

LB INTERNATIONAL MISSION

REV. MATTHEW ROGNESS

One hundred years ago, in 1918, the Church of the Lutheran Brethren sent their first missionary couple to Africa. Mr. and Mrs. Berge Revne served many years before the first converts came to faith in Jesus Christ. Today the church in Cameroon has over 800 congregations and over 130,000 in Sunday worship attendance. Their sister church in Chad also has more than 800 congregations and similar worship attendance. The church in Cameroon has sent missionaries to Mali, a country in west Africa that has a predominantly Muslim population. Our sister church in Chad is partnering with LBIM to reach the Bagirmi, Bilala and the Fulbe people of Chad.

The Church of the Lutheran Brethren has called and supports gifted, qualified, and trained missionaries in Africa and Asia. Our clear goal is to be disciplers that plant a church that can be reasonably expected to reach their own people with the gospel. We serve alongside and/or in partnership with four independent sister churches in Cameroon and Chad in Africa and in Japan and Taiwan in Asia. Additionally, we continue to serve in China, our first mission endeavor as a newly founded denomination in 1901.

Since we met together at the Biennial Convention of 2016, there are two significant events that have taken place in your International Mission ministry.

1. Kay Asche was called, commissioned and sent to language study in France and in a month from this Convention, she will arrive in Chad for ministry among the Bagirmi people.
2. Ben and Sara Hosch have been called and will be commissioned at this Convention to serve as our missionaries in Taiwan.

Reasons to praise and thank God: for these servants and for the senders—YOU!

CHINA

Joel and Liz Christenson have just completed ten years of ministry as directors of Friends of China. Liz continues with her ministry to challenged children and their families. Joel expects to return to teaching British and American literature at a major university. Pray that these opportunities will allow them to be disciplers for the gospel in a very needy circumstance.

TAIWAN

We have been praying the Lord of the harvest for additional missionaries to serve the Lord and the Church among the Hakka and other Chinese who need Jesus. God has answered our prayers in providing both Ben and Sara Hosch and significantly more than half of the funding for this year. In addition to Ethan and Sandy

Christofferson's outreach and discipling ministries, Ethan is also involved teaching and research opportunities. Mike and Delores Kittelson continue an effective discipling ministry primarily to Hakka seniors but also have opportunities in the broader Hakka community. They also partner with two congregations in disciple-making mentoring.

JAPAN

Dean and Linda Bengtson live and minister in Ishinomaki, Japan, where they continue cultivating discipling relationships that they pray will eventually lead to people coming to faith in Jesus Christ and a church plant that can be expected to reach others in their community for Christ. Dean and Linda have a busy summer of ministry opportunities planned.

CHAD

Chad continues to be our most physically challenging place to send missionaries due to environmental and economic factors. It is a place, however, that we as a Church were called to in the late teens of the 1900s. Our initial focus of ministry was in southern Chad. Today our ministry has transitioned to a focus in south central Chad among the Bagirmi, Bilala and Fulbe people, all unreached Muslim people groups. Kay Asche has spent the last academic year in French language study.

Lord willing, she will travel to Chad from France on July 8th. She will continue her language and cultural adaptation, living at our Center in Ndjamena. She will eventually be deployed among the Bagirmi people. Danny and Mandy Bronson and their children are living in Bokoro (a predominantly Bilala town) where they continue Arabic language study. They are due for a home assignment and will return this summer. Dave and Sonja Narvesen have been called as your missionaries to the Fulbe in Chad. Together with their children they studied in France from January-December last year and arrived in Chad Christmas 2017. They are currently in the midst of Arabic language study. We trust that they will move to the Fulbe village of Doh in late fall or early winter of this year. Jeremy and Sallee Stanton serve in management of our Welcome Center in Ndjamena, which is so important in serving our missionaries. Nathanael and Carrie Szobody and family have been living in Boudamasa, a predominantly Bagirmi town. It is there that they have continued their ministry. They have had some great opportunities for ministry and relationship building as they have entered into the life and lives of their neighborhood. Paul and Teresa Szobody have been living in a new home and ministry location near the village of Adere where they have begun their ministry of

teaching and mentoring our Chadian missionaries to unreached people groups. The first Chadian missionary family has received their certificate for ministry after a 10-month intensive. We believe that this ministry will be, Lord willing, a part of helping our Chadian counterparts get some additional training toward working together as families and teams in the context of ministry to unreached Muslims.

SUPPORT PERSONNEL AND ADVANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Dan Venberg serves as our mission mobilizer and recruiter. In this role Dan has been communicating the need for missionaries among the Bagirmi, Bilala and Fulbe peoples of Chad. He has also visited a number of our congregations in his mobilizer role. Dan also has responsibility for day-to-day operations in Chad while I (Matthew) split my time between International Mission and Director of Operations for the CLB. Marcos Holzner continues in his part-time role working on several Naba translation projects for the Bilala people of Chad. These projects include the Gospel of Luke; a Naba, Arabic, English Dictionary, and A Guide to Learning Naba. We are grateful for Melissa Mortenson, our Administrative Assistant who has made a good transition with the help of Betty Christenson. Randy and Betsy Mortenson

continue in their role as our pastoral care team for Asia. Gaylan and Joy Mathiesen continue to compile our Daily Prayer Notes. NorVal and Carey Semchenko continue to supply our missionaries with vehicles at a very low lease rate while they are on home assignment. Noel (MD) and Trisch (RN) Johnson serve as our volunteer Medical Advisors for Chad. We appreciate their expertise.

LOOKING AHEAD

What does the future hold for your international ministry to unreached peoples? We are praying the Lord of the Harvest for an additional couple to join our team in Taiwan. We are also praying for a couple to join our Fulbe team and another with our Bilala team, both in Chad. There are currently two couples that are sensing God's call to these specific needs. This is all a part of our five-year Ministry Advancement as the Church of the Lutheran Brethren. We continue to praise God for the individuals and families that continue to be a part of this important ministry of the CLB by praying and giving in significant and sacrificial ways. Thank you!

Rev. Matthew Rogness serves the Church of the Lutheran Brethren as Director of International Mission.