

NEWS FROM THE CLAUSING FAMILY

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This semester Emmanuel Semng'indo has been assisting with school administration in the seminary office. A gifted musician, Emmanuel has helped to introduce the Swahili version of the hymn “This Joyful Eastertide” to the seminary. The hymn appears in the Kenyan hymnal but is new to most Tanzanians.

Make Known His Deeds Among the Peoples

Some time ago I was eating in a Tanzanian restaurant while a wall-mounted television quietly played a religious music video in the background. Although spiritual music in secular venues is rare in the U.S., in Tanzania it is quite common. Equally common was the content of the video. The singer stood in the midst of a grassy field with arms outstretched, a glorious panorama of mountains in the background. With eyes closed in an expression of rapture, he sang (in Swahili) lyrics typical of modern Christian pop music, something like, “You are worthy, I just want to praise you, you are able, you lift me up when I am down, etc.” I



Our Family

Anita and I were married on August 16, 1997 and have been blessed with nine children.

Back Row, Left to Right:

- Anita (12.9.74)
- Ethan (5.8.08)
- Eileen (8.21.11)
- Emmanuel (3.6.15)
- Elijah (7.3.13)
- Eric (12.16.09)
- Jonathan (8.20.75)

Front Row, Left to Right

- Ernest (7.16.04) studies at Concordia University, Nebraska
- Eunice (6.1.06)
- Emil (10.29.99) lives and works in Chicago
- Eleanor (1.10.02) studies at Concordia University, Nebraska

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honestly wasn't even paying close attention until the singer finally came to the refrain: "Allahu Akbar." With a jolt I realized that I wasn't listening to Christian pop; I was listening to Muslim pop! Equally jarring was the troubling question raised by the experience: "Is there really any substantial difference between the two?"

Holy Scripture tells us what *ought* to be the difference. Echoing many other Old Testament writers, Isaiah declares, "Make known His deeds among the peoples." Christians identify the true God by declaring His deeds - His deeds in history, in specific places, before the eyes of specific people. The later parts of the Old Testament constantly refer back to the exodus - to Pharaoh, the plagues, the Red Sea, and God's provision for His people in the wilderness. God's Name was made known among the nations specifically because of His deeds in history. Likewise, we Christians identify the true God by His deeds in Jesus Christ - His conception, birth, baptism, miracles, transfiguration, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, and sending of His Spirit. When your hymnody is filled with these things, you don't have to wait until the refrain to find out to whom you've been singing!

At St. Peter seminary we sing Swahili hymns both old and new, but always explicitly Christian and steeped in the words of Holy Scripture. As I mentioned in the caption for the opening photo, it brings me great joy to see Christians get excited about introducing new, Christ-centered hymns into the church.

Had Christ, who once was slain, Not burst His three-day prison, Our faith had been in vain: But now has Christ arisen! (LSB 482)



Meanwhile, on the other side of Tanzania, construction continues on the new seminary in Shinyanga. Our colleagues the Steffensons and the Paynes are preparing to teach there. Thanks to Zach Schnare for providing this photo after his recent visit to the new campus.