 2023 Report to the WELS One Africa Team

submitted by Dan Witte, August 8, 2023

The Confessional Lutheran Institute (CLI) is OAT's arm which partners in learning for action in Christ throughout Africa. Specifically CLI divides into the two functions below.

1) Formal Continuing Education (led/managed by Dan Witte)

Bachelor of Divinity (BDiv) studies for CELC pastors in Africa

- *Update on past classes:* Eighteen men from 5 African countries are in the 2020–2025 BDiv cohort. They take two courses a year. Seventeen of the eighteen men have completed the research and writing course, “More Like Moses.” (Mukhweya, LCCA-M, is two weeks from finishing.) All have finished “Yesterday, Today, and Forever,” a course on African church history, “Like the Back of My Hand,” a course on Psalms, and an outreach course. Udo and Udo, the Nigerian seminary teachers, still need to finish the marriage-and-family doctrine course; all the rest have finished it. Due to his June 2022 motorcycle accident Frank Shonga (LCCA-Z) did not take part in the last two courses. The cohort is 5 courses through a 9-course program, which is due to finish in 2025.

Next courses and other updates:

- The next courses, God willing, will be in Lilongwe, October 17–24, 2023 — Ken Cherney leading a learning journey in Pentecostalism; and in Lusaka, June 2024 — Jon Bare leading a [problem-based learning](#) course: “Solving your Biggest Ministry Problem.”
- It is hard to say if Frank Shonga, who is recovering slowly, will be able to rejoin the BDiv cohort.
- *Mid-April–July quarterly BDiv rock:*
 - Take suggested improvements from PSI team (*complete*) and GLP consultant (*first meeting Sep. 5, so not complete*) to BDiv/MA handbook and implement those improvement.

Master of Arts in Theology (MA) studies

- David Kamwata, Bright Pembeleka, and Anthony Phiri are nearly done with their MA studies; all now have only have a final project/thesis to complete in 2022. The plan is for
 - Ken Cherney to advise David Kamwata in a project on implementing dialogue education in a seminary course he is already teaching. This plan is on hold at Kamwata's request.
 - Brad Wordell is advising Bright Pembeleka in a project about Chewa and biblical proverbs in good preaching. This plan is somewhat on hold because Pembeleka is CRM.
 - John Schuetze is advising Anthony Phiri in a project about substance abuse counseling. This plan is on hold at Phiri's request.
- Richard Ogesi Amayo, Isaiah Mbeta Mayingo, and Chrispinus Omuse (LCMC pastors) asked in March 2022 to enroll. They attended the Psalms class in Lusaka in March/April 2022. Amayo has finished his Psalms paper as part of his entry. WLS has not yet officially enrolled any of the three due to that and other loose ends that have needed to be tied up. Dave Bivens and Dan Witte have reset October 17 as a deadline for all enrollment requirements to be fulfilled. This includes Mbeta and Omuse actively serving LCMC congregations.

From July 14, 2022 until his 2023 furlough Witte tried to meet over WhatsApp with all three men weekly on Thursday mornings. Connection problems often prevented one or two of the men from making the meeting. Since their May 2023 class together in Sondu, Kenya—STEP Bible and Logos computer Bible basics—Witte has been sending brief learning tasks to participants. He has received just enough responses to keep going, but not enough to be excited about needed progress.

 - A highlight of the time in Sondu was the May 29–June 1 stewardship/organization/financial workshop with leaders from most of LCMC's churches.
- *One of Dan's mid-April through July quarterly rocks for MA was the same as BDiv:*
 - Take suggested improvements from PSI team (*complete*) and GLP consultant (*first meeting Sep. 5, so not complete*) to BDiv/MA handbook and implement those improvement.
- *The other quarterly MA rock:*
 - Work with Dave Bivens to identify and plan for courses for at least two other MA instructors.

Pastoral Studies Institute of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary

- Dan coordinates BDiv and MA with the three PSI brothers: Dave Bivens, Skip Goetzinger, and Al Sorum. Dave Bivens is OAT's busy PSI liaison. Dan and Dave confer often. Dan owes PSI a report on each BDiv and MA student shortly.

2) Seminary Consultation (led/managed by John Roebke for Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, and Uganda, and Dan Witte for Cameroon, Nigeria, and Zambia)

Cameroon *Dan Kroll and Dan Witte:* Pastors Gervase and Israel are leading pre-seminary courses with 7 men. Reports, funds accounting, and requests are forthcoming and complete. The two Cameroonian men report their weekly progress well, and especially Israel often encourages the Nigerian brothers to do similarly. Kroll and Witte met in Douala with all six West African seminary teachers (5 days) and all three board chairman (2.5 days) during the first full week in June.

Also, Kroll, Witte and the 6 teachers meet about every other Wednesday afternoon online, in spite of some poor internet connections. Kroll prepares agendas. The teachers take turns giving devotions and leading the meetings. Last meeting was Wednesday 2 August 2023.

For more on Cameroon, see below on Nigeria.

Ethiopia *Mark Panning:*

- Rev. Kebede has submitted a Maor curriculum for the upcoming academic cycle. The SA-FR has asked Bivens/PSI to look at it and share feedback.
- The LCE will again look to WELS/OAT to help teach Maor classes. Panning will give additional information soon.
- We need to emphasize teaching Maor classes online. If all goes as planned, there will be students in Dukem/Bishoftu, Gambella and Bulbulla. Also, given the current political situation, especially in Gambella, we may not be allowed to travel to these places.

Kenya *John Roebke:*

- Student exams and in-person teaching taking place August 1–11 in W Kenya
- *Current enrollment:* 3 Third Year students + 8 First Year students
- Next term begins 01 September. Onunda is looking for teachers of courses on Small Catechism and Pastoral Epistles.

Malawi *Vicar assignments, via Mark Panning:*

- Vicar Kaliati has been assigned to Chigombe LCCA
- Vicar Mike Paul has been assigned to Nanseta LCCA
- Vicar Chitsulo has been assigned to Nsema LCCA
- Vicar Grant has been assigned to Chimenya LCCA.

Note: an additional 4 graduates remain unassigned

Congregations that refused to accept a vicar: St. Michaels (Mzuzu),
Mwalaulomwe, Nagome, Erukweni

- » Mzimba congregation unable to pay vicar salary, thus not assigned one
- » M'bowola parish parsonage not livable, thus not assigned one

As of 4 August, the LCCA has not presented a plan for moving the vicars to their places of service, or for vicar supervision.

Regional Preaching Assistant workshops in Malawi (August 2023)

OAT approved the following requests to fund workshops

- Blantyre district MWK 1,670,000
- Lilongwe district MWK 2,360,700
- Mzuzu district MWK 1,179,100
- Thyolo district MWK 1,092,000
- TOTAL MWK 6,301,800 (\$5,977)

OAT subsequently received a request from ZoPham District to fund a workshop for MWK 1,701,700 (\$1601)

Nigeria We are coming up on year 2 of 2 in Pre-Seminary level for all our worker training in West Africa. Both schools completed the first year Pre-Seminary and are hoping to add some computer training for the second year, with teaching to be done by an outside expert in each location. Most materials are in hand. A few await being printed. Teachers need to take more and more responsibility to activate the students in their learning rather than lecturing for easily-forgotten facts/rote memorization.

All three Worker Training programs have prepared their own budgets and will be accountable for how funds are used. This is a new (big) step in teaching independence and responsibility, so prayers for financial stability are appreciated.

Dan Kroll and Dan Witte will meet with seminary teachers in Douala from August 27 to September 2.

Wrinkle: There is some unique activity in All Saints where the President seems to be making big revisions in the pre-Seminary program. Since the program is very similar at All Saints as in Christ the King, might there be a possibility of sending the All Saints students to Christ the King? The church politics at All Saints are creating some challenges that might be avoided if the program shifts to Uruk Uso. We invite comments and prayers as we make plans that will allow for the continued education of men who are serious about learning how to better serve as leaders of the Lord's people.

Uganda Ben and Howie have introduced the Seminary Consultation process and there is an OLS stakehold input plan.

Zambia:

- Graduation of 7 Malawi Student vicar candidates and 5 Zambia Student vicar candidates took place on Friday, 30 June 2023.
- Principal and teacher Philip Birner will retire at the end of July 2023 after teaching at the LCCA Zambia and Malawi joint worker training seminary for 27 years.
- The LCCA-Zambia worker training faculty (Birner, Kamwata, Phiri, and Simweeleba), Board of Control and Synodical Council eagerly are looking forward to Seminary Consultation meetings later this month.

Vicar assignments

- Tembo assigned to what I called Mulonnda in Mwembezhi district.
- Chili (Chili?? This must be Morris Chulu - MTP) assigned to Lufambula where Pastor Du Shawa had been.
- Ngulube assigned to Livingstone
- Njobvu assigned to NW province.

Also, a request to give \$1,140 from the Seminary budget to fund supervising pastors' travel has been granted.