

SERVING THE LORD IN WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA

NEWS FROM PHILLIP MAGNESS



Summer 2023



A BEAUTIFUL PARTNERSHIP

Producing a hymnal requires a team – and the quality of the hymnal depends on the abilities and dedication of that team. *Édition Africaine* (ÉA) had particular needs, and the Lord graciously provided for them through the humble service of the Revs. David Saar (above right) and David Somers (left).

Pastors Saar and Somers, whom I like to call “the two Davids,” were the leadership team for *Liturgies et Cantiques Luthériens* (LCL), the parent hymnal of *Édition Africaine*, so I was extremely thankful when they got on board with this project. They caught the vision at our first meeting via Zoom early in 2020 and faithfully followed through in all their commitments to the project.

Pastor Saar did all the engraving for ÉA, guaranteeing that it would align with the look of LCL, which he also engraved. He also found several of the new psalm antiphons that we included in ÉA. Pastor Somers, who among us is the most fluent in French, handled the copyrights and hosted the introductory conference in Montréal.

We also thank Concordia Publishing House for giving us permission to use the *LSB/LCL* artwork, and Lutheran Heritage Foundation—Africa for publishing the book. Indeed, we are better together!



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African Ministry – in Canada!



Making a joyful noise at the début workshop for « *Édition Africaine* »

This summer started off on a high note as my son, Evan, and I drove to Québec to teach psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs (canticles) from *Édition Africaine* (ÉA) to pastors and musicians from Congo, Cameroon, Madagascar, Haiti, Canada, and the United States. We had a fabulous time, and it was a joy connecting with so many people who are engaged in francophone ministry right here in North America.

The conference was hosted by Lutheran Church—Canada and, for reasons of space, convenience and lodging, was held at St. George’s Anglican Church in downtown Montréal. The conference featured four days of students singing through the book, receiving instruction in Lutheran liturgical practice and participating in Divine Service at the end of the conference. Participants included Canadians and Americans involved in African ministry as well as many Africans themselves.

Montréal is truly a bilingual city, at least in the center city. So the practice is to say “Bonjour-Hi” to signal that you are francophone but are happy to converse in English, or “Hi-Bonjour” to communicate the opposite. The conversation then continues in the language chosen by whomever was greeted. Of course, if you only speak English, you just say “Hi” and hope for the best!

I was particularly overjoyed that Rev. Guy Kasongo, from Milwaukee, was able to attend. A Congolais immigrant and LCMS pastor, he shepherds two congregations, one anglophone and one francophone, and has helped carry the mission into Kentucky and South Dakota. It’s great to see Lutheran ministry extended to French-speaking peoples here in the US as well as in Canada!



PLEASE PRAY FOR:

- Rev. John Donkoh (pictured with me above) as he leads the congregations of Ghana into greater use of Lutheran Service Book (LSB), and as his church body continues work toward an indigenous Ghanaian hymnal that will incorporate Ghanaian hymns alongside a core of hymns and liturgy from LSB.
- The seminary in Dapaong, Togo, as they navigate difficult times due to increasing violence from Islamic extremists making incursions into their country, and for our plans to bring the seminarians to a safer, third location in January so that I may lead a workshop with them.
- Preparations for rolling out *Édition Africaine* in Burundi, Rwanda, Côte d'Ivoire, Togo, Congo-Brazzaville, and Congo-Kinshasa (DRC).

GIVE THANKS FOR:

- The excellent introduction of *Édition Africaine* at the Montréal workshop.
- Lutheran Heritage Foundation—Africa, and their coordinator in Nairobi, Rev. Tuomo Simojoki, for their work in publishing and distributing *Édition Africaine*.

The Mission Extends Far and Wide



With Rev. Albert BAKAT, who serves a congregation in Sioux Falls, S.D.

Another brother I was pleased to get to know is Albert Bakat, who is also an LCMS pastor from Congo. He is serving as assistant pastor at Resurrection Lutheran Church in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. There are many African immigrants working in the Midwest in industries such as meat packing, and they are often in need of finding Christian community. Pastor Bakat seeks to connect with them and hopes to grow a Lutheran congregation such as Pastor Kasongo has in Milwaukee.

Meanwhile, preparations are underway to send me back to Africa where the bulk of this ministry is taking place. While Lutheran Heritage Foundation—Africa will be sending 2,000 copies of *Édition Africaine* to North America for use in the U.S., Canada, and Haiti, 12,000 copies are slated for distribution in Africa itself.

The plan is for 4,000 of those copies to go to West Africa to equip congregations in Togo, Côte d'Ivoire, and Burkina Faso. A safe, central location for me to teach pastors, seminarians, and musicians from these countries is being determined — most likely in either southern Togo or Accra, Ghana. I'll be heading there on my next deployment.

I'll also be going to Central Africa, where another 6,000 hymnals are set to be shipped. I'm particularly stoked at the opportunity to work with pastors and musicians from Kananga, DRC, where the church headed by Bishop Evariste KENDI is thriving.

The remaining 4,000 will be kept in reserve with LHF—Africa in Nairobi, with plans to get them — and me — to Rwanda or Burundi sometime next year.



A Little Comparison



Liturgies et Cantiques Luthériens and *Édition Africaine* side-by-side

The two hymnals pictured on the left show their heritage on their cover. On the right, one sees a hymnal that is almost like *Lutheran Service Book (LSB)* — with the same artwork embossed — except in blue with a French title. One can see it as a type of daughter of the *LSB*. The hymnal on the left, then, is a kind of granddaughter, also reflected on the cover, except this time the artwork is printed rather than embossed. This smaller, mission edition is ready to be sent all over Africa — with your help!



There are many opportunities to serve as short-term or GEO missionaries. Check out the current list and download an application at lcms.org/service. Click on "Service Opportunities."

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