Global Mission
Reaching from Australia to Zimbabwe

Now Serving: AUSTRALIA • BANGLADESH • BOTSWANA • CAMEROON • CANADA • CHINA • DENMARK • EGYPT • EL SALVADOR • ETHIOPIA • FINLAND • GERMANY • GHANA • GUYANA • HONG KONG • ICELAND • INDIA • INDONESIA • JAPAN • KENYA • LATVIA • LIBERIA • MADAGASCAR • MALAWI • MALAYSIA • MEXICO • NAMIBIA • NIGERIA • NORWAY • PAPUA NEW GUINEA • PERU • SLOVAKIA • SOUTH AFRICA • SOUTH KOREA • SWEDEN • SWITZERLAND • TAIWAN • TANZANIA • UGANDA • UNITED KINGDOM • UNITED STATES • ZIMBABWE
Top: A Day in the Life participants gathered in February to discover what attending seminary is like. Above: During the annual variety show in April, Luther’s cabinet members introduced themselves in a skit. They are, from left, Patricia Lull, John Mann, Richard Bliese, Donald Lewis and Kathy Hansen. Not pictured: David Lose.

Global Mission Institute (GMI) staff and friends honored departing director Frieder Ludwig (fourth from left, top row), and his wife, Bettina (sixth from left, center), with a reception in February.

Jadzia (left) and Morgan Gray, daughters of Luther staff member Virginia Gray, “go fishing” with Ecumenical Coordinator Debra Collum at her booth during the April Mission Auction and Variety Show.

Above: Piano duettists Helen and Paul Baumgartner performed at Our Saviour’s Lutheran Church in Minneapolis for the Music with a Mission Concert in February, which benefited the GMI. Below: Seminary Pastor John Mann is flanked by Luther staffers and members of his fan club, from left, Kate Sterner, Maria Thompson and Laura Kaslow, during the annual April auction, which featured John Mann Fan Club T-shirts.
Pastors are being trained today much like missionaries were trained 30 years ago. This is a good development! Luther Seminary’s mission statement focuses on equipping leaders for Christian mission. Translated today, this means training “evangelical missionaries for North American communities.” As I reflect on my own training for work as a missionary, I have come to realize that what I needed for ministry in Germany and Zaire was, strangely enough, exactly what I needed for ministry in the United States! Let me explain.

First, our U.S. context has changed, becoming both more secular and more spiritual. Neighbors no longer know the inside of a church or the contours of the Christian story. Consequently, Christians must become skillfully adept at communicating the gospel as genuine “good news” to a whole variety of different people who may be: a.) thoroughly secular, b.) hostile to the church or, c.) following other gospels.” Evangelical proclamation has never been more challenging.

Second, cultures are changing in your neighborhood, and so too are languages. Pastors used to be surrounded by people from their own cultural backgrounds. Such homogeneity is becoming rare. Pastors now are sent into communities very different than their own. Cross-culture ministry is the “norm.” In fact, to be faithful and effective, leaders may need to learn a language other than their own to proclaim the gospel.

Third, new ministry situations demand new strategies. Congregations are breaking old patterns and trying creative forms of ministry in order to be faithful witnesses of Jesus Christ. As they return to Scripture and catechism—that is, to the basics of their faith—they are discovering new impulses for in-reach and outreach.

Learning to do ministry in new contexts, cultures and situations was the basis of my own missionary training abroad years ago. Now we need this training at home! We are re-discovering the truth that mission—everywhere!—demands missionaries, even in our own neighborhoods. We have been called to a missionary existence within our own country, culture and context. Congregations are the new mission stations. That changes everything about how we “do church” and how we equip pastors for leadership. Pastors are called to be missionaries, and they are called to be trainers of missionaries within their congregations. It’s a new day! But it’s the same calling from our Lord.

Speak, Lord, for your servant(s) [are] listening.

— 1 Samuel 3:9

Pax,

Richard H. Bliese
President
Luther Seminary
Luther Seminary students often hear about God’s mission in the world and how churches can become part of that mission, but it isn’t every day that they hear from pastors about how exactly such missional activity takes place.

In his week on campus as Luther Seminary’s 2008 alum-in-residence, Steve Holm, ’70, embodied such mission-mindedness. From Feb. 26 through March 3, Holm offered a longtime pastor’s perspective on important matters of modern ministry—including church mission.

“It’s gratifying to see so many young persons interested in being pastors,” said Holm, pastor at Desert Cross Lutheran Church in Tempe, Ariz., while reflecting on his week as alum-in-residence. “I’m convinced this is a great time to be a part of the ELCA—I’m excited about its future as it moves in the direction of being a missional denomination.”

**Opportunities for growth**

Holm’s visit came while his Arizona congregation prepared to make a major missional step: becoming one congregation with two sites. This summer, Desert Cross will launch a ministry in nearby Gilbert, Ariz., where the congregation will build a second church.

In his chapel sermon, Holm likened the journey to the disciples’ inspired change of course in Acts 16:6-10. The growing Desert Cross congregation planned several years ago to build a new sanctuary at its current site in Tempe. But, Holm said, “The Holy Spirit said no.” Instead the congregation realized its unique ability to respond to Gilbert, where other ELCA mission studies had been aborted.

“Our task was simply to bring our gifts, to put them into the hands of God and see what would happen,” Holm said. “Being the church is not so much bringing people in as it is going out, and, as we have gone out, as we have begun that mission in Gilbert, we have discovered that we have entered into God’s future, and it is so much fun.”

**Future plans**

Holm said he can no longer think about simply coasting into retirement within the next few years. He also pointed to Desert Cross’ missional motivation in setting aside 15 percent of each capital campaign for mission outreach and assistance to other congregations, particularly Latino congregations in the Phoenix area, which is nearby.

Holm, 63, who with his wife, Cherie, has six children and seven grandchildren, was called to ministry one night while a student at Minneapolis’ Augsburg College. Originally from Tigerton, Wis., the lifelong Lutheran spent his first 20 years as a pastor in Worland and Casper, Wyo., before coming to Desert Cross. Although he speaks highly of Arizona’s year-round golf opportunities, he insists that each call has come as a response to God’s Spirit.

Before formally beginning his week as alum-in-residence, Holm took care of other business by interviewing candidates for Desert Cross’ first-ever internship. He then visited various classes, sharing his experiences. He told students in Foundations of Biblical Preaching about memorizing each week’s lectionary Bible texts and applying them in different sermon forms catered to each of Desert Cross’ weekly worship services. Included is a Saturday storytelling service with Garrison Keillor-style stories about the fictional Crown and Cactus Lutheran Church.

But Holm’s greatest lesson might prove to be his example of putting missional theology into action.

“What’s important to me is beginning to have more and more congregations adopt a missional attitude and recognizing that God is at work in our world. The job of congregations is to somehow work with God in whatever that work might be,” Holm said. “We do everything we can to emphasize that to people—that they have multitudes of opportunities in daily living for missional work.”

---

**The Luther Seminary alum-in-residence stays on campus for approximately one week and preaches in chapel, speaks in seminar classes, meets with faculty members and visits with students.**

The Luther Seminary Alumni/ae Council is receiving nominations for the 2009 alumni/ae-in-residence program. All Luther graduates are eligible.

To nominate an individual, visit www.luthersem.edu/alums/council/alumresform.asp or contact the Office of Seminary Relations at 888-358-8437.
The door to Charles Amjad-Ali’s office says a lot about the man inside. Posted on the wood is a brightly-colored card claiming, “All Shall Enjoy Equal Human Rights.” A few inches away hangs the seven deadly sins according to Ghandi. In an issue focused on global mission, Charles Amjad-Ali personifies it. He has lived, worked and traveled across the globe, spreading the good news of Christianity—a faith, he is quick to point out, he was not born into. Amjad-Ali joined the Luther Seminary faculty in 1997 as a visiting professor. Later that same year, he received the Martin Luther King, Jr. Chair of Justice and Christian Community. He also heads the Islamic studies program. A native of Pakistan, one of Amjad-Ali’s passions is educating others about the relationship between Christianity and Islam.

What about the Christian faith appealed to you?
If God is the creator of all creation, how does this creator-God become creation in the absolute downtrodden part of history? Single mother, 13 to 16 years old. Born in a manger among the droppings of animals. Truly the filth of history. This is where the Lord of history is to be born and worshipped. After three years of ministry he had only 12 students—I did better than that in my teaching. One of them betrays him, one of them denies him, and then he gets crucified. To me, that is what makes Christianity unique and precisely that which appeals to me, the vulnerability of God and the crucified God. And if you take that out, I don’t have to be a Christian. I don’t have any DNA loyalty to this faith.

You hold an honorary doctorate in theology from Uppsala University in Sweden, directed the Christian Study Center in Pakistan, wrote for and worked with street theater performers to educate the illiterate about economic issues and wrote speeches for the late Benazir Bhutto, the former prime minister of Pakistan. Looking back at your life and career, what do you consider your proudest accomplishment?
I became the first director of political education for the Aurat (Women) Foundation [1995-1996]. It’s a center run by women, for women [in Pakistan]. I was the first male invited to work with them in setting political education for grass-roots women so they could understand the system of the state and how the state functions. We produced six booklets written in very simple language, with pictures so illiterate women could understand them. Now they’ve become a high model that everyone is copying. I thought it was a great achievement because it was written for women who were the lowest of the low. As far as Benazir is concerned, I was not only her speechwriter but an adviser on politics. She was the first woman prime minister in 1988, and if you have a woman in an Islamic land you set paradigms. I still remember doing a survey for young schoolgirls in 1985. We asked them what they wanted to be. Everyone answered doctors, teachers, nurses, etc. We did the same survey five years later and 62 percent of young girls wanted to be prime minister because Benazir had provided them with the vision. Since then, because Benazir was head of the second-largest Muslim country in the world, almost every non-Arab Muslim country has had a woman as the head of the state. America has yet to achieve this.

Was there ever a time you felt in danger or fearful?
Oh, constantly. You Americans don’t understand it. The danger is a given. If you survive, it’s a bonus. This is Christian witness. Nobody ever says you will be protected. Jesus says, “Take up your cross and follow me.” He did not say get a Cadillac and follow me. It doesn’t say that. The biblical message assumes that you will be threatened and you will be in danger.

And that you should be in danger.
Absolutely. So the question is, what has the Western church compromised so that they are no longer in danger? I think they have tied their faith so tightly to their nationalism that they are now an inseparable reality. For those of us who live in the two-thirds
Q&A with Charles Amjad-Ali (continued)

world, where you live constantly under the microscope of other people saying, “What are you Christians doing?” I think we are probably closer to the biblical experience. To be jailed and to be beaten, it’s a given. If that does not happen, we thank God. So my achievements and my accomplishments are that I have tried. I want to live as close to the Christian faith as possible. And that faithfulness entails expecting the cross, not avoiding it. That I’m alive, it’s certainly not my accomplishment. It’s God’s accomplishment.

Why is knowing about Islam important for students preparing to be leaders of Christian communities?
We all talk so glibly about loving your neighbor. If I love you and I don’t know anything about you, my statement about loving you is nothing else but hypocrisy. One of the neighbors that we have the greatest encounter of fear with right now is Islam. And unless we know who they are, what they are, how they are, we can’t love them. We really are in a crisis. We don’t know how to deal with Islam. Islam is not going to go away, and we can’t continue to maintain hostilities and war. It just doesn’t work. You can beat somebody into submission, but whenever that person gets a chance, they will rise up and fight. So we need to transform these relationships so that we are no longer in hostile relations with each other.

What has surprised you most about teaching Islam at Luther?
How much we don’t know about the world. We don’t even know other denominations here. I’m an Anglican. I was the first non-Lutheran, full-time faculty member. I will fight hard for the Lutheran identity of this place and

I think this is very important and very critical. I think Lutheran theology has important elements and edges that a lot of other denominations would greatly benefit from. I think it’s got great contributions to make. But at present, Lutheranism doesn’t, because it doesn’t participate in the public realm in the same way other denominations do. The Lutheran contribution to the discourse is kept to a minimum. We talk more about missiology here than other places but we actually don’t enter the public space in an apologetic move like Paul did in Athens.

How are things different for us, Christians living in a Christian country, as opposed to Christians living in a non-Christian country? What do we take for granted?
We take for granted that we are meant to be successful, and that to me is such a perverse model, because my Lord, on this success criteria, was not successful. He died on the cross. And he prayed for avoidance of this, the text says he prayed so hard that his sweat was like drops of blood. And God didn’t listen to him. And he died. On what faith and theological grounds do we base this comfort zone? It is at the cost of the cross. We expect assets and success and all these things as our inherited right through what I call DNA Christianity. When you don’t take all that for granted, the faith comes alive.

How can we, as Christians, promote peace in a post-9/11 world?
I think Christianity is the only way to build peace because it’s not the power of God that Christianity appeals to but to the crucified God and vulnerability.

Do you think world peace is possible?
I can say theologically, no. I think we are sinners. I really believe that there is no possibility because I think we are so power-conscious all the time. But at the same time, reconciliation is a fundamental Christian vocation—see 2 Corinthians 5:19—as is peace and justice.

You’ve educated people in so many countries. Is there any one memory that sticks out in your mind where it was clear that you had made a difference in someone’s life or their way of thinking?
I was teaching in Australia. The head of the Northern Land Council of the aboriginal people and I were looking at the Indian Ocean. We were talking about why we are Christians, and we sat from around 6 p.m. all the way up to 5 a.m. as the sun was coming up. He was constantly asking me, “Why Christianity?” He was not satisfied with the white Australian answers, because they had taken their land and beaten them (the Aboriginal people) up. He had become a Catholic by force. I think my answer had a very profound impact and was a transforming moment in his life. He said, “I now understand what it is about Christianity that is critical and what I should be.” The second memory is I was teaching at Stellenbosch (South Africa) in 1992. You must remember, this is the heart of the Afrikaaner beast. Apartheid was still there. I was the first person of color to teach there, and the grandson of the founder of the apartheid system came into my apartment. We talked all night and two days later he joined the ANC (African National Congress). His mother disowned him because he joined the ANC. His wife became ambassador to Ireland for the ANC two years later, and he became professor of ethics at Stellenbosch. That was a great transforming moment from something I said and something I did.
By Allison K. Schmitt, ’07 M.A.

Whether they are leading colleges, seminary students or congregations, Luther’s international alumni/ae fulfill the ELCA’s objective of “mission through leadership development.” Current students from abroad aspire to similar careers in their home countries.

Faith Lugazia, Tanzania
“I love teaching,” said Faith Lugazia, a Tanzanian and Ph.D. student in systematic theology. “I hope to use my education at home as a teacher of theology. Sharing my faith journey has been my wish.” Lugazia, who earned a Master of Theology at Luther in 2001, said she has long felt God’s call to serve. In January 2006, Lugazia was ordained in her hometown of Bukoba, Tanzania. She and another woman ordained that day were the first women ordained in the Northwestern diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania.

Julius Simaremare, Indonesia
Julius Simaremare, a pastoral care and counseling M.Th. student and ordained pastor in the Protestant Christian Batak Church of Indonesia, will likewise return to his home country and teach at its seminary. Because Indonesia is home to the world’s largest Muslim population, it would have been impossible to get the “deeper integrated empirical and academic study in the field of Christian pastoral care and counseling” that he’s getting at Luther, he said. It’s important to learn from Western society, he said, because it provides a picture of what Indonesia could be.

Indonesian churches face the challenge of balancing love and discipline, forgiveness and justice, and freedom and responsibility, he said. Simaremare is learning these lessons from his studies and relationships, as well as practical approaches toward faith and healing, addiction, interdisciplinary pastoral care in a global context and “ministry with.”

What is most urgently needed, Simaremare said, is “to provide ministry with Christian characteristics in order to sustain the gospel...in the hearts of the believers and share the good news of God’s love with Indonesian society.”

Sanghwal “Hans” Han, South Korea
Sanghwal “Hans” Han hopes to work as a missionary once he completes his Master of Divinity degree and returns to South Korea. He felt the call to ministry so strongly that he limited himself to freelance work so he had time to proclaim Christ to those around him. Isaiah 58:11-12 is his guiding text, which says, in part, that “The Lord will guide you continually and satisfy your needs in parched places.”
Luther’s international graduates span the globe, serving in a variety of capacities.

- **Paul Gao Feng, ’97**, was recently elected president of the China Christian Council, which promotes theological education and the publication of the Bible, hymn books and other Christian literature.

- Upon graduating with a Master of Arts degree in 2005, **Eustacio “Tacho” Dominguez** returned home to south central Mexico with his family to operate the Mazahua Valley Ministries, a residence for children who must leave home to attend the upper grades.

- Another 2005 M.A. grad is **Masresha Chufa**, who returned to Ethiopia to the Mekane Yesus Seminary to teach Arabic, Islamic studies and theology.

- Among graduates at Luther’s May 2007 commencement was the husband-wife team of **Thomas Tsen** and **Laura Hindrianto**. Tsen earned a Ph.D. and was elected bishop of the Basel Christian Church of Malaysia in November. Hindrianto earned an M.A. and M.Th. and is now dean of students at Sabah Theological Seminary in Sabah, Malaysia.

- **Nihjar Minz Ekka** and **Neeraj Ekka**, who earned an M.Th. and Ph.D. at Luther, respectively, are in the northeast Indian city of Ranchi, Jharkhand state.

**International Students (continued)**

Marie Hayes is Luther’s coordinator of International Student Services. She said that the objective of training students to work in their home countries is reinforced by U.S. visa laws, which require that a student go home after completing a degree. Further, those who attend an ELCA seminary on scholarship sign a covenant that they will return home, or else are required to reimburse the denomination for their education expenses. So far, she said, the ELCA has not had to take this step. But fewer students are relying on ELCA scholarships. Of the 49 international students at Luther this year, only seven are receiving full financial support. Although the American standard of living presents a significant financial lure, approximately 90 percent of Luther’s international scholars return home.

“It’s your own personal commitment to your calling,” Hayes said. Students often need a year or two once returning to their home countries “to reconnect to their home churches to see how they can contribute,” she said.

They are building—literally—a seminary for the North Western Gossner Evangelical Lutheran Church, in partnership with Minneapolis-based World Mission Prayer League.

- Other Luther alumni/ae serve in such places as Germany, Peru, Iceland, Papua New Guinea, El Salvador, Egypt and China—speaking and living out the gospel while using their Luther educations to bless the world. For a complete list of countries where Luther alums are serving, see the cover of Story.

**Interested in learning more about Luther Seminary’s global mission efforts?**

The Global Mission Institute (GMI) at Luther Seminary:

- Supports nearly 50 international students from 18 countries studying at Luther Seminary through a variety of programs.

- Provides Luther Seminary students opportunities to actively reflect on topics of global importance in weekly Mission and Ministry forums.

- Offers an annual visiting professorship for an international scholar to teach, research and write at Luther Seminary for a semester.

- Hosts the annual Burgess Lecture focusing on the task of global mission today.

- Establishes and maintains international partnerships with theological institutions in 13 countries.

- Works alongside Cross-Cultural Education, Islamic Studies and Mission and World Christianity at Luther Seminary.

To learn more about GMI or the topics you’ve read about in this issue of Story, visit [www.luthersem.edu/gmi](http://www.luthersem.edu/gmi) or call 651-641-3487.

The Global Mission Institute (GMI) fosters understanding and experience of Christian life and witness throughout the world for Luther Seminary students and faculty and in area congregations.
International Students Teach Others While Learning

By Laura Kaslow, Communication Specialist

ncluding voices from around the globe brings great depth to classroom discussions for Luther students and faculty alike. Luther Seminary is honored to currently have 49 international students from 18 countries, representing nine faith communities. Members of the Luther Seminary faculty were recently asked what international students bring to the classroom. Their answers all lifted up international students for their strong faith, unique theological perspectives and scholarship.

Here are a few thoughts on what international students bring to the classroom.

A Unique Voice

Having an international student’s point of view as part of theological discussions brings richness and depth to classroom discussions.

“I don’t think we can genuinely hear the gospel without different voices around the table reading Scripture together. This is exactly how we experience Pentecost today. That is how important the presence of international students in class—and in the community—can be.”

Richard Bliese, president

“Their theological perspectives in courses are unique and often powerful. Often, they don’t jump into class discussions. When they have, it has often provided a new dimension that could only come from across the globe. I love sitting around an international table and enjoying the depth and richness of the discussion because of what they add.”

Mary Sue Dreier, associate professor of Congregational Mission and Leadership

Working as Scholars and Teachers

International students are not only scholars, but they often are training to be educational leaders in their own countries. As part of this formal preparation, Ph.D. students work as teaching assistants.

“I (sought out my current teaching assistants, Lucy Mungai and Margaret Obaga, both from Kenya) because I was looking for the best students available who had wisdom, thoughtfulness, deep compassion and wide experience in pastoral care issues. I love that they bring substantive, basic understanding of being human, plus the important insights they bring from their own county. It is cross-cultural learning at its best.”

Gary Wilkerson, adjunct instructor

“Lucy Mungai is a full participant in my teaching. She prepares materials to teach each week, adds her own perspective and interacts with the students in a variety of ways. She also enters into our class discussion spontaneously and appropriately to add her perspective on pastoral care and aging from the African perspective (which is frequently less individualistic and more communally based). The students respect and treasure Lucy’s contributions; she functions as a young scholar and pastoral care giver whom I respect and appreciate.”

Janet Ramsey, associate professor of congregational care leadership

Spreading the Gospel

International students have a great love of the gospel of Christ, and their faith inspires faculty.

“The gospel is powerful and spreading all over the world. International students bear witness to these things. It’s encouraging to all of us when we hear how the Spirit is working all over the world.”

Richard Bliese

“International students help round out our perspectives by bringing to us life from around the globe—life usually in cultures not consumed by consumerism and often in social conditions where people live with threats of poverty, hunger, disease, danger, etc. far beyond our U.S. experiences (or comprehension!). Consequently, their faith is so alive and so rooted in Scripture. Faith is a day-to-day reality. And they have taught me so much about trusting in God, living in gratitude, praising God and proclaiming the message of Scripture straightforwardly.”

Mary Sue Dreier

The international community is an important part of the culture at Luther Seminary. To regularly read international student and alum profiles, sign up for the Global Vision and Global Insight newsletters through the Global Mission Institute at www.luthersem.edu/gmi.
For Luther Seminary students, finding a well-stocked theological library is as simple as a walk to Gullixson Hall. But there are many places in the world where higher education institutions do not have access to theological books. For these institutions, gifts of theological books from the Lutheran International Library Assistance Project (LILAP) mean that they are able to build a theological library.

To continue LILAP’s mission to bring books to theological institutions in developing countries, Marianna Forde, LILAP program coordinator, says she seeks academic theological books in good condition that will translate well to an international audience. Gifts of recently published books are especially appreciated. Monetary gifts are also essential, because international shipping costs are very expensive.

Referring to donations from the LILAP collection, a Malaysian international student at Luther Seminary once told Forde, “To you this is nothing, but to us this is everything.”

Each year LILAP ships about 10,000 books, most of which have been donated by retiring pastors or theological professors. The majority of these books are shipped to Africa and Asia, as well as Eastern European countries that were once under communist rule. While LILAP works to keep shipping expenses down, about $9,000 each year is spent to ship boxes of books.

By giving books to LILAP, donors have the chance to spread the gospel to places they may not otherwise reach. As one person wrote, “One can only imagine the countless people that have heard the gospel in their lives because of the word that (LILAP has) helped spread throughout the world. It would be impossible for those who receive LILAP books to obtain them on their own. (This is) so important for the mission of the Christian church worldwide.”

The majority of funding for LILAP comes from ELCA Global Mission and the Global Mission Institute at Luther Seminary. For more information on LILAP e-mail lilap@luthersem.edu.

**Interested in giving a gift to LILAP? Contact the Office of Seminary Relations at 888-358-8437 or semrel@luthersem.edu.**

---

**What country or culture do you find the most fascinating and why?**

- **Germany. I am perplexed by it. It never ceases to amaze me.**  
  Rob Myallis, Master of Divinity senior

- **The continent of Africa, because of all the needs there.**  
  Amber Marten, Master of Divinity middler

- **Israel. I’d like to see where Jesus walked.**  
  Carol Skjegstad, Master of Divinity middler

- **Kenya, my country. I miss home.**  
  William Obaga, non-degree

- **Tanzania and Africa, where I am from. Those cultures are the root of who I am. I don’t understand all the Minnesota hurriedness. I miss the slow pace of those cultures.**  
  Salim Kaderbhai, Master of Divinity junior

- **South Africa. Just the fortitude of the people to get up another day and sing and dance in the midst of what looks like suffering to us.**  
  Jaddie Edwards, Master of Arts junior
Luther Alums Put Their Training to Work Leading Seminaries in Africa

By Andy Behrendt, M.Div. middler

When Cyril Fayose was a student at Trinity Theological Seminary in Legon, Ghana, he lived in a dorm room by himself. Twenty years later, with Fayose now serving as seminary president, three or four students share a room.

“All that means is that there are more people who want to come to Trinity than we can even train,” says Fayose, who in 2001 earned his Ph.D. in Pastoral Care and Counseling from Luther Seminary. “What that also means is that there are so many churches that should have pastors but cannot have pastors.”

Peter Bartimawus, the principal officer of Bronnum Lutheran Seminary in Yola, Nigeria, has experienced similar struggles for resources. A 2005 graduate of Luther Seminary’s Ph.D. program in Church History, he has focused largely on developmental challenges since becoming Bronnum’s provost in March 2006.

“Most seminaries in the Third World were built by missionaries, and they were founded by missionaries. Of course, when the missionaries left, the structures were there, but that’s all you have,” says Bartimawus, noting that the need for more classrooms and housing has grown amid a growing Christian church. “But also in terms of manpower, you want to train people who have the knowledge and skills to be able to communicate the gospel in a changing culture. That’s a challenge.”

Opportunities and challenges

In visits to Luther Seminary last summer, Fayose and Bartimawus discussed their roles as seminary presidents in their African homelands, where Christianity’s rapid growth is creating both opportunities and difficulties for theological education.

Fayose was already serving as lecturer, campus pastor and counseling center director when he tacked on the role of Trinity president in September 2006. Previously vice president, he’s one of the seminary’s youngest faculty members at age 41, about the same age as most students. His courses range from pastoral care to homiletics.

As Ghana’s major Protestant seminary, Trinity has about 450 students and offers programs at the diploma, bachelor’s and master’s levels. Built for fewer than 100 students, it faces great demand in Ghana for pastors, who now serve as many as 25 congregations at a time.

Fayose’s objectives include developing a master of ministry program and doctoral programs in ministry and theology. He also hopes to upgrade the seminary’s library. Fundraising has become an increasing priority as well, since Trinity’s sponsoring church bodies have backed off from fully funding scholarships for all students. “Things are changing, and we can’t continue to depend on the churches because the money’s not coming in,” he says.

Building bridges

During his recent visits to Luther and other U.S. seminaries, Fayose hoped to build stronger relationships and support structures, and establish better exchanges of scholars. “I don’t believe that the traffic should be one-way,” he says of scholars. “Insights from Christianity in the West should also be
Luther Alums in Africa (continued)
brought to us to give us new insights.”

Bartimawus, 48, returned to his alma mater in the Twin Cities over the summer while visiting the ELCA’s Minneapolis Area Synod, which partners with the Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria.

Bartimawus was a teacher and academic dean at Bronnum before coming to Luther. It was shortly after he resumed teaching at Bronnum that he was chosen to lead the seminary. He is in his third year of a five-year term as provost and continues to teach courses on religion in relation to social change and Reformation history.

Bronnum, with about 130 students in all, offers a three-year pastoral program toward ordination in the Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria and a women’s ministry course. Maintaining a consistent flow of candidates for ordained ministry amid the growth is one of the Nigerian Lutheran church’s key concerns, he says.

“We have to really work on that deliberately in a more conscious way but also make the church relevant in a context that is quite changing,” Bartimawus says. “Sometimes we talk of the church in the West as being in a post-Christian era, but those realities, too, are there, even in our context. So there’s a need to offer curricula and education that help people meet those challenges in a very constructive way.”

Both Cyril Fayose and Peter Bartimawus now serve as presidents of seminaries in Africa. But earlier in life, a career in ministry was far from their minds.

Peter Bartimawus

While growing up, Bartimawus wanted to be a lawyer. But when he was 15, a conference organized by Nigeria’s Fellowship of Christian Students provided him with a conversion experience that reshaped his perspective. At that point, he says, “I knew that the best thing I could ever do in my life is to lead another person to Christ.”

After completing his undergraduate studies in Nigeria, Bartimawus pursued his Master of Theology degree at New College, the divinity school of the University of Edinburgh in Scotland.

Bartimawus was an instructor and academic dean at Bronnum for several years, meanwhile serving a congregation as an associate pastor, before coming to Luther Seminary in 1999. In 2005, he received his Ph.D. in church history. He had returned to teaching at Bronnum when the seminary’s provost was made a bishop and needed a successor.

Bartimawus began his five-year term as Bronnum provost in spring 2006. He and his wife, Fiyayina, welcomed their first child, Joshua, last year.

Cyril Fayose

Fayose had been a farmer with his heart set on becoming an economist when a pastor in Ghana changed his course. "He says, ‘You know, I think this guy is a good candidate for ministry.’ And that was the beginning of my troubles,” says Fayose, laughing.

“It was a long-term journey, but let me say that I have never regretted being a minister,” he says. “It’s the greatest thing that happened to me.”

A Trinity graduate, Fayose studied industrial psychology at the University of Ghana during his first several years as a pastor. In 1993, he came to the United States to pursue a master’s in religion at the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary. He spent a second year in Iowa as a clinical resident in Des Moines, where his wife, Marylinda, and the first of their four children joined him.

Fayose returned to Ghana to serve as a pastor and Trinity lecturer before coming to Luther Seminary in 1996 to pursue a Ph.D. in pastoral care and counseling. He graduated in 2001, having also spent a year as a pastor in Alexandria, Minn. He resumed teaching and pastoring in Ghana, became director of Ghana’s National Counseling Center and in fall 2006 assumed Trinity’s presidency.
Vanessa Bradby gives the term “international student” a whole new meaning. Bradby is originally from Massachusetts—she just happens to be conducting her studies in Pakistan.

When she began at Luther in 2006, Bradby lived in the Twin Cities. But in March 2007, her husband, Mark, received a job offer in Pakistan. Mark, born in India to missionary parents, and Vanessa, who shared his calling to serve overseas, had planned on moving abroad at some point, but Vanessa wasn’t even halfway through seminary.

Yet faculty at Luther said they could make it work. “I’m kind of a high-maintenance distance-learning person,” said Bradby. “They’ve been working very hard to make sure the program works out for me. I just finished my first semester from Pakistan.”

Now a Master of Divinity middler, Bradby moved to the Pakistani capital of Islamabad in July and finished her summer Hebrew course by recording lectures using an Internet calling program. Last fall, she took three online courses and “attended” one course via Internet phone.

Bradby has always been a bit unique—her background is especially ecumenical. She is affiliated with the United Church of Christ, was called to ministry while working at an American Baptist youth camp, attended a Nazarene college, and worked for Episcopal and Methodist churches. She and Mark now attend the Church of Pakistan, which she has found to be an especially challenging context for the contextual education involvement required by her program.

Amid her new life, Bradby has pondered how to piece together her call to ministry with her passion for overseas service and experience with youth. She aims to complete seminary in 2009 and expects that she and Mark will be in Pakistan at least that long.

It’s lonely to be a long-distance student, but Bradby has found community with other seminarians. “There are people who felt connected to me who I had never seen because they sat next to my Internet speaker,” said Bradby, noting the attention she received while on campus for January classes. “When I said what I was doing, about six people turned around and said, ‘Ahhh! I know you!’”

Arthur Vining Davis Grant Aids Learning Assessment

By Laura Kaslow, Communication Specialist

At Luther Seminary we have a lot to teach and a lot to learn. Goal five of “A Bold and Faithful Witness,” the seminary’s new strategic plan, states that “Luther Seminary will be a responsive learning organization supported by a culture of assessment and accountability.”

In order to accomplish this goal, Luther Seminary applied for and received one of only three $200,000 grants from the Arthur Vining Davis Foundation, an organization dedicated to providing financial assistance to certain educational, cultural, scientific and religious institutions. The grant will be used to help the seminary build a program to assess the institution’s learning outcomes.

The grant from the Arthur Vining Davis Foundation will be used to fund work with outside experts in building assessment programs for higher education institutions. Through this partnership, Luther will develop an assessment program to test how well students are prepared to be leaders for Christian communities.

“After an initial research period that I would envision to last about two to three years, I believe we will know much more and be doing this differently based upon what we’ve learned,” says David Lose, academic dean and Marbury E. Anderson Professor of Biblical Preaching. Lose, along with Mary Hinkle Shore, associate dean for first theological degree programs, is leading the assessment development.

Based upon the results of this research, Luther will then develop a plan for ongoing assessment that, says Lose, “commits… to revise and adapt our practices based upon what we learn.”

To learn more about Luther’s assessment goals, go to www.lutherseminary.edu/strategic_plan to download a copy of the strategic plan.
Paul Berge Helps Slovaks Grow in Faith and Education


What does it take to make a miracle?

Students at the Bible School in Martin, Slovakia, know: It takes patience, passion, perseverance—and a miracle worker. The first three have come with help from American supporters like Paul Berge, professor emeritus of New Testament, who became involved eight years ago. Under his advisement, and in partnership with Luther Seminary, the Bible School joined with the neighboring university to start a master’s program in religious education. University students who were preparing to be teachers could take a second major from Bible School faculty certifying them to teach religion.

The initial class in 2001 numbered 13 students. The Bible School has since blossomed. Adult-level programs have expanded to include training in youth ministry, mission and outreach, and Bible teaching. This year’s class has more than 120 students.

Perseverance has been necessary to push past Slovakia’s communist history. For decades, the government allowed the church to exist as a cultural institution—essentially, for marrying and burying—but pastors and believers participating in worship were often arrested or harassed, Berge said.

Several generations now view the church with cynicism, apathy or fear.

Yet Berge said many in their 20s and 30s are emerging as church leaders.

“I can’t say enough about the young people who are involved with the school,” Berge said. “These were the people who were out on the streets when the (Berlin Wall) went down in ’89. They have such hope for the future of Slovakia. They want democracy to prevail. And yet, they don’t have that mentoring generation to show them the faith. That’s why it’s so important to connect them with (Christians from around the world),” he said.

That connection has come through the work of churches like St. Andrew’s Lutheran in Mahtomedi, Minn., Berge’s home congregation and an active partner with the Lutheran Church in Slovakia since 1991. As coordinator of Vision Slovakia, a St. Andrew’s ministry, Berge has facilitated numerous mission trips to help build the Bible School campus and teach conversational English study groups. They’ve also targeted young people who don’t associate the church with the oppression of the past.

“In order to get the midlife generation back into the church, you have to get at the children,” Berge said. This summer, 32 St. Andrew’s volunteers will travel to Slovakia to lead an annual, weeklong vacation Bible School open to all community children. This year’s VBS may include more than 350 children.

“It’s become a real outreach event,” he said. “Last year the final program was held on the sidewalk of the city center. Kids were singing and acting and laughing. It was a wonderful way to show the people a different, more open side of the church.”

The school has also broadened its reach. Four years ago, a kindergarten class began, and new grades have since been added. Forty are registered for next fall’s kindergarten, and next year’s elementary school enrollment is projected at 185.

The excitement over growth is matched by worldwide support. More than 50 percent of elementary and 75 percent of adult students receive scholarship assistance.

“What’s really exciting for me is when people sponsor students,” said Berge, who coordinates fundraising efforts. “I know how appreciative (the students) are.”

Patience, passion, perseverance … and what about that miracle worker?

“Vision Slovakia’s slogan is Making Miracles Happen. It is fun to see the pieces fall into place. (Students at the Bible School) come because they realize and believe that the subject of that slogan is God,” Berge said. “God is the one who is making these miracles happen.”

To find out more about ministry with the Bible School in Slovakia, e-mail Paul Berge at pberge@luthersem.edu.
**Fellowships Recognize Innovation in Ministry**

Luther Seminary’s new Arts and Innovation Fellowships promote the creativity necessary to reach new generations.

Up to 20 $5,000 awards—the cost of a semester of full-time study—will be awarded this spring. The one-time fellowships are available to students accepted and entering the Master of Divinity, Master of Arts, Master of Sacred Music and Master of Theology programs. Individuals currently in the admissions process may also apply.

Individuals must demonstrate a talent in the visual, literary, media or creative arts or have applied innovative thinking in a ministry setting. Submissions are due June 1. Send applications to Ron Olson, Director of Admissions, at rdolson@luthersem.edu. For an application, visit www.luthersem.edu/admissions/fellowships.

**Schiotz Scholar Specializes in Cross-Cultural Studies**

Professor Samuel Ngun Ling of the Myanmar Institute of Theology has been named the next Schiotz Visiting Scholar.

Ling, who specializes in Christian-Buddhist dialogue and cross-cultural studies, hopes to share his research with the Luther Seminary community during his time on campus in the 2008-09 academic year.

The Visiting Scholar program is made possible by a generous grant from the Schiotz Fund, part of the Global Mission Institute of Luther Seminary.

**Post Memories of Retiring Professors**

Remember your favorite retiring professors by posting memories online. Memory books for Rod Maeker, James Boyce and Marc Kolden are available at www.luthersem.edu/memorybook.

**EVENT CALENDAR**

**The 139th Commencement**

May 25
Central Lutheran Church, Minneapolis
Details at www.luthersem.edu/registrar/graduation

**Word & World Lecture**

Oct. 15
Chapel of the Incarnation
Ellen F. Davis, professor of Bible and practical theology, Duke Divinity School
“A Theology of the Land”
www.luthersem.edu/lectures/wordworld

**Andrew S. Burgess Lecture**

Nov. 5
Chapel of the Incarnation
Jonathan J. Bonk, executive director, Overseas Ministries Study Center
www.luthersem.edu/lectures/burgess

**Register Now For Upcoming Kairos Courses!**

www.luthersem.edu/kairos
Continuing education opportunities for pastors, associates in ministry, diaconal ministers and lay leaders.

**May**
12-14 Process Preaching: A System of Extemporaneous Sermon Delivery
19-21 Discover Your Call—Dependable Strengths® for Congregations

**June**
2-3 Women of the ELCA Bible Study Preparation—The Hidden Hand of God: Wisdom Stories from Ruth, Daniel and Esther
2-5 Preaching Days
9-11 Coming of Age: Ministry with Younger Men or Why the Congregational Culture Needs to Come of Age Too!
9-13 The Leader-Coach: Leading from the Middle
16-20 Using the Arts and Visual Technology in Worship
23-26 School for Lay Ministry

**July**
14-18 Biblical and Ethical Resources for Environmental Issues
21-25 Teaching the Bible to Change Lives
28-Aug. 1 Presence, Power and Prayer: Process-Relational Spirituality

For more information, call 651-641-3416 or e-mail kairos@luthersem.edu.

NOMINATE AN INSPIRATIONAL ALUM FOR THE FAITHFULNESS IN MINISTRY AWARDS. DUE JULY 31! www.luthersem.edu/fim.

**Continue Your Education with Lay School Classes**

Informal, non-credit classes taught by seminary professors for lay persons who want to learn more about matters that relate to their Christian faith and life.

**Desert Spirituality**
7-9 p.m. Mondays
Faculty: Lois Farag, assistant professor of early church history

**Gospel of Mark**
7-9 p.m. Mondays (webcast available)
Faculty: Sarah Henrich, professor of New Testament

**Making Faith Sense in Times of Election**
Noon-2 p.m. Mondays
Faculty: Mary Hess, associate professor of educational leadership
Gary Simpson, professor of systematic theology

All fall classes are held Sept. 15-Oct. 13. To attend “Gospel of Mark” via webcast you will need a high-speed Internet connection. For class descriptions or to register, visit www.luthersem.edu/layschool. For more information, call 651-641-3416 or e-mail kairos@luthersem.edu.

**Nominate an inspirational alum for the Faithfulness in Ministry Awards. Due July 31! www.luthersem.edu/fim.**
Meet Luther Seminary's Newest Faculty Members

Mary Sue Dreier
Associate Professor of Congregational Mission and Leadership

Mary Sue Dreier spent 25 years in the ministry, serving rural, suburban and mission-start congregations and on the staff of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod. She recently completed her Ph.D. thesis and will receive her degree from Luther Seminary in May.

Why do you think what you do is important for the mission of the church? The Congregational Mission and Leadership program has the mission of the church at its heart. It is committed to training new missional (church) leaders, and offers increasing numbers of courses to help students prepare theologically for this new era of mission.

What are you most excited about as you begin your time at Luther? Simply: the students, with their call and passion to serve the church—and especially as they catch the Luther Seminary missional vision and carry on lively theological conversation around it.

Mark Granquist
Visiting Professor of Church History

Mark Granquist spent 15 years on the faculties of Gustavus Adolphus College and St. Olaf College; served as pastor of youth and education at Bethel Lutheran Church in Rochester, Minn.; and oversaw numerous interim parishes since his 1988 ordination.

What drew you to Luther Seminary? It's an interesting new challenge after 15 years of college teaching, the ability to offer courses that were more closely tied to my academic specialty and the ability to be a part of theological education for Christian leaders.

How has your time on campus been so far? Students are much more diverse in age, educational background and interests than college (students), but there’s more of a sense of a shared purpose among the students, too.

Steven Haggmark
Associate Professor in the areas of Islamic Studies and Christian Mission and World Religions; Director, Global Mission Institute

Steven Haggmark was an adjunct faculty member at Luther Seminary and visiting professor in the department of religion at Gustavus Adolphus College for six years. He has also taught extensively at post-secondary institutions in India and Indonesia, and led continuing theological education classes in Malaysia and Singapore.

What drew you to Luther Seminary? My experiences in the Muslim contexts of Indonesia and Malaysia sparked an intense interest in Islam and the Christian experience in an Islamic environment. As director of the Global Mission Institute, I will be able to fulfill a longstanding desire to interact more directly with our brothers and sisters from around the world.

What are your particular areas of interest? I am deeply interested in pursuing more in-depth studies of Islam and the engagement of Islam with Christians. I am especially interested in helping people in our congregations gain a beginning knowledge of Islam without the usual stereotypes (that) neither further our relations with Muslims nor promote a fruitful environment for the gospel.

Theresa Latini
Assistant Professor of Congregational and Community Care

Most recently, Theresa Latini served on the faculty of Western Theological Seminary in Holland, Mich. She is an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church and served a Pennsylvania congregation while earning her Ph.D. from Princeton Theological Seminary.

What drew you to Luther Seminary? Luther’s emphasis on the church as confessional and missional fits my own beliefs about the church’s needs in today’s multicultural and pluralistic world. I am excited by Luther’s willingness to create innovative programs to meet the educational needs of ministers-to-be.

What are you most excited about as you begin your time at Luther? I am excited not only to teach M.A. and M.Div. students but also Ph.D. students in Luther’s pastoral care and counseling program. Many of our students will teach pastoral care in seminaries throughout the world. They will influence a multitude of ministers in their own contexts and thus contribute to the mission of the global church.

For more in-depth interviews with these faculty members, go to www.luthersem.edu/story.
Mark Granquist, visiting associate professor of church history, co-authored “The Augustana Story: Shaping Lutheran Identity in North America.” The book was written with Maria Erling, of Gettysburg Seminary, and released on April 16.

Craig Koester, ’80, professor of New Testament, contributed “Why Was the Messiah Crucified? A Study of God, Jesus, Satan and Human Agency in Johannine Theology” to the book “The Death of Jesus in the Gospel of John.” He also contributed “The Church and Its Witness in the Apocalypse of John” to the Norwegian journal Tidsskrift for Teologi og Kirke and wrote essays for “Kompendium der Gleichnisse Jesu.” All contributions were published late last year.

Gerald Hoffman, director of the Center for Stewardship Leadership, spoke on “Ask and You Will (Usually) Receive” at the Association of Lutheran Development Executives Conference on Feb. 29 and March 1. He addressed policy governance on March 12 at the Jacob’s Well Council in Minneapolis. He also was the guest speaker on stewardship at First Lutheran Church in Duluth on April 27.

Rolf Jacobson, ’91, associate professor of Old Testament, was the keynote speaker for the South Dakota Synod Pastors’ Retreat in Watertown, S.D., March 25-27. His topic was “The Ten Commandments: Not Just for Children Anymore!”

Marc Kolden, ’66, Olin S. and Amanda Fjelstad Reigstad Professor of Theology, spoke on “A Lutheran Reads the Bible” at a Lutheran CORE (Coalition for Reform) gathering at St. Michael Lutheran Church in Canton, Mich., on April 13.

Alan Padgett, professor of systematic theology, spoke on “Does Heisenberg Uncertainty Apply to God? A Faithful Model of Divine Omniscience” at the Open Theology and Science Conference at Azusa Pacific University in Azusa, Calif., April 10-12.

Mary Hinkle Shore, associate dean for first theological degree programs and associate professor of New Testament, preached at Valparaiso University’s Institute of Liturgical Studies on April 2. Paul Westermeyer, professor of church music, held a pre-workshop at the same event. Shore and Westermeyer also worked at the Preacher’s Retreat following the Institute, serving as chaplain and musician, respectively.

Janet Ramsey, associate professor of congregational care leadership, spoke on “Forgiveness: Wise Practice, Deep Theology” at the Post-Easter Retreat for Church Professionals. The event was held March 24-27 in Carefree, Ariz.


Robert Albers, adjunct instructor of pastoral care, taught a two-week intensive course on addiction at the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago, Jan. 7-18. He also participated in pastoral theology courses at St. John’s University in Collegeville, Minn., on Jan. 25-26, Feb. 22-23, April 7-8 and April 21-22.

Faculty News (continued)

Ryan Torma, ’07, joined the Luther Seminary staff as instructional designer on March 3. He previously worked with Spirit Garage in Minneapolis. Torma will work with faculty in creating new and improved online classes, and is looking forward to further expanding the online reach of Luther Seminary.

Alvin Luedke, associate professor of rural ministry and associate dean of missional pastors, presented “Rural Ministry and the Region 3 Context” at the retreat of Region 3 bishops in Alexandria, Minn., on Nov. 14. During the Rural Church Network meeting in Kansas City, Mo., held Nov. 29-Dec. 1, Luedke was elected the U.S. representative to the planning committee for the next meeting of the International Rural Church Association (IRCA), tentatively scheduled for Aug. 2-9, 2010, in Germany.

Gary Simpson, professor of systematic theology; and Terri Elton, Children, Youth and Family adjunct faculty member, served as keynote speakers at the Central States Synod’s April 23-25 conference, “Missional Ministry: From Dry Bones to Life-Giving Breath; From Theory Towards Action”

Gladys Sandgren, a former staff member, died Jan. 12. She was employed at Luther for more than 30 years.

Coming to a Town Near You

Craig Koester, professor of New Testament, will be the featured speaker at the Western Iowa synod assembly in Storm Lake, Iowa, June 6-7. The featured topic will be the book of Revelation.

Marc Kolden, Olin S. and Amanda Fjelstad Reigstad Professor of Theology, will speak at the Association of Teaching Theologians Convocation at Central Lutheran Church in Minneapolis, Aug. 12-14. The overall topic is missional education. Kolden will address the question of “How Do We Teach Lutheran Theology Missionally?”

The following faculty members will participate in the 16th Festival of Homiletics, scheduled for May 19-23 at Central Lutheran Church and Westminster Presbyterian Church in Minneapolis: David Lose, academic dean and the Marbury E. Anderson Professor of Biblical Preaching; Carol Miles, associate professor of preaching; Mary Hinkle Shore, associate dean for first theological degree programs and associate professor of New Testament; and Frederick Gaiser, professor of Old Testament and editor of Word & World.

Diane Jacobson, professor of Old Testament and director of the ELCA’s Book of Faith Initiative, will make several presentations on the initiative at synod assemblies across the country through June.

Former Colleagues Remember John Victor Halvorson

For 21 years, John Victor Halvorson faithfully served on the faculty of Luther Seminary. On Oct. 2, Halvorson, professor emeritus of Old Testament, died at age 86. He was buried next to his wife, Hazel, in Clifton, Texas.

Professor emeritus Jim Limburg wrote in a memorial that Halvorson was “one of the best teachers I’ve had” and “introduced a generation…to the world of contemporary Old Testament studies.” Limburg credits Halvorson’s teaching with leading him to teach Old Testament.

Fellow professor emeritus Roy Harrisville remembers Halvorson for his political activism. Harrisville says that Halvorson was a close friend of Hubert H. Humphrey, who once visited Halvorson’s class. Additionally, Halvorson was friends with Eugene McCarthy, who visited the Halvorsons’ home each year to discuss politics and religion.

“No one on this faculty has ever enjoyed such contact with political thinkers as did John Victor Halvorson,” Harrisville says.

Halvorson is remembered for his pride in his Norwegian-American Heritage. In 1946, he married Hazel Louise Iverson, whom he met at Luther College. He was the father of four daughters and two sons, grandfather of 16 and great-grandfather of four.

He was a graduate of Luther College, University of Minnesota, The Johns Hopkins University, Luther Seminary and Union Seminary. In addition to teaching at Luther, he served congregations in Washington, Minnesota, South Dakota, Texas and Iowa.

In honor of his teaching and ministry at Luther Seminary, a memorial book has been established online. To share memories of Halvorson, go to www.luthersem.edu/memorybook/halvorson.
The ‘00s


Rob James, ’06, and his wife, Ann, welcomed a daughter, Claire Kylee James, on Feb. 26.

Sara Yotter, ’04, accepted a call as assistant to the bishop of the South Central Synod of Wisconsin.

Scott Johnson, ’03, accepted a call at the University Lutheran Center at Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa.

Clint Schnekloth, ’02, published an essay, ”Baptism and Immigration,” in fall 2007 in the Lutheran Forum, where he works as a columnist. Schnekloth recently received a grant from the Siebert Foundation to pursue Doctor of Ministry studies at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, Calif.

The ‘90s

Paul Gao (Gao Feng), ’97, was recently elected as the Chairman of the China Christian Council, the top position in the officially sanctioned church in China.

Stephen Mahan, ’91, of White Bear Lake, Minn., died March 10 at the age of 58.

The ‘80s

Jeff Nehr­bass, ’94, was featured in the Minneapolis Star Tribune on Feb. 2 in the article “Dancing with the Clergy.”

The ‘70s

John Siverson, ’89 and ’90, of Minneapolis, died March 29.

The ‘60s

Robert Sachs, ’78, received a Doctor of Ministry degree from Luther in May 2007 and will be installed in April as a missional redevelopment pastor to Trinity Lutheran Church in Evanston, Wyo.

The ‘50s


The ‘40s

Robert Wurtz, ’65, of Sheridan, Mont., died March 1.

Alum Spotlight:
Rev. Alem Asmelash

Born in Ethiopia, Rev. Alemseged (Alem) Asmelash (formerly Hagos) immigrated with his family to Sweden, where he earned his bachelor of divinity degree. In 2002, he earned a Master of Theology degree from Luther Seminary, and in 2004 he received his Doctor of Ministry. He now holds a position in which he serves in three unique ways. He is a part-time pastor at Minneapolis’ Trinity Lutheran Congregation. He serves as a chaplain at the University of Minnesota Medical Center, Fairview, where he works with the diversity department. He also works with the ELCA’s Minneapolis Synod, serving as an advocate for East African immigrants. In addition, Rev. Asmelash is involved with KNOS 95.3, a station that broadcasts a half-hour service every Sunday in the Amharic language. Rev. Asmelash lives in the Minneapolis area with his wife, Jerusalem, and children, Joel, 14, and Naomi, 12.

What experience at Luther best prepared you for your current ministries?
In 2000, I was in financial and spiritual need. I was contacted by a congregation in Indianapolis, Ind. I had never met them, but I received a weekly postcard informing me that I was in their prayers. They helped with tuition, but more than that they gave me courage. I realized that God had a job for me to do. I didn’t finish my education by myself; we finished it together. This gave me the strength to fulfill my current responsibilities.

Do you have a favorite memory of Luther Seminary?
The “African Table” during lunch. The African students would sit together. We invited (the American students) to join us. There was much laughter, and we bonded.

What’s the best way for readers to help you in your current ministry?
Go to www.ethiopianradio.org and learn about how we are reaching overseas with a message of hope.

Financial gifts may be directed to Trinity Lutheran Congregation, which will support our outreach locally and overseas.

What advice do you have for current students or recent graduates? It is good to prepare and to have a plan, but what I see when I look at my life and ministry is God’s plan, not mine. You must give the ultimate decision over to God and let God work his plan through you, not in spite of you. My own life and ministry is a testament to “Thy will be done.”

Would you like to add anything? I encourage all in the ELCA to help and care for each other as you are given the opportunity. Any gift to the seminary isn’t wasted. With it you are helping people everywhere, wherever Luther Seminary graduates serve. A gift to the seminary is a gift to God.

For more of this interview with Rev. Asmelash, go to www.luthersem.edu/story.
Dorothy Lee continues tradition of giving

To ensure the church always has strong, compassionate leaders, Dorothy Lee and her late husband, Alan, gave to Luther Seminary.

Together, Alan and Dorothy chose to include Luther in their estate plans. After Alan passed away, Dorothy established a charitable gift annuity that will eventually fund the Alan and Dorothy Kjorlie Lee Endowed Student Scholarship.

“By giving my asset to Luther Seminary, I could receive fixed income through my whole lifetime and minimize the capital gains taxes,” says Dorothy.

“I believe Alan smiled from heaven when I set this deferred gift up. I gave the gift, but I get the benefits from it now.”

What will be your tradition of giving? Ask us about giving through estate plans.

Contact the Office of Seminary Relations
Michael Johnson
888-358-8437
mjohnson005@luthersem.edu
www.luthersem.edu/gift
Table of Contents

Luther Members
Bring Change to China ........................................ 4-6
Alum-in-Residence Steve Holm ............................... 7
Q&A with Charles Amjad-Ali ................................. 8-9
International Students Trained to Lead Their Home Churches ......................................................... 10-11
International Students Teach Others While Learning ............................................................ 12
Student Poll .......................................................... 13
Luther Alums Put Their Training to Work Leading Seminaries in Africa ....................................... 14-15
Vanessa Bradby Gives New Meaning to International Student .................................................... 16
Arthur Vining Davis Grant Aids Learning Assessment ................................................................. 16
Paul Berge Helps Slovakians Grow in Faith and Education .......................................................... 17
Event Calendar ....................................................... 18
Lay School and Kairos Schedules ............................. 18
Meet Luther Seminary’s Newest Faculty Members ................................................................. 19
Faculty & Staff Notes ............................................. 20-21
Former Colleagues Remember John Victor Halvorson .............................................................. 21
Alum News ............................................................ 22
Alum Spotlight: Rev. Alem Asmelash ...................... 22

Luther Seminary educates leaders for Christian communities
+ called and sent by the Holy Spirit
+ to witness to salvation through Jesus Christ
+ and to serve in God’s world.

Editor
Kelsey Holm

Contributing writers
Andrew Behrendt
Shelley Cunningham
Jack Davidsen
Laura Kaslow
Allison Schmitt

Luther Seminary, the largest of the eight seminaries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), is accredited by the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada and the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. It is a part of the ELCA’s Western Mission Cluster, along with Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary.

The Luther Seminary Story is published three times a year and distributed via third class mail to alumni/ae and donors by Luther Seminary, 2481 Como Ave., St. Paul, MN 55108.

Correspondence concerning The Luther Seminary Story should be sent to Office of Communication, Luther Seminary, 2481 Como Ave., St. Paul, MN 55108, via e-mail communica@luthersem.edu or by phone at 651-641-3399.