

A STORY OF COMMITMENT IN THE FACE OF TRAGEDY
(AND COMMUNICATION, AND TRAVEL, AND FAITHFULNESS)

Several years ago I attended the funeral of Caleb Quanbeck at American Lutheran Church in Billings. He was part of the Quanbeck family from Shepherd, Montana—a family which produced quite a number of pastors, missionaries and theologians. Caleb and his wife had served for many years in Madagascar. He was in his 90's and living at St. John's Lutheran Home when he died.

Hearing his story was both fascinating and humbling. Two small tidbits I'd like to share:

1. After their missionary training here in the U.S. they spent a year in France learning the French language. The year was 1927, and while there they witnessed **Lindberg's landing** after his famous trans-Atlantic flight.
2. They had 2 children, a son and a daughter. They had sent their **10-year-old daughter** to boarding school at another mission location in Madagascar. One day a "runner" arrived at their village to tell them that their daughter had died of some tropical disease. He had been running for several days—the only way to communicate in Madagascar at the time. By the time Caleb and his wife got the **tragic news** their daughter's funeral and burial had already happened. Their son, Stan, and his wife, Kathie, recently retired from a lifetime of service as medical missionaries in Madagascar. Caleb had told them not to come home for his funeral. It would take too long and would not be the best use of resources.

When I think of how easy it was for my wife and me to communicate with our grown children during our 7 years ('97-'04) with Global Mission in Slovakia (daily emails, easy phone calls), and to fly home to Montana for our infant grandson's birth and death (using frequent flyer miles we had saved for just such an emergency; we thought it would be for one of our mothers, both in their 90's) we are humbled by the dedication and sacrifices made by previous generations of global missionaries.

In Caleb Quanbeck's day transportation was by ship, and mail traveled the same way, meaning it would take **weeks, even months**, to communicate with missionaries, and to hear stories of their faithful work. But oddly enough, I think we knew more about global mission then than we do now!

How ironic!! Now we have virtually instantaneous communication tools. We're almost drowning in information! How do we, as pastors or as laypeople with special interest in global concerns, help our congregations sort through the maze so they feel connected with the church around the world? Not to do so means that we are **even more isolated** than the Quanbecks were!

Our ELCA Global Mission unit offers us a quick way to keep in touch through the miracle of the Internet. You can subscribe to it easily. We're attaching the December issue to help you make the connection.

Any other suggestions for how to keep these connections vital?
Please let us know: paulandkay@hanson.org

Advent Blessings to you all!!
Montana Synod Global Mission Committee, Paul and Kay Hanson, Chairpersons

GLOBAL LINKS

Connect to the global church through elca.org

December 2009

OPERATION THANKS-GIVING

Around the world, missionaries and military personnel have received handmade Thanksgiving cards from across the ELCA. See pictures and stories at <http://blogs.elca.org/handinhand>. (A writer is seeking quotes from people who have received a card. If that includes you or someone you know, please contact Sue.Edison-Swift@elca.org.)

FOOD FOR LIFE: ADVENT WORSHIP

Discover resources for this church season and for other ministries, based on the Food for Life cookbook published by the Lutheran World Federation. See www.elca.org/lwf under *In the News* 11-2009; click the logo on the right *Accompanying Resources*.

GOOD GIFTS

Give a Christmas gift to a friend or loved one - and do good somewhere in the world at the same time. See <http://www.elca.org/elcagoodgifts> or order a catalog at <http://www.augsburgfortress.org/store>

GLOBAL MISSION EPIPHANY DEVOTIONS

Celebrate Christ's light to the nations during Epiphany. Beginning December 1, devotions by ELCA missionaries will be available on-line at www.elca.org/globalmission/epiphany. An excellent resource for committee devotions or personal use, these devotions will reflect on ministry in Slovakia, Tanzania, Bolivia, Japan, Egypt and West Africa.

GLOBAL MISSION GATHERINGS IN 2010

Connect global and local mission at these events held across the country. See a schedule at <http://www.elca.org/Who-We-Are/Our-Three-Expressions/Churchwide-Organization/Global-Mission/Engage-in-Global-Mission/Global-Events/Glocal-Mission-Gatherings.aspx>

HEAVY RAINS FLOOD EL SALVADOR

Heavy rain and landslides devastate crops and bury homes and roads, with more than 190 deaths and many still missing. See www.elca.org/disaster

ZIMBABWE: SEEDS OF HOPE

One year ago, the people of Zimbabwe were in crisis. Crops failed, cholera took hold, and there was a shortage of medicine and medical supplies. Your gifts to ELCA World Hunger made all the difference. See sidebar for video: <http://www.elca.org/Who-We-Are/Our-Three-Expressions/Churchwide-Organization/Global-Mission/Where-We-Work/Africa/Zimbabwe.aspx>

A HISTORY OF EXCELLENCE IN HEALTH CARE IN LIBERIA

The tile flooring at Phebe Hospital and School of Nursing in Suakoko, Bong County, Liberia, is faded and worn, revealing pathways where healers and people in need of healing have walked for decades. See www.elca.org/stories click on Outreach.

HOW COFFEE SAVED MY LIFE...AND OTHER STORIES OF STUMBLING TO GRACE

A well-written and soul-stirring memoir about serving in Uruguay and simple living as a Young Adult in Global Mission. See http://www.thelutheran.org/article/article.cfm?article_id=8611

GLOBAL HEADLINES at www.elca.org/news (click News Releases)

- + Nine ELCA Synod Bishops Preparing for Middle East Visit
- + Lutherans to Observe World AIDS Day Dec. 1
- + ELCA Council Approves Social Policy Resolution on Immigration
- + Concordia College Grad Roxana Saberi to Receive 2010 NCAA 'Award of Valor'
- + Lutherans, Others Urge Congress and White House to Address Climate Change
- + ELCA Presiding Bishop Welcomes Travel Policy Change for People with HIV
- + Lutheran Bishops Advocate for Rights of Immigrants and Refugees
- + ELCA Wittenberg Center Staff Ends Service Nov. 30, Center's Future Unclear
- + LWF General Secretary-Elect Names Priorities to Strengthen LWF Communion

IN OUR PRAYERS

Give thanks for Regional Representatives for West Africa, Anne and Willie Langdji, who foster church to church relationships in Cameroon, Senegal, and Central African Republic. (This prayer for December 5 is available along with daily prayers from around the globe at <http://www2.elca.org/prayventures/>)

This issue of *Global Links* (December 2009) contains highlights from *elca.org* of ELCA ministry with companion churches and agencies in other countries. Please forward *Global Links* in whole or in part to other individuals or groups, or use it in publications with attribution. Please send your suggestions and comments to lanny.westphal@elca.org or to Pr. Lanny Westphal, ELCA Global Mission, 8765 W. Higgins Rd., Chicago, IL 60631.



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