

Global Vision



A newsletter for friends of the Global Mission Institute, Luther Seminary

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Luther Heralds First Graduates in Mission and World Christianity Program

Five Students to Complete Masters Program in May

By Rebecca Craig & Christopher Byars

The first students from the Master of Arts in Mission and World Christianity Program are preparing to graduate this May from Luther Seminary. This program, which prepares students for dynamic 21st century ministry in a world of many cultures and religions, was instituted at Luther Seminary three years ago with Dr. Frieder Ludwig, head of the Global Mission Institute at Luther Seminary, as faculty point person. It was met with an immediate response from students Kirk Sandvig, Diane Solmonson, Krista Anderson, Chue Siong and Lue Moua.

Kirk Sandvig's interest in the program started out as a misunderstanding. "I originally thought it was a mission and world religions program," he admits. Given his undergraduate work in Asian Studies, he was drawn to the idea of learning about other religions. However, despite the initial confusion, the coursework turned out to be equally as intriguing because the program works with other religions, yet focuses on the encounter in a way that relates Christian identity with the knowledge and experience of others in a common world. "It's been fascinating learning how Christianity functions so differently in other parts of the world versus what we see here in the west," explains Kirk. "It made me realize that the Holy Spirit is moving in the church, regardless of the ties the church has. It adapts to whatever form or function is needed throughout the world." In the future, Kirk hopes to bridge communities through the use of documentaries and media that will not only help visibly unite the body of Christ but will also let donors see the faces of those they are helping and witness the impact donor support is having in their lives.

For Diane Solmonson, the program fit with work she was already doing. International work has always been an integral part of Diane's life working for non-profit organizations. Most recently, she helped raise funds that would support the training of doctors that specialize in heart surgery for children



Kirk Sandvig (left) and Diane Solmonson (right) are two Luther Seminary seniors who are preparing for graduation in the Master of Arts in Mission and World Christianity program this May.

in Africa and has been involved in helping American families adopt children from Kenya. While the seminary has students participate in cross-cultural work, it has never before had a program geared specifically for mission. Diane notes, "Cross-cultural is great for those called to be pastors in the ELCA to at least experience different cultures. But for those of us who are not called to necessarily be 'preachers,' this program gives us a tremendous opportunity to do international work within the ELCA." Diane hopes that one day there will be even more mission-minded courses at Luther. "People need to be taken out of their own backyards from time to time, even if they're not interested in pursuing global mission as a livelihood. International experiences change people's hearts and transform their understanding of the world at large."

Lue Moua and Chue Siong were born in Thailand at the Ban Vinai Hmong Refugee Camp. Lue, the younger brother of Chue, came to Luther Seminary to learn and grow so that

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The GMI Mission:

The Global Mission Institute provides critical support to Luther Seminary in its task of developing global mission leaders, partnering with the church in fulfillment of the great commission.

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he could reach out to the Hmong people in Thailand and teach English. Lue's passion is to minister and evangelize by being the hands and feet of Christ to the people of his own culture. Chue, who is married to Luther graduate and Pastor William Siong from Hmong Central Lutheran Church, graduated with a degree in Elementary Education from Crown College. Originally, she began to study at the University of Minnesota in the medical program. After one semester, she realized that this did not fit in with the relationship she desired to have with her husband, so she decided to enter Luther Seminary to study so she could partner with her husband in ministry. Through their involvement with this program, Chue and Lue have both found a broader understanding of faith and culture. Raised Baptist, they have also appreciated learning about the Lutheran perspective and enjoy how it has allowed them to better understand other faiths and belief systems. "Luther Seminary has broadened my perspective of what mission looks like to help me in my mission overseas or here in the United States," states Chue.

Krista Anderson and her husband felt called to mission in 2004 and spent a year in Thailand where they taught English in a Christian school in Chang Mai. In this time, she served with the Health Project for Tribal People serving the Hill Tribe people and providing AIDS education which allowed her to visit an orphanage, and visit and learn about the Hill Tribe people of Thailand. Upon her return, she knew that her calling was to serve in global mission, but she felt more education was necessary and entered the newly formed Mission and World Christianity program at Luther. "The classes gave me words to what I knew," she states. She also appreciates the consistency within the program. After seminary, Krista desires to serve in long-term mission work wherever God will lead her and her husband.

These five students bring unique gifts and passions to the realm of global ministry. As they move toward graduation and prepare to enter into the mission field, we look forward to seeing how the spirit will utilize their gifts and education.

INTERNATIONAL LIFE THIS SPRING



Toshifumi Uemura ('03), Assistant Professor of Christianity at Japan Lutheran College in Tokyo, visited campus Feb. 23-25 with some of his students and met with GMI donors (see below).



Students from Japan Lutheran College (left) with donors Grace Ingulsrud and Dorothy Sorenson.



Current student Hitoshi Adachi (left) and another student from Japan Lutheran College with donor Lois Setterholm.

Rev. Dr. Magdi Gendi, acting president and professor of Old Testament at the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Cairo, gave a presentation to students and faculty at the Mission and Ministry Forum regarding the state of Christianity in Egypt and the Middle East.



Visiting Schioltz Scholar Rev. Dr. J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu from Ghana preached during chapel.

