



Rockrohr News and Notes

www.rockrohr.net

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Ministry Information:

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Our website has the latest news of our work and family. Look for us on Facebook too!



Deaconess Insights: Mercy in the City

After a full semester of learning in the classroom about mercy and the work of the deaconess, the LTS deaconess class visited the work of Tshwane Leadership Foundation (TLF) in the heart of the city of Pretoria. TLF is a pan-Christian organization that focuses its work in the areas of women and girls at risk; homelessness; community development; health & child care; inner city housing; and economic development, all from a decidedly Christian and gospel-focused perspective. Our tour guide, Win, has been involved with TLF since its beginning in 1993. Travelling with us in a mini-bus that we had chartered for the excursion, Win took us all over central Pretoria for a first-hand look at the various mercy projects of TLF and also gave us an in-depth perspective on the needs and challenges of such a mercy ministry.

Upon return to campus, we spent a few minutes debriefing in the



The LTS deaconess class took a tour of the work of Tshwane Leadership Foundation in the inner city of Pretoria. (Daughter Becky Rockrohr who is a deaconess student at Concordia U. Chicago was able to join the LTS deaconess class for the tour.)

classroom. It was apparent that the experience was very moving for the students. It also helped them to begin to think concretely about their future work as deaconesses. Here are some written comments from each of their field trip reports:

•“We need to teach the teachers and children the Word of God, to pray, worship and praise Him, because God is the one who cares and protects

our lives.”

•“My impression is that the people [of TLF] did well to have so many people that they are taking care of. Also, there is more need to take care of these people.”

•“My understanding of theology for mercy is that these people need not only physical care but

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Mercy in the City (cont. from page 1)



Deaconess students Ruth and Helen hold babies while visiting the crèche of the TLF during their tour on May 24th.

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also spiritual care, to seek God and all His righteousness first before everything they need.”

•“I was impressed by the love people extend to those people in need.... I was very much motivated by the orphans and knowing that they should be loved by somebody somehow.”

•“It helps me to think that as a deaconess I should be merciful to others as our Father is merciful to us.”

•“God wants all to come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved; and if the neighbor or anyone is still in need there is still work to be done.”

•On seeing the ministry to street people, one student saw their primary need as “food because they are staying in the roads, no place for them to cook. I reacted very ashamed, my heart was touched.”

•“What I have learned is that as Christ is merciful we should be merciful to others and what I have seen today is that not just providing the needs to the people also the teachings

on that nature, meaning and purpose of Gospel to the women. They are also teaching the Word of God, connecting/building a relationship with God so that the women can be counseled through the Word of God while God was their Potter from the beginning, now and forever.”

•“It hurts as I was watching on the way even the older people, some are using the streets to prepare where they can sleep, take shower etc.”

•One student was impressed with “how the organization is able to extend its hand to reach out to the lives of many people with many different life challenges and still have the [resources] to do more in terms of reaching out.”

How to Give Support:

To donate by phone call: **1-800-433-3954** (Designate your gift “for the Rockrohrs.”)

You can find the links for online giving at: www.lcms.org/rockrohr

Or, make checks payable to LCMS World Mission with “Rockrohr” noted on the memo line and mail to:
LCMS WORLD MISSION
P.O. Box 790089
St. Louis, MO 63179

Seminary and Partner Websites

Our seminary and its partners have their own websites.

www.lts.org.za – Our Lutheran Theological Seminary website. Carl helps maintain this site. Sign up for the seminary newsletter on the site!

www.lcsa.org.za - The website of the LCSA. The seminary’s Rector, Dr. Weber, is also Bishop of the LCSA. The LCSA is one of three partners who operate the seminary.

www.felsisa.org.za – Another partner of the seminary, the Free Evangelical Lutheran Synod in South Africa.

www.mission-bleckmar.de – This is a German Lutheran mission organization which has a long history of sending missionaries to South Africa. In English the organization is called Mission of Lutheran Churches. Use www.translate.google.com to read the site in English.

What happens when you move to Africa?

Many Christians are taking mission trips to learn of the vibrancy and joy of fellow Christians in Africa. These trips can help the visitor learn more about God's church elsewhere and more about his/her own faith. Well-designed mission service trips can also help fellow Christians with specific projects.

What happens when you *move* to Africa though? How is it different from a trip to Africa?

The people you live and work with in Africa become your family. Their everyday life becomes your everyday life. Their conditions in life become part of your conditions in life. Their laughter becomes your laughter and their tears your tears. I would like to share just a few events the last few months.

Academics

When teaching in the U.S. one expects certain academic standards. Grade school, high school and college all have certain standards to reach, even if some school districts have more difficulty than others. When teaching students from a variety of African countries these standards

vary quite a bit. Not only because of the lower quality of schools in some areas, but also because of various living conditions. Some students are from countries where there have been wars and they could not live in the same place for long. Their schooling opportunities were not stable.

In the last semester I required a research paper, but some of my students had never had long-term instruction on how to do research. In many school districts in the U.S., research skills are taught in grade school and high school. It was different for many of my students.

My students' challenges became my challenges. We struggled together all semester as I taught the difference between direct and indirect quotes, using reliable sources, etc. This is not a short term task; we will continue learning next semester.

One of my students, Matthew, told me two weeks ago, "No one has ever taught me how to do research like this. Thank you."

Health

If a student is not well, they cannot study and the

purpose of seminary is diminished. One of our new deaconess students, Helen, had two bad front teeth. She is a lovely woman, dedicated to becoming a deaconess, but her teeth were very troublesome for her.

For nearly the whole semester, Deborah worked with Helen and Hannah (a volunteer nurse for the seminary) to help her get Helen's teeth fixed. It took longer than in the U.S. It took patience and a daily friendly question, "Do you have your new smile yet?" Finally the answer was "yes!" We all rejoiced that Helen had a new smile.

Daily Tasks Together

Dozens of other big and little tasks are daily researched, planned and carried out. Some are easy, some quite challenging, but these are part of daily life together. For example:

- Working with volunteers to clean and keep the seminary computers virus free. Thanks for your work Niel (South African), Jonathan and Stephen (German)! Very time consuming!

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Deborah's Speaking
Schedule as of
May 31

June 17th Beautiful
Savior, Waukesha WI

June 24th St Paul,
Dolton IL

July 1st Trinity
Lutheran, Sheboygan,
WI

*Please contact
Deborah's mother,
Mrs. Carol Roth, for
scheduling a date if
you would like
Deborah to give a
presentation to your
congregation or
group. 573-450-6323*



Ted continues to adjust to school in South Africa. The current sports season is soccer, which is a familiar sport to him!

Moving to Africa (cont.)

From page 3

•Tending to dorm room problems. Carl and Deborah each oversee student dorms and do inspections. Sometimes there are needs which require immediate action, like immediately shopping for and replacing a dangerous hot plate for safe cooking in the dorm.

•Helping students adjust to their new living environment at LTS. Deborah has spent many hours over the past months counseling and guiding deaconess students who have moved far away from their homes and families. Some of the deaconess

students have children back home, with all the attending cares and concerns.

The Church is God's Family

In only a few months, stories like these have been multiplied many times over. Deborah and I laugh and cry and pray for the students, staff, and our South African friends from all over the country. Together we are striving daily in God's kingdom in Africa.

Yet in actuality our experiences are similar to Christians around the world; we live with fellow Christians as brothers and sisters. Pastors, deaconesses, teachers

and all workers in the church have these same daily experiences. Our daily work happens to be in Africa.

Not everyone can move to a new place, but we are thankful we have been able to. God has enlarged our family with family members in Africa.

We encourage every reader to daily look around and see in your fellow Christians, your God-given family. Your Sunday worship, your Bible classes, your congregational projects, your shared laughter and shared tears: these are part of being in God's family.

We're on the Web!
www.rockrohr.net
and
www.lcms.org/rockrohr



Seeking More Support Now

As LCMS career missionaries we are required to raise support for our budget.

Our budget is currently in deficit and we urgently need to broaden our support base. We have many enthusiastic supporters, but we do need more to ensure our stay in Africa.

We appreciate your prayerful consideration to support us. Giving details are on page 2 of this newsletter.

Fund-Raising Trip

Deborah will be fund-raising this summer in the U.S. by speaking with congregations and groups in the Midwest June 15-July 17. She still

has open dates.

If you are would like to have Deborah visit your congregation or group in June-July please contact Deborah's mother, Mrs. Carol Roth, who is scheduling Deb's appointments.

573-450-6323