

Handling the Word of Truth

Supporting Theological Education in Togo and West Africa

Missionary Rev. Jacob W. Gaugert

May/June. 2018

Vol.6 Issue 3

Theology



We usually speak of 4 main disciplines of theology.

1. Exegetical – examining the Biblical text in original languages. The Scriptures are the sole and final authority to all doctrine.

2. Systematic – the doctrine is presented in a “system” with connections and logic.

3. Historical – being informed on the expressions of theology and the practice of the church in the past.

4. Practical - considering how to apply theology in the current age.

Study for Ministry

An intelligent heart acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge. - Proverbs 18:15

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

An important quality in any good theology student is the ability to study: to have the academic know-how to evaluate the culture and the community in which one serves to bring the Word of God into the lives of the people. Language and cultural studies in the field are important to this, but one must also be well-versed in the disciplines of theological study: exegetics, systematics, historical, and practical theology. These four main areas of theological study are addressed in the curriculum at CLET, though they are not mainly for the classroom, but for life. Indeed, our Lord Jesus spoke to the people in their language and used images from their culture to proclaim the gospel. Jesus is true God, and He is also a Jew from the first century. He demonstrates both of his natures in His Ministry to teach and to save humanity. So also, a pastor must see and interpret the world through the theological lens of the Word of God to serve and to speak faithfully.

Any good student and sincere teacher will be aware of their own limitations. We all can relate to the teacher in high school or in college who had a great impact on our thought and development in how we approach life and our vocations – be they vocations in the church, or in professional “secular” careers. No good teacher will ever tell their student to simply listen to them and their own presentation of the truth or discipline they teach. A good teacher will guide their students to critique and to research the claims from the classroom to evaluate if they really are true. This is why schools and



CLET students study in the library under the watchful eye of the Good Shepherd (mural right).

Pray:

Thanksgiving for the gifts of books that we have received from members of LCMS parishes in the US and Lutherans in Europe.

Thanksgiving for Ben's willingness to serve with us this summer and that his time with us would be fruitful for him and our CLET community.

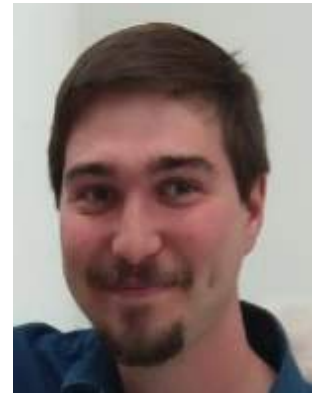
That our students would use their summer vacation time to do honest work and care for their families rather than slipping into idleness and vice that could become the object of public scandal.

That our CLET students and their families would be drawn to a love of learning that we hope would continue even after their studies at CLET.



MEET

Benjamin Osenbach

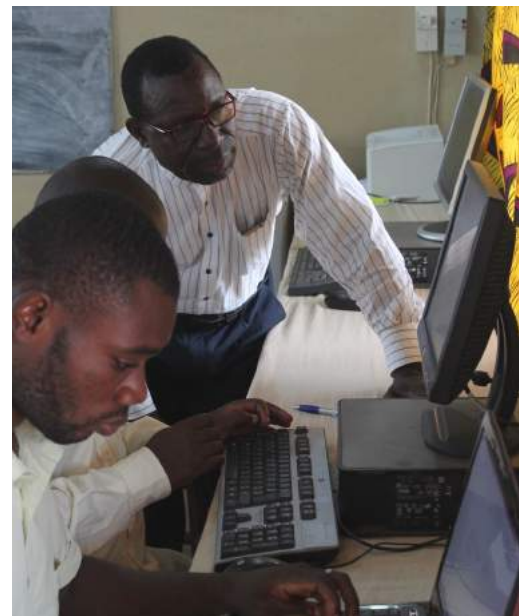


Ben will be joining our CLET community for seven weeks this summer. He is an official short-term volunteer who has offered to share his expertise in the field. Ben lectures in statistics and economics at a university in New York. He will be assisting us in our summer computer formation for our students and training in accounting software for our CLET administration.

universities have libraries. The libraries serve to give students and teachers access to the voices and the studies of others – other faculties, perspectives from other cultures, language groups, and religions. A library serves to keep a student and an institution honest and well-prepared to defend the claims that are taught in the institution.

At CLET we also have our library. And this has come at no small sacrifice from the part of previous missionaries and generous donors around the world. We have added more French volumes with special one-time gifts and from the travels of members of our LCMS-OIM missionary team in France. However, our greatest change came this winter 2017/2018 with the arrival of the container from the United States with over 2,000 volumes in English from the Chemnitz Library Initiative and a grant from Mission Central to purchase around 400 new volumes in French. In order to accommodate all of the new volumes, shelving had to be installed on wall space, and free-standing metal shelving units were erected in the middle of the library room. Given all of the fluctuations in temperature and humidity, the climate in our part of Africa is not kind to paper books. Since we want to keep the books in good condition, new drapes were added to the windows to keep the sunlight from damaging the volumes and fans were installed to ensure ample air flow to avoid the growth of mold. Additional lighting has been added to help reading, and new computers with wifi and printer connection have also been installed for the students' use.

Inculcating a love for reading in our students is also a challenge. In order for a child to become what we call “bookish” they need to have access to



Rev. KOUTIA assists students using the library computers.

Ministry Information:



Rev. Jacob W. Gaugert
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In this issue of my newsletter I mentioned our short-term volunteer, Benjamin Osenbach. If you or a friend might be interested in volunteering your skills for a few weeks in the mission field, please contact Ms. Erin Alter at: erin.alter@lcms.org 314-996-1746

Make checks payable to LCMS and note "Gaugert # A106198-69350" in the memo line. Please send to:

Lutheran Church
 Missouri Synod
 PO Box 66861
 St. Louis, MO 63166-6861
 1-888-930-4438
 Or contact:
 Gary Thies
 Mission Central
 40718 Hwy E 16
 Mapleton, IA 51034-7105
 712-882-1029

To give online:
www.lcms.org/gaugert

books. Books are lacking in Africa. Most children will attend all of their schooling without ever having a hardcover book to take home and study. All information has to be copied from the blackboard into a notebook and memorized for the tests. Comprehension of what is memorized is not a priority. Sometimes in certain African contexts, asking questions of the teacher in class is considered rude and disrespectful against the teacher's honor. You can imagine that after years in such an educational context, it is a real challenge to encourage our CLET students to reflect upon and ask pertinent questions in class and to pursue independent studies in addition to their already prescribed class readings. Despite the challenges in this regard, we do notice some changes. Certain students will check out books to read at home, and others will gladly check out a book that addresses a matter on a question they raised in class. Of course, the luxury of time to study depends on the stability in one's family and personal life. It is difficult to concentrate on studies when your immediate family is struggling with sickness or fatigue from excessive heat, or if you have found out about a death of a loved one back home and you are distraught because you cannot go back home to attend the funeral. Your absence may hurt your honor or the honor of your family in the community.

Such are some of the challenges that make academic studies difficult in francophone Africa. However, if our students are to be faithful shepherds, they need to know how to be caring toward their people and also caring towards the doctrine and practice of the Lutheran church. If they are not aware of the differences in practice that are tied to different teachings, they may unwittingly adopt heretical or sectarian practices that will later be difficult to wean the parishes from.

We pray that the studies in our classrooms and library will equip our CLET graduates to critique and collaborate in a loving and civil manner with their brothers in the Ministry and the lay leaders of their churches, so that the good people would be cared for and edified by the Good Word.

In Christ,



The CLET library is not only for CLET students and staff. While two students from Guinea-Conakry study together, pastoral candidate Hyacinthe Lamboni, from a neighboring parish of the Lutheran Church of Togo, works in the background.

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