



# Confessional Lutheran Institute

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

submitted by Dan Witte, 11 April 2023

The Confessional Lutheran Institute (CLI) is OAT's arm to *equip, enhance, and enable* pastors within African CELC member churches. Specifically CLI divides into the *two* functions below.

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

#### Bachelor of Divinity (BDiv) studies

- *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 have completed the research and writing course, “More Like Moses.” (Mukhweya, LCCA-M, is three weeks from finishing.) All have finished “Yesterday, Today, and Forever,” a course on African church history, and “Like the Back of My Hand,” a course on Psalms. Due to his June 2022 motorcycle accident Frank Shonga (LCCA-Z) did not take part in the October/November 2022 Outreach course. All the other eighteen men completed it. We are 4 courses through a 9-course program.

#### *Next courses and other updates:*

- The next two BDiv courses will be in Lusaka, June 13–20, 2023 — John Schuetze teaching the doctrine of marriage/family — and in Lilongwe, October 17–24, 2023 — Ken Cherney leading a learning journey in Pentecostalism.
- It is hard to say if Frank Shonga, who is recovering slowly, will be able to rejoin the BDiv cohort.
- *Mid-February–mid-April quarterly BDiv rock:*
  - BDiv and MA handbook complete and in the hands of, OAT, PSI team and GLP consultant.

## **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 still needs to finish 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 set May 31 as a deadline for all enrollment requirements to be fulfilled.

Witte has tried to meet over WhatsApp with all three men weekly on Thursday mornings since July 14, 2022, but connection problems have often prevented one or two of the men from making the meeting. Amayo and Mbeta are connecting better than Omuse due to Safaricom bundles. All are in touch enough Dan has no concerns.
- January 30–February 9, 2023, Dan Witte met with the three men in Kisumu, Kenya to work together on preliminaries and to lead a learning journey in Pentecostalism, the Holy Spirit, and the theology of the cross. Onunda attended for the first three days.
  - The group plans to meet next, God willing, in late May. Starting date is not firm yet. It depends in part on when stewardship training for a broader group starts and how long it goes. Witte would need to fly out to Cameroon on Saturday, June 3.
- *Dan's mid-February through mid-April quarterly rock for MA was the same as Bdiv:*
  - BDiv and MA handbook complete and in the hands of, OAT, PSI team and GLP consultant.
- *Formal Continuing Education Rocks through mid-August will follow shortly.*

## **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.
- What CLI used to call MTh (Master of Theology) we now call MA (Master of Arts). Dave and Dan, after checking with others at WLS, are proposing this change. Why? One reason is that by both African and American accreditation standards, MTh is almost always built on top of a previous MA or MDiv. If not, MTh should be a 4-year full time set of courses. We are building a master's degree on top of a bachelor's degree. Also MTh always ends in a thesis; MA can end in a project or thesis. We like that flexibility.

## 2) Seminary Consultation (led/managed by John Roebke for East and South Africa and Dan Witte for West Africa)

**Cameroon** Pastor 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 they often encourage the Nigerian brothers to do similarly. *For more on Cameroon, see below on Nigeria.*

**Ethiopia** *Mark Panning:* Kebede has revised his plan for LCE diploma, bachelors, and masters degree studies several times. He is in the process of doing so again. He is looking for lots of help via OAT and stateside teachers. He plans three locations: Bulbulla, Dukem, and Gambella. The issue will likely be before OAT this quarterly meeting, once Kebede submits a simpler proposal.

**Kenya** The LCMC Kenya Evangelist upgrade program has restarted, with 12 enrolled. Three more might join shortly. Amayo, Mbeta, Onunda, and Roebke are teaching 5–6 evenings a week over Google Meet.

**Malawi** *John Roebke and Mark Panning:* Faculty and students are in pre-seminary year 2 with 12 students, down from the initial Year 1 enrolment of 19. Student performance continues to be below average. The understaffed faculty (Daile, Mwaktika, and Panning) is doing what it can to keep its collective head above water. Panning returned his call to King of Prussia, PA. A call to a WLS graduate would place a new man in Malawi sometime yet this year, God willing. JR is hoping LCCA-M will appoint a small sub-committee for sem consult. Meetings have been postponed due to flooding. JR created a matrix of choices for LCCA-M.

**Nigeria** *All Saints (north, Cross River State):* Egar and Obi have have a full classroom of 10 men for pre-seminary classes. Classes are going well so far, and Egar and Obi communicate well with Kroll and Witte through WhatsApp. They report back to the other four West African seminary teachers most weeks too. Reporting has improved in 2023 compared to 2022.

*Christ the King (south, Akwa Ibom State):* Pastor AP Udo (Director), Pastor Idorenyin Udo (Assistant teacher), Mr. Edeme (English), and Elder Stephen (Agri-Science) are training ten men in pre-seminary studies. Udo and Udo had been the most lax in communicating until the March 29 meeting. Both have also reported since on lesson progress.

With the six teachers in Cameroon and Nigeria Kroll and Witte are in a good regular pattern of meeting 3 times per year in Douala face-to-face for one week:

- 1) early/before the school year (early September) to confirm that all are ready,
- 2) mid-year (early January) to start planning for the coming school year and iron out any wrinkles in the current year, and

- 3) end of the year (early June) to review and plan strategies. This June 2023 we plan to bring into Douala for two days the three board chairmen as well. Together we will spend some quality time in coordinating, budgeting, and accounting, since a) the latter two seem to be fairly new to most of our teachers, and b) Kroll, Witte, the teachers, and the board chairmen have never met face-to-face before as a group.

Also, Kroll, Witte and the 6 teachers meet 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.

**Uganda** Ben and Howie are heading there this Friday splitting up to teach in two different locations. They are building people up from the ground up. They will introduce page 1 of the Seminary Consultation process.

**Zambia:** *Phil Birner reports:*

- Graduation of 7 Malawi Student vicar candidates and 5 Zambia Student vicar candidates will take 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.

*Seminary Consultation rocks through mid-August will follow shortly.*