

Global Vision



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

Vol. 17, No. 2, Easter 2006

Swansons Shaped Global Programs

Missions Professor Leaves Seminary

By Shelley Cunningham

Over the past eight years, most of Luther Seminary's international outreach and interfaith education has had Swanson fingerprints all over it. Both Mark and Rosanne Swanson have played a major role in advancing the seminary's reputation as a place committed to global mission.

Mark Swanson joined the Luther Seminary in 1998 as associate professor of Islamic Studies, and followed Roland Miller as director of the Islamic Studies program. On July 1, he will begin a new call, as professor of Christian-Muslim Studies and Interfaith Relationships at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago.

Rosanne Swanson served as interim director of the Global Mission Institute from 2002-04, until Frieder Ludwig was called to the position. She helped shepherd an intentional examination of the GMI's purpose and priorities, and set in place many of the long-range goals that shape the GMI's vision for ministry today.

With two children already in college and their youngest graduating from high school this spring, the Swansons felt this was a natural transition point for their family. Rosanne's doctoral dissertation topic was approved recently, and she plans to complete her Ph.D. in pastoral care in 2007. She has also been speaking with the Metro Chicago Synod about finding a call to serve in a parish in Chicago, and will be teaching a course in pastoral care at LSTC. Since completing a term as interim director of the GMI in 2004, she has served as director of pastoral care at Lord of Life Lutheran Church in Ramsey, Minn., while working on her graduate studies.

One of the things Mark Swanson is most pleased with is how the larger seminary community views the importance

of inter-religious study. A few years ago, master of divinity students were required to take a general introduction course to world religions. While that class had some merit, he said, many of the missions faculty felt it would be more advantageous for future pastors to better understand how Christianity compares and interacts with a specific religion, like Islam or Buddhism. This year, for example, Swanson taught an Introduction to the Qu'ran class. Of the 24 students, only one was enrolled in the Islamic Studies degree program.

He sees the seminary's effort in this area as planting seeds that will bear fruit in the parish.

"When I'm out in the community doing adult forums, I've started asking the question, 'Does anyone have a Muslim

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Amjad-Ali Named Interim Director of Islamic Studies Program

With current director Mark Swanson's departure June 30, the Islamic Studies program is entering a transition period. Charles Amjad-Ali, Martin Luther King, Jr. Professor of Justice and Christian Community, will take on a two-year term coordinating details of the program. The seminary is currently searching for an adjunct faculty member who can help teach required courses, Swanson said.

Ordained in the Church of Pakistan, Amjad-Ali is an internationally known teacher and social activist.

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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

Islamic Studies Program Continues in Face of Change

"Historically, of all the religions, it is Islam that has the most thrust itself on the consciousness of Christianity as 'the other.' Unfortunately we have usually responded to this other in negative terms. It is very clear that we need a new theological discourse for a new relationship; one which is no longer based on internal discussion within the west itself but rather on a relationship between our idea of what it means to be a Christian and our existence within a fundamental plurality of values which are located in multiple religious systems."

This statement by Charles Amjad-Ali in a 1996 article in *Word & World* indicates why the engagement with Muslims is essential for a major theological institution such as Luther Seminary. Today, in 2006, this task is more urgent than ever.

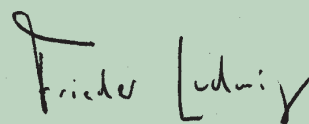
Our Islamic Studies program was set up in 1993 by Roland Miller; in 1998 Mark Swanson became director. In its 13 years of existence, the program has prepared leaders to play critical roles around the world. More recently, we have made efforts to integrate this program strongly into our general studies. Now, students in the Masters of Divinity program can take courses on Christian-Muslim relations to fulfill a part of their requirements in mission and ethics.

As you know, Mark Swanson accepted a call to teach at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, another of the ELCA's seminaries. We will miss him and Rosanne very much. We are grateful for all their work and support, and we wish them all the best and God's blessings for their work in Chicago. We will stay connected through the GMI.

We are glad indeed that Charles Amjad-Ali, Martin Luther King, Jr., Professor of Justice and Christian Community, is willing to take on additional responsibilities in the Islamic Studies Program. Charles has been integral to this program since its beginnings. He has published extensively on Islam and is an internationally well-known scholar. Those who have had an opportunity to attend one of his lectures know what an exciting teacher he is. We are looking forward to his return from his sabbatical in South Africa this summer.

During J-term, some students visited him in South Africa on a cross-cultural mission trip, and they were profoundly impressed by their experiences. This certainly helps to foster our relationship with theologians in South Africa.

At the moment, we are negotiating forms of cooperation with schools in Costa Rica (San Jose), the Netherlands (Utrecht) and Denmark (Copenhagen), while we signed agreements with institutions in Slovakia (Bratislava) and India (Gurukul). It is worth mentioning that both the college at Gurukul and the theological faculty in Copenhagen are celebrating the 300th anniversary of the Daenisch-Halle'sche Mission in Tranquebar in 1706 – an initial event in the history of Lutheran missions.



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Global Vision

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International Partnerships Developing

Luther Seminary has called upon the Global Mission Institute to help develop exchange relationships for students and faculty with institutions abroad. Several new partnerships are emerging at this time. Cooperation documents have recently been signed between Gurukul Lutheran Theological College and Research Institute in Chennai, India as well as Lutheran Seminary in Bratislava, Slovakia. Point persons at Luther Seminary for these partnerships will be Paul Daniels and Mary Hinkle Shore for Gurukul, and Craig Koester and Gary Simpson for Bratislava.

We are also moving forward on establishing partnerships with the Evangelical-Lutheran Seminary of Utrecht in Holland, the University of Copenhagen in Denmark, and the Bible University Latinoamericana in Costa Rica. The relationships we have long shared with institutions in Norway will also be updated in the future. We look forward to work together with companions around the world.

2007 Schiotz Visiting Professor Announced

While the Luther Seminary community has missed the presence of Dr. Monica Melanchthon with us this spring due to visa difficulties, several students have enjoyed her insights and leadership via computer and phone contact. Dr. Frieder Ludwig and Dr. Melanchthon are co-teaching "Confessing Christ in Asia" this semester. It has been a great gift to connect with her online, and with this technological assistance we hope to set a precedent for future global connections of the same sort.

We are also pleased to announce that Dr. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu from Trinity Theological Seminary of Ghana will be joining us as the 2007 Schiotz Visiting Professor! He has done research on New Religious Movements and



Asamoah-Gyadu

Pentecostalism and will bring a fresh perspective on Christianity from his context. He hopes to arrive at the end of January 2007 and we look forward to learning from him and being with him next year.

– ST

EVERY PEOPLE, TONGUE AND NATION

The spring Donor Dinner in April provided lots of time for catching up with friends old and new. More than 115 people attended to hear the latest updates about the GMI and to celebrate both its ministry and the generosity of its supporters.



A Global Choir of Luther Seminary students provided musical entertainment in Swahili and Norwegian for the evening, under direction of William Obaga, master of sacred music student from Kenya.



Photos by Allison Schmitt

International Student Profile

Laura Hindrianto and Thomas Tsen

By Kelly Larson

“We are ‘the students family,’” said Ph.D. student Thomas Tsen, laughing. He and his wife, Master of Theology student Laura Hindrianto, are both enrolled at Luther Seminary. The couple also has four daughters, three of whom are in higher education programs. “Every year a new one goes to college,” he said. “There are three of us in grad school, two are in college, and one is going to be a senior in high school.”

Both Thomas and Laura are pastors of the Basel Christian Church of Malaysia, which is one of four Lutheran churches in that country.

“Malaysia is one of the most culturally diverse countries in the world, with a large mix of Asian cultures. Everyone maintains their own religion, culture and dialect,” said Thomas, who enjoys working within the multicultural context.

To prepare him for addressing this diversity, Thomas was sent to the United States by his church and the Malaysian seminary, where he teaches in a graduate program.

“[At home,] the Christian church is a minority. There is a need for church leadership to meet the demands of the church community,” Thomas said.

When Thomas's plans arose, Laura also decided to further her education. Last year she earned a master of arts degree in youth and family ministry from Luther Seminary. She is now working on her post-master's degree, an M.Th. in pastoral care.

“There is a need for these ministries in this era,” she said. “There are family problems, and people don't know where to go. As a pastor and friend I want to help comfort, guide and pray for them.”

Studying in the U.S. has had its challenges, but they are both grateful for the opportunity.



Laura Hindrianto and Thomas Tsen, center, and their daughters (left to right) Catharine, Evelyn, Irene and Jean.

“It is hard to communicate sometimes,” Laura said. “English is not my second language, but my ninth. I want to learn how to speak English well, and I am learning through reading, writing, and communicating with others in groups.”

The couple believes that learning about other cultures is very important.

“It is important to respect each other, and be thankful to God for the wonderful world he created,” Laura said. “The world is full of different cultures and people. We should love them like God loved us.”

Thomas said that cultural knowledge is not only important to their context in Malaysia, but also a day-to-day necessity around the world. “Look at the big cities. There are many different people there. In this post-modern era we can't just care for ourselves and ignore others.”

Thomas also believes that learning about others and their ways of life adds wisdom.

“We have a saying in Malaysia about the frog and the coconut shell. We don't want to be like a frog living under a coconut shell. The frog only knows that tiny space, but when the coconut is lifted up the frog sees a bigger world and existence.”

Thomas finds the GMI international student program very helpful.

“We've been here almost four years, and it has been very challenging, but colorful. The GMI has been enriching to me and my family. It is difficult when the whole family is in school.”

Laura agrees. “When we first got here we didn't know much about the U.S., but the GMI opened their warm arms to help us adjust and learn how to live in the country,” she said.

“The GMI is doing a wonderful job,” said Thomas. “Students get to meet new people, learn new ways of life, and it is encouraging more people from different backgrounds to be involved.”

Thomas and Laura offered some words of advice to other international students: “Be bold and continue learning. Take the challenge to cross over, remember failure is the mother of success. Stand up again and learn again.”

To the GMI and the Luther community they would like to add, “You guys are doing a great job. You are really helping international students grow.” On behalf of all the international students they'd like to say thank you to everyone who has been warm, kind, and understanding of their struggles.

FAREWELL, from page 1

in-law?' Invariably, at least one person raises a hand. People in our churches are relating, closely, to people of other religions. It's not just their neighbors, or their coworkers; it's their family members.

"It's important that our church leaders have an understanding of this, and know how to talk with their congregations about it. And, I hope as people encounter Muslims in the context of their ministry – which they will! – that they will have wrestled with

what is a Christian's responsibility. The seminary's role is to help people who are going to be church leaders in various ways to think about the challenges of being a Christian today."

Swanson's profile rose quickly in the wake of the September 11, 2001, attacks. He was a frequent resource as society was clambering to learn more about Islam.

"This is where the GMI really kicked in," he said. "They put together a tremendous 'speakers' bureau'" and connected congregations with faculty, students, and community specialists who could get into churches and talk with people



Photo by Allison Schmitt

Rosanne and Mark Swanson's contributions were honored at the GMI Donor Dinner in April, where Mark was also the featured speaker.

about Islam and Christian-Muslim relations. "It certainly raised our profile for awhile."

In May, a group of seven students completed their Islamic studies degrees, and others will finish up over the summer and fall.

Close to 90 students have been part of the program since its inception in 1993. "Luther Seminary has provided Christian communities with a pretty constant stream of leaders who have a solid training in Islamic Studies," he said. "I certainly hope that will continue."

ISLAMIC STUDIES, from page 1

"We cannot be passive in the face of injustice; we must be involved," he says. "As Christians, we can do no other."



Amjad-Ali

He has traveled the world teaching and working with ecumenical and human-rights organizations. These have included a special commission of the World Council of Churches on Christian-Muslim relations, the International Franciscan Commission on Christian-Muslim relations, and the Luther World Federation and Global Methodist Church Christian-Muslim dialogue groups.

In the classroom, in public lectures and in his ecumenical work, Amjad-Ali advocates that the

Church embrace all kinds of people. He's also working for labor rights and economic justice in the Third World. He created a site on the World Wide Web that is a clearinghouse for information on these issues (www.luthersem.edu/camjad/justiceweb).

Swanson feels strongly that the program is being left in good hands.

"[Dr. Amjad-Ali] has great enthusiasm for Islamic Studies," he said. "The faculty has made its support clear as well. It is my hope that conversation about the future of the program will be ongoing. I expect that will begin in earnest at the start of the next academic year."

Although he said he will "greatly miss the Luther Seminary community," those positive plans made it easier to accept the call to LSTC. "The support for the program is here. I'm convinced that there are very good and capable people out there who can help lead this program."

GMI Member Profile

Kathy Dean

By Kelly Larson

“It is always important to have someone from your own culture take the lead in your congregation or ministry,” said GMI supporter Kathy Dean. Kathy and her husband began to donate money to the GMI in the 1980s to help raise up indigenous church leaders. Kathy continues to contribute in honor of her late husband. “He was a wonderful man and was passionate about this,” she said.

Kathy began to see the importance of indigenous leaders in the 1960s and '70s when her father started a mission church in the Bahamas.

“It is important to have someone people can recognize, identify with and walk along the same path,” Kathy said about her father starting a church within a different culture.

Twenty-five years later, Kathy’s mother went back to see how that congregation had grown.

“My mom told me the good news about the church’s growing. It was so refreshing to hear how it grew and developed, and how God has been faithful to that community of believers.”

Kathy and her husband met former Luther Seminary President David Tiede through a mutual friend about two decades ago. Shortly thereafter, her husband joined Luther Seminary’s Foundation Board. As they worked with Luther Seminary and other institutions over the next twenty years, they continued to see how important mission work was for the church.

In the early 1990s, their Novato, Calif., congregation called a new pastor, Rev. Phil Baker, who had taught in the Lutheran Nigerian Seminary. Pastor Baker invited the Bishop of Nigeria to speak to their congregation about the needs of the Nigerian Lutheran Church. He told about the great need for local clergy to minister in the Nigerian churches.

The message piqued the Deans’ interest in donating to Luther Seminary’s scholarship program for those living in the third world. Since then, they have supported students from Nigeria, China and India who come to the United States to further their studies so they can be ordained in their home countries.

“It is important to learn about others and to learn their customs,” she said. “It is important for students to take world religion classes. This helps them better understand those cultures, which can be hard to do, but by breaking down cultural barriers we can help learn more about why wars and



Photo courtesy of Kathy Dean

Kathy Dean shares a moment with two of her grandchildren – 2-year-old twins Jessica and Alex.

conflicts happen due to cultural differences.”

Kathy is the proud mother of three sons, and a grandmother of three. In 2004, she retired from her psychotherapy practice as a Marriage, Family and Child Counselor.

“I retired when my twin grandkids were born. I wanted to spend time watching them grow and learning about God.” She loves to play with her grandchildren, going on walks, reading, doing art projects and attending the local Bible Study Fellowship class with them weekly.

As a former avid golfer who retired from the sport when her 3 grandchildren were born in 2004, she continues to enjoy snow skiing, supporting the San Francisco Giants, hiking, and reading. She wants students to remember to “get closer to God by being open to His leading. A student should find their niche in the world, find a good support system and know that with God’s strength, they can handle whatever situation comes their way.”

The GMI is supported by generous donors like Kathy Dean and many others. If you would like more information on supporting the GMI, please contact CloEve Demmer at 651-641-3594.

The GMI has put together a CD-Rom presentation of the work of the GMI for use in congregations and with potential donors. If you wish to see the presentation or use it as you talk to others about the GMI, please contact Orin Cummings, GMI Relations Coordinator at 651-641-3595.

✘ **OBAGA ATTENDS UN GATHERING**

Luther Seminary student Margaret Obaga from Kenya traveled to the United Nations earlier this year for the UN's 50th Annual Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). The CSW celebrated the advancement of women's rights and gender equality. It also sought ways to enhance the participation of women in global development.



News Notes

the Louisville Institute. For a presentation schedule and more information, go to www.luthersem.edu/AIC

✘ **INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS EARN DEGREES, RETURN HOME**

Several international students will complete their studies at Luther Seminary this spring and summer. We say congratulations, and we pray that God's ministry will flourish through their gifts: James Chai and Thomas Lip Tet Tsen (Ph.D. students); Angel Huang, Samantha Cummings, John Flomo, Mike Jinteh, M. Nabeel Ashraf, Jiyeon Kim, and Samuel Chim (MA students); Yuko Maruyama (MSM student); and Vijaya Meesala and Andar Parlindunganar (M.Th. students). Several visiting scholars who have studied here this year will also be returning home: Steinar Vage, Natalia Kacianova, Adrian Kacian, Stig Holter, Marit Rong, and Njaal Skrunes.

✘ **GRANT HOPES TO LINK AFRICAN COMMUNITIES**

A new series of panel presentations featuring a variety of congregational and community leaders from numerous African countries began this spring. "Connecting Potentials, Developing Networks" aims at bringing Twin Cities-area immigrant church leaders together for conversation around a common topic. GMI Director Frieder Ludwig is the coordinator of the series, which is funded by a grant from

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

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.

Benefits of Membership

1. The satisfaction of knowing your investment strengthens global mission in the ELCA and around the world.
2. Prompt thanks and recognition from the GMI and Luther Seminary.
3. Automatic membership into Luther Seminary PARTNERS.
4. An annual GMI Watanabe Calendar (mailed late fall)
5. Invitation to an annual GMI donor recognition event.
6. *Global Vision* newsletter, featuring news and information about global mission.

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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.



GMI Calendar

Friday, May 26 African Immigrant Congregation Series
"Encounters with Muslim Neighbors: The Church in Somalia."
Northwestern Hall Auditorium. 6-9 p.m.

Sunday, May 28 Commencement
Dr. Craig Koester, Professor of New Testament, speaker.
Central Lutheran Church, 333 S. 12th St, Minneapolis. 3 p.m.

July 16-18 Palestinian Dance Troupe
Performances in the Twin Cities. Check www.luthersem.edu/GMI for location and details.

July 27-30 ELCA Global Mission Event
"Sent by God's Grace for the Sake of the World."
University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Mass.
www.elca.org/GME



Friday, Sept. 8 African Immigrant Congregation Series
"Ethics: Social Justice and Anti-Racism." Northwestern Hall Auditorium. 6-9 p.m.

Friday, Sept. 22 African Immigrant Congregation Series
"The Church in Sudan/Sudanese Christians in Minnesota."
Northwestern Hall Auditorium. 6-9 p.m.

Monday, Oct. 9 Burgess Lecture in Global Mission
"Healing and Reconciliation: Articulating *Missio Dei* Today."
Speaker: Rev. Rafael Malpica Padilla, executive director,
ELCA Division for Global Mission. Chapel of the Incarnation.
10 a.m.

Prayer Concerns

- ✧ We pray for Mark and Rosanne Swanson as they prepare to leave Minnesota and Luther Seminary for the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. We give thanks for their service to the GMI and the Luther Seminary community, and we wish them well.
- ✧ We pray for the international students as they prepare for final examinations, the end of the school year, and, for some, their transition to their home country. We give thanks for their witness and presence at Luther Seminary. Bless them and keep them, gracious Lord.
- ✧ We lift up prayers for those suffering from the perils of weather. May you be our shelter, our rock, and our consolation in the face of life's changes and chances. Protect us from danger and preserve us from evil.
- ✧ We pray for all refugees and those without home and other aspects of daily bread. We especially lift up those who are facing famine and hunger, illness and disease, war and violence. May the peace that passes all understanding attend us all, and may we all live and love in that peace.
- ✧ We ask for the continued blessing of the Islamic Studies program at Luther Seminary. Through its growth and change, continue to bless it as a tool for dialogue. Help us all to speak to the fullness of our faith as we work together for the sake of the world and our neighbors.

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