

# Global Vision



A newsletter for friends of the Global Mission Institute, Luther Seminary

Vol. 18, No.2, Easter 2007

## Luther Heralds First Graduates in Mission and World Christianity Program

### Five Students to Complete Masters Program in May

By Rebecca Craig & Christopher Byars

The first students from the Master of Arts in Mission and World Christianity Program are preparing to graduate this May from Luther Seminary. This program, which prepares students for dynamic 21st century ministry in a world of many cultures and religions, was instituted at Luther Seminary three years ago with Dr. Frieder Ludwig, head of the Global Mission Institute at Luther Seminary, as faculty point person. It was met with an immediate response from students Kirk Sandvig, Diane Solmonson, Krista Anderson, Chue Siong and Lue Moua.

Kirk Sandvig's interest in the program started out as a misunderstanding. "I originally thought it was a mission and world religions program," he admits. Given his undergraduate work in Asian Studies, he was drawn to the idea of learning about other religions. However, despite the initial confusion, the coursework turned out to be equally as intriguing because the program works with other religions, yet focuses on the encounter in a way that relates Christian identity with the knowledge and experience of others in a common world. "It's been fascinating learning how Christianity functions so differently in other parts of the world versus what we see here in the west," explains Kirk. "It made me realize that the Holy Spirit is moving in the church, regardless of the ties the church has. It adapts to whatever form or function is needed throughout the world." In the future, Kirk hopes to bridge communities through the use of documentaries and media that will not only help visibly unite the body of Christ but will also let donors see the faces of those they are helping and witness the impact donor support is having in their lives.

For Diane Solmonson, the program fit with work she was already doing. International work has always been an integral part of Diane's life working for non-profit organizations. Most recently, she helped raise funds that would support the training of doctors that specialize in heart surgery for children



*Kirk Sandvig (left) and Diane Solmonson (right) are two Luther Seminary seniors who are preparing for graduation in the Master of Arts in Mission and World Christianity program this May.*

in Africa and has been involved in helping American families adopt children from Kenya. While the seminary has students participate in cross-cultural work, it has never before had a program geared specifically for mission. Diane notes, "Cross-cultural is great for those called to be pastors in the ELCA to at least experience different cultures. But for those of us who are not called to necessarily be 'preachers,' this program gives us a tremendous opportunity to do international work within the ELCA." Diane hopes that one day there will be even more mission-minded courses at Luther. "People need to be taken out of their own backyards from time to time, even if they're not interested in pursuing global mission as a livelihood. International experiences change people's hearts and transform their understanding of the world at large."

Lue Moua and Chue Siong were born in Thailand at the Ban Vinai Hmong Refugee Camp. Lue, the younger brother of Chue, came to Luther Seminary to learn and grow so that

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#### The GMI Mission:

The Global Mission Institute provides critical support to Luther Seminary in its task of developing global mission leaders, partnering with the church in fulfillment of the great commission.

## Director's Corner

# Understanding Christianity in a Minority Setting

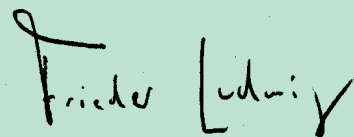
## Thailand trip highlights the continuing story of the Christian Church

"How can I make my witness meaningful to my neighbors if I fail to understand where they are and where I am in the continuing story of the Christian church here? How can I engage in meaningful theological thinking if I do not understand the story of the development of theology in Northern Thailand?" These questions were raised by Kosuke Koyama in *Water Buffalo Theology*, one of the foundational books in mission studies. Koyama, who was born in Tokyo, was a missionary in Thailand and taught at the McGilvary faculty of Theology in Chang Mai. Later, he became Professor of Ecumenical Studies at Union Theological Seminary. He now lives in Minneapolis and occasionally teaches at Luther Seminary. It is a privilege to work together with him and to learn from him.

I often thought of him during a recent stay in Thailand, not only because of the photo of the young Koyama in the faculty building in Chang Mai. I also asked myself the same questions. I was with a group of students on a cross-cultural experience, and in our many conversations with pastors and church leaders in Thailand and in Laos we began to understand more about Christianity in a minority situation. We learned about Buddhist-Christian dialogue and interaction. We experienced a tremendous hospitality, and we had the opportunity to participate in the fourth Asian Lutheran International Conference. Everything was well prepared, and it was a pleasure to lead this tour. The students who participated represented different cultural and denominational backgrounds; some of them will be among the first graduates in the M.A. in Mission and World Christianity.

This program was established three years ago; it was clear that such a specialization was needed at Luther Seminary with its commitment to "mission in the 21st century world of many cultures and religions." The program immediately attracted a number of students. They took almost all concentration classes, and we added new courses to it. I enjoyed working with them over a longer period of time. They even got used to my accent.

They were committed and dedicated to their studies. They benefitted from the international programs we have and from the interaction with professors such as Kosuke Koyama, Charles Amjad-Ali, Lois Farag, Monica Melancthon and Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu. I am confident that they will make important contributions in their work for the church. Of course, the learning process will never end, but that is true for all of us. To quote once more Kosuke Koyama: "A missionary is never a finished product. 'Missionary' is a continuous participation concept."



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## International Students Complete Studies

Several international students are expected to complete their studies at Luther Seminary this spring and summer. We congratulate them and pray that God's ministry will flourish through their gifts:

Arne Braut (Norway) – Non-degree

Laura Hindrianto (Indonesia) – M.Th.

Jiyeon Kim (S. Korea) – M.Th.

Tae Hee Kim (S. Korea) – M.Div.,  
admitted to M.Th. program

Byung Ohk Lee (S. Korea) – M.Th.

Joon Ho Lee (S. Korea) – Ph.D.

Judith Takwi Mufuh (Cameroon) – M.A.

Elieshi Mungure (Tanzania) – Ph.D.

Robbyanto Notomihardjo (Indonesia) – Ph.D.

William Obaga (Kenya) – M.S.M.

Enlin Peng (China) – Non-degree

Ivana Sabanošová (Slovakia) – M.S.M.

Ishaya Yarison (Nigeria) – M.S.M.

Jayamon Yohannan (India) – M.Th.

Calvin Zhao Yu (China) – Ph.D.

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he could reach out to the Hmong people in Thailand and teach English. Lue's passion is to minister and evangelize by being the hands and feet of Christ to the people of his own culture. Chue, who is married to Luther graduate and Pastor William Siong from Hmong Central Lutheran Church, graduated with a degree in Elementary Education from Crown College. Originally, she began to study at the University of Minnesota in the medical program. After one semester, she realized that this did not fit in with the relationship she desired to have with her husband, so she decided to enter Luther Seminary to study so she could partner with her husband in ministry. Through their involvement with this program, Chue and Lue have both found a broader understanding of faith and culture. Raised Baptist, they have also appreciated learning about the Lutheran perspective and enjoy how it has allowed them to better understand other faiths and belief systems. "Luther Seminary has broadened my perspective of what mission looks like to help me in my mission overseas or here in the United States," states Chue.

Krista Anderson and her husband felt called to mission in 2004 and spent a year in Thailand where they taught English in a Christian school in Chang Mai. In this time, she served with the Health Project for Tribal People serving the Hill Tribe people and providing AIDS education which allowed her to visit an orphanage, and visit and learn about the Hill Tribe people of Thailand. Upon her return, she knew that her calling was to serve in global mission, but she felt more education was necessary and entered the newly formed Mission and World Christianity program at Luther. "The classes gave me words to what I knew," she states. She also appreciates the consistency within the program. After seminary, Krista desires to serve in long-term mission work wherever God will lead her and her husband.

These five students bring unique gifts and passions to the realm of global ministry. As they move toward graduation and prepare to enter into the mission field, we look forward to seeing how the spirit will utilize their gifts and education.

## INTERNATIONAL LIFE THIS SPRING



*Toshifumi Uemura ('03), Assistant Professor of Christianity at Japan Lutheran College in Tokyo, visited campus Feb. 23-25 with some of his students and met with GMI donors (see below).*



*Students from Japan Lutheran College (left) with donors Grace Ingulsrud and Dorothy Sorenson.*



*Current student Hitoshi Adachi (left) and another student from Japan Lutheran College with donor Lois Setterholm.*

*Rev. Dr. Magdi Gendi, acting president and professor of Old Testament at the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Cairo, gave a presentation to students and faculty at the Mission and Ministry Forum regarding the state of Christianity in Egypt and the Middle East.*



*Visiting Schioltz Scholar Rev. Dr. J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu from Ghana preached during chapel.*



## International Student Profile

# Ivana Sabanošová

By Christopher Byars

**M**usic is at the heart of worship for this Slovakian-born church musician. Ivana Sabanošová grew up in Partizanske, Slovakia as a pastor's daughter. Early on, Ivana was introduced to music. Her mother played the organ for Ivana's father, and she would sit and listen with interest to her six-year old brother's piano lessons. At the age of five, her parents hoped to get her involved in music as well, though formal training programs were only offered to six-year olds. So, she began to attend lessons with her brother. She eventually played throughout elementary school and began to teach herself English. She attended a bilingual high school in Bratislava, and midway through her first year was accepted to and began attending the Conservatory to study church music.

During her studies at the Conservatory it was recommended that she apply to a program in the United States, and she eventually attended St. Olaf College for a bachelor's degree and Notre Dame for a Master in Music Performance.

During her time at St. Olaf, she became acquainted with Dr. Paul

*"My hope is that through these programs within the church, many families may then feel drawn to join in worship."*

*—Ivana Sabanošová*



*Ivana hopes to use her musical talents to spread the gospel throughout her hometown in Slovakia.*

Westermeyer, head of the Master of Sacred Music (M.S.M.) program at Luther Seminary, which led to an interest in Luther. Following a year teaching high school in Bratislava, she returned to the United States and entered the M.S.M. program. The M.S.M. program introduced her to the theology behind the music and she appreciates the fellowship she has found with her classmates in the program. She enjoys how the program allows for practical application of the things learned in class and the discipleship time to discuss issues. The M.S.M. program has been a great blessing and Ivana looks forward to the practical application of this education in her home country of Slovakia.

Upon returning to Slovakia, Ivana hopes to establish workshops for musicians in small churches, helping them make the most of scarce resources. These community music programs would allow those that may not normally attend church to enter safely and without any pretense. It would also be an opportunity to teach many youth different musical skills that they would not normally have in many of the smaller communities.

"My hope is that through these programs within the church, many families may then feel drawn to join in worship," says Ivana.

Additionally, since the fall of communism and with the influx of the broader Western influence in Slovakia, Ivana has found that people within her hometown no longer mingle outside their homes as they once did. Neighborhoods that were once safe are no longer secure places for children to play. People have become more defined by what they have and what they do than by the community in which they live. She states, "I remember a time when one's word meant something and there was no need for contracts, but things could be determined by a handshake." These community centers would hopefully provide a safe environment for people within these neighborhoods to once again reclaim some of that unity and kinship that existed when she was a child.

Luther's M.S.M. program has thus served as a practical gift not only to help Ivana to find ways to use her passion for music, but also serve in bringing others closer to Christ.

# Thailand Cross-Cultural Course Presented Unique Opportunity for Students

By Rebecca Craig

Cross-cultural trips through Luther Seminary present wonderful learning opportunities for students. For those on the Thailand trip this past February, the visit offered a particularly unique opportunity because they were invited to participate in the fourth Asian Lutheran International Conference, the first time non-Asians have been permitted to attend. Held in Bangkok, Thailand, the conference brought together representatives of the Christian church from all over Asia, including Thailand, Hong Kong, China, Laos, Cambodia, Papua New Guinea and Indonesia, as well as bishops from the United States. Issues discussed included dealing with the aftermath of the Tsunami in December 2004 and how the United States can better handle the changing multi-cultural face of congregations.

The conference gave students an opportunity to meet and confer not only with Asian leaders, but also with mission-minded leaders from the United States that they might not have otherwise met. Many Asian students expressed frustration to their American counterparts about the candidacy process here in the United States. They find it to be demeaning and feel that it fosters cultural stereotypes because most Asian students are being interviewed by Western-oriented candidacy committees and psychologists. They also pointed out that the process of going from America to any other country in the ministry field is a relatively simple process. Conversely, non-U.S. church leaders must go through a much more difficult process to be allowed to teach and preach in the United States. Asian ministers say they wonder why the standards for who can preach are so different between the East and the West?

The Asian Lutheran International conference took place at the end of the trip. Before the conference, students had many other educational opportunities. A trip into Laos gave students the opportunity to see Christianity operating under a communist regime. While Christianity is permitted to be practiced now, the government still controls what goes on in the churches. Foreigners can participate and observe, but they are not allowed to lead or preach. If they do not follow these strict guidelines, the church will be closed and the leaders potentially imprisoned. Interestingly, the students discovered that there were seven or eight non-Christians attending the services every week. "They may have tighter restrictions, but the gospel seems to be moving more freely than ever!" participant Kirk Sandvig observed. Despite



*Luther students and guides in front of a Thai church.*

Christianity making up less than one percent of the Laotian population, they are vibrant and alive and many Western churches could learn from them.

Students also visited the country of Myanmar which has been under a military dictatorship and has suffered from the effects of ethnic cleansing. While they were only there for three hours, they could feel a change and noticed that, as strangers to the community, it was difficult to engage people in conversation.

Most of the students found the trip a challenging and rewarding experience and felt an overwhelming sense of hospitality from the people of Thailand. By the end of the trip, all had a greater sense of how the Holy Spirit is working in new and unexpected ways throughout the world.

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## Global Church Highlighted by Luther Events



*Korean choir performing "We Will Keep Our Faith Alive" at the seminary Variety Show.*

The month of March included several events highlighting our global church.

The community meal on March 7 featured African dishes. Luther Seminary observed International Day of Women on March 8 with a tea celebrating

the contributions of all our female students, staff and faculty.

Some of our international students led a global chapel service on March 14 including prayers in Slovak, Urdu, Korean, an African creed of the Masai and a blessing in Swahili. Our Korean students joined together to sing at the Second Annual Variety Show on March 15, and part of the proceeds from the Silent Auction that evening went to the International Student Scholarship Fund.

## GMI Member Profile

# Jim & Beverly Almquist

By Laura Kaslow

**J**im ('61,'78) and Beverly Almquist's giving is guided by their heart for mission. This call has led them to faithfully give to the Global Mission Institute at Luther Seminary for over a decade. In explaining their love for mission work, the Almquists point to the Gospel. "In John 3:16, we are told that 'God so loved the world,' and in Matthew 28:19, Jesus says to 'Go therefore and make disciples of all nations,'" Jim noted.

Jim and Bev see the need for missional ministry at home and across the globe. "It is very clear that our ministry has to have a world view. The Global Mission Institute is bringing that to young theologians and pastors of the church," Jim said. "It is especially important for new, young pastors to grasp this. The world has come to us. We are a cosmopolitan community— people from all over the world are coming to our doorstep. Luther's students need what GMI is giving to the seminary."

The Almquist's gifts help the GMI to continue to be a center for global awareness, hospitality and networking and facilitate experiences for faculty and students that enhance an understanding of Christian mission and witness in a multi-cultural and religiously plural world. In addition to their monthly faithful gifts, the Almquists have included the GMI in their estate plan through a Charitable Gift Annuity (CGA). By giving through a CGA, the Almquists are eligible to receive a tax break due to their charitable donation. Additionally, they receive regular payments from the annuity, which is backed by the seminary's assets, for the rest of their lives. Upon death, the Global Mission Institute receives the value of the gift.

When asked about their continuing support for the GMI, Jim said that they have given as they were able. "From the time GMI started, we were interested in supporting the program." Last year the Almquists sold some stock options and decided to give a gift from the sale to Luther Seminary, designated to the Global Mission Institute.

"Rather than wait until we die to give the seminary a gift, we decided to give now through a CGA," Jim said.

The call to a missional ministry began for Jim as a child. The son of a Lutheran pastor, Jim's parents often had missionaries stay in their home. These visits seeded Jim's interest in mission work. He went on to serve as a chaplain in the US Army for 36 years, on both active and reserve duty, where he further saw the need for God's mission in the world.



*Jim & Beverly Almquist at their home in Minneapolis.*

During the 1960's, Jim served in Alaska and described his ministry there as a "crisis ministry" because the traditional lifestyle of the indigenous people of Alaska was radically confronted by Western culture. This confrontation led to a "schizophrenic society," where the young people began to speak English in school and adapt to Western society and the older generations lived traditionally. "You recognize how people struggle through these kinds of experiences. This happens all over the world," Jim said.

While the worldwide struggles can be heartbreaking, Jim finds mission work to be a rewarding ministry. "People who have lived in darkness spiritually, grasp the light of Christ and hold onto it. The Gospel brings them such great joy!" he exclaims.

Jim went on to serve parishes in Minnesota including, Zion Lutheran Church in Minneapolis and Calvary Lutheran in Golden Valley as the Mission Outreach Pastor.

The call to Calvary Lutheran brought Jim and Bev together. At the time Jim received his call to Calvary, Bev was on staff as a pre-school and kindergarten teacher. Both widowed at the time they met, the two were married in 1982.

Jim retired from Calvary Lutheran in 1995, but was not able to retire from his call to mission quite yet. Shortly after his retirement,

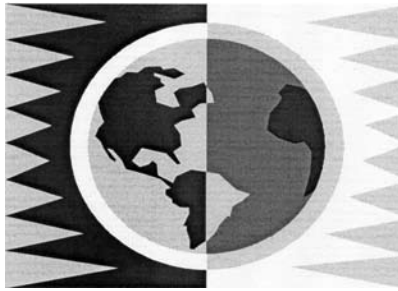
he was called to an interim pastor position at Our Saviors Lutheran, Minneapolis, Minn. Before he was even able to begin his call at Our Saviors, the church burned down in a massive fire. Jim was quickly pulled into local mission work to help the church overcome the aftermath of the fire. Today, the Almquists continue to be drawn to the church's missional work through their charitable gifts, mission work in their congregation and a close relationship with the Global Mission Institute at Luther Seminary.

*"It is very clear that our ministry has to have a world view. The Global Mission Institute is bringing that to young theologians and pastors of the church."*

*—Jim Almquist*

✧ "A MIGHTY FORTRESS" EXHIBIT

The exhibit "A Mighty Fortress, Far From Lake Wobegon: The Music of Minnesota's Newest Lutherans" will be at Luther Seminary in the Olson Campus Center from March 19 - April 15, 2007. It was created by ethnomusicologist Allison Adrian and artist Wing Young Huie. "A Mighty Fortress" uses the Lutheran Church in the Twin Cities as an entry point to discuss immigration, Minnesota identity and the significant role worship music plays in negotiating spiritual and ethnic identity. This exhibit is cosponsored by the Global Mission Institute, the African Immigrant Congregation Series (Louisville Institute Grant Research Project), and the Fine Arts Committee. Contact the Fine Arts Committee for more info at: [finearts@luthersem.edu](mailto:finearts@luthersem.edu).



## News Notes

✧ AFRICAN CHRISTIANITY AND THE NEO-DIASPORA CONFERENCE

Luther Seminary hosted a conference exploring "African Christianity and the Neo-Diaspora," March 23-25, as an extension of the African Immigrant Congregation Series funded by a grant from the Louisville Institute. The conference highlighted presentations by international scholars and addressed

religious perspectives of African immigration around the world.

✧ MEXICO CITY LUTHERAN CENTER

Katie Pence Dahl, GMI assistant director, visited the Lutheran Center in Mexico City in March 2007. She went on behalf of Luther Seminary to develop a semester study abroad program in collaboration with the other ELCA seminaries. This is a part of the GMI initiative to connect with international partners in the global South.

✧ ASIAN LUTHERAN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

Frieder Ludwig, GMI director, and a group of seven students participated in the Asian Lutheran International Conference in Bangkok, Thailand in January.



Thank you for considering a gift to the GMI. Your gift to the GMI helps give international church leaders the opportunity to advance their ministry through study at Luther Seminary.

### Why is your support of the GMI important?

The work of the GMI is supported entirely by the gifts and grants of individuals, congregations, foundations and corporations.

### How can you become a member?

Membership begins with a gift of \$250 to the GMI. Membership may be renewed annually. GMI membership automatically qualifies you as a PARTNER of Luther Seminary. Simply fill out the form to the right and mail it in with your payment, or make payments online through our web site: [www.luthersem.edu/gifts](http://www.luthersem.edu/gifts)

### Benefits of Membership

- The satisfaction of knowing your investment strengthens global mission in the ELCA and around the world.
- Automatic membership into Luther Seminary PARTNERS.
- Invitation to an annual GMI donor recognition event.
- *Global Vision* newsletter, featuring news and information about global mission.

**YES!** I want to help others share the Gospel around the world!

#### Global Mission Membership Levels

- GMI Missioner (\$10,000 or more)
- GMI Investor (\$5,000-\$9,999)
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#### Have you included the GMI in your estate plans?

By including the GMI in your estate plans, you will help share the good news of Jesus Christ throughout the world. For more information on various planning options, please check here.



To give online, go to [www.luthersem.edu/gifts](http://www.luthersem.edu/gifts)



# GMI Calendar

## **Friday, April 13—African Immigrant Congregation Series**

*"African-American Experiences"*

Northwestern Hall Auditorium, 6-9 p.m.

## **Friday, April 13—Norwegian Music Evening**

7 p.m. OCC Chapel of the Incarnation

May-Britt Forsberg Hovdenak (spouse of student Sorle

Hovdenak) & Turid Bakke Braut (mother of student Arne Braut)

## **Friday, April 27—African Immigrant Congregation Series**

*"Pan-African Experiences/African & African-American Experiences"*

Northwestern Hall Auditorium, 6-9 p.m.

## **Sunday, April 29—GMI Donor Dinner**

5 - 7 p.m., Olson Campus Center Dining Room

## **Friday, May 11—International Student End of the Year Picnic**

Contact the GMI for details, 651-641-3487

## **Friday, May 18—African Immigrant Congregation Series**

*"Networks and Resources in Minnesota"*

Northwestern Hall Auditorium, 6-9 p.m.

## **July 19-22—ELCA Global Mission Event**

*"New Heaven and New Earth"*

Ohio State University Campus, Columbus, Ohio

[www.elca.org/GME](http://www.elca.org/GME)

## **Wednesday, October 10—Burgess Lecture on Global Mission**

Rev. Dr. Wanda Deifelt

*Associate Professor of Religion at Luther College, Decorah, Iowa*

OCC, Chapel of the Incarnation, 11 a.m.

# Prayer Offerings

- ✘ We give thanks for international alumni/ae from Luther Seminary who recently returned to Minnesota to visit:

Peter Ndung'u (Kenya)

Toshifumi Uemura (Japan)

Magdi Gendi (Egypt)

Amos Gimbi (Tanzania)

We pray for their continued ministry around the world.

- ✘ We pray for the students who are preparing to leave for internship or their first call. We also pray for safe travel and a gentle transition for our international students and their families as they return home after completing their studies here. May God guide them and their work throughout the global church.
- ✘ We pray for Christians around the world as we take pause on Good Friday and raise our voices in praise on Easter Sunday for our Lord Jesus.
- ✘ O God, we pray for those living amidst war and violence who seek refuge or asylum in the United States. Grant safety to the families who are waiting for answers and wisdom to the leaders who are making these important decisions.

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**Luther Seminary**

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