

Board for International Mission
January 27, 2022
Via Zoom Videoconference

Board Members Present: Kristine Bruss, Rev. James Douthwaite, John Edson, Rev. Limakatso Nare, Rev. David Stechholz, Allan Voss, James Wolf, and Rev. William Zwick. Rev. Magdiel Fajardo joined the meeting in progress.

Board Members Not Present: Rev. Magdiel Fajardo (partial), Terence Lung and Rev. Bernhard Setter.

Staff Members and Guests Present: Barbara Below, Stacey Egger, Rev. Kevin Robson and Jeannie Smithson.

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by the vice chairman, John Edson, at 9:00 a.m. and was opened with a devotion led by Rev. Limakatso Nare.

Introductions: The chairman introduced a new member of the board, Rev. James Douthwaite, East-Southeast Region – Individual Member (ordained or commissioned).

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the September 23 and 24, 2021 meeting were approved.

President's Report: President Matthew Harrison reported that this is a remarkable moment for LCMS missions. We have extremely qualified missionaries doing great work. We want to add missionaries and staff to support them. There is a strong mercy fund. The Synod is in the best financial shape in its history.

Chief Mission Officer Report: Kevin Robson also reported that Synod is in a very strong financial position. Restricted gifts to OIM are down, but the shortfall has been offset by other funds. The 2021 annual report and the convention mid-term resolution report are being finalized. OIM had a very productive meeting in Mexico City with a follow up meeting in St. Louis focusing on coordinated strategic and operating plans for all four regions. Mission Advancement has been doing well; however, that creates a critical need for additional infrastructure to support any new missionaries. There is a focus on planned gifts working with the LCMS Foundation.

Unit Executive's Report: Kevin Robson reported on behalf of Dan McMiller. OIM has 100 deployed missionaries most of whom are career missionaries. GEO missions were greatly depleted during COVID. NSM funding is extremely strong with 270 days of funding in hand. OIM continues to run into regular instances of LCMS individuals, congregations and LCMS-affiliated (but non-RSO) mission societies and organizations who act in an autonomous and uninformed manner (apart from both the letter and spirit of Bylaw 3.8.3 and 2019 LCMS Convention Resolutions 2-06 and 2-07) that does injury to the work of called LCMS OIM missionaries and LCMS OIM regional staff in the foreign mission areas of Synod.

Dr. Mark Rabe has joined OIM as director of missionary recruitment. Christian Boehlke has done some great work on safety and security. OIM has contracted with SOS International for

local security information for any areas where OIM has missionaries or anticipated travel. The second round of *Missions Unpacked* presentations is being released.

The Latin America region is dealing with a large number of COVID cases. We have eleven alliance missionaries in place. The Livonian Lutheran Project in Riga, Latvia has been a spectacular success. The Eurasia region is working with LCMS Communications to produce a series of videos on the basics of Lutheran doctrine and practice designed to reach Muslim populations in Europe and Iran.

Shauen Trump is working with CPH to print an Amharic hymnal for Ethiopian communities in the United States. Travel in Asia is shut down. A lot of work is being done in Japan to pull together the faithful remnants of the Japan Lutheran Church. Curriculum is being developed for the Mandarin speaking seminary in Taiwan.

Regional Director Report: Rev. James Krikava, Regional Director for Eurasia, joined the meeting and presented an informative report on our work in the Eurasia region including an entertaining rendition of *The Epistle to the Eurasians* as a summary of the work in the region. COVID restrictions severely impacted their work, but the region is growing and they have plans for additional growth. The COVID pandemic set back the launch of the Livonian Lutheran Project/Riga Luther Academy Collaboration but resulted in the development of a hybrid seminary with online courses, on-site courses and local field work. New churches are being planted in Romania. Eleven Pakistani students are enrolled in our bachelor of theology program. Work is just starting in Greece and Bulgaria.

Church Relations Report: Rev. Jonathan Shaw, Director of Church Relations, reported on recent church relations developments. We are working with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Brazil and the North East District to enhance Portuguese language ministry in the U.S. The Spanish Evangelical Lutheran Church celebrated the consecration of its new bishop.

A joint meeting with the Anglican Church of North America, the North American Lutheran Church and the Lutheran Church-Canada resulted in plans to hold a conference in May on the topic “Being the Church in a Cancel Culture.”

The Japan Lutheran Church has doubled down on women’s ordination. The Synod in convention will be asked to make a determination regarding the fractured fellowship with them. Meetings continue with the WELS and ELS and with the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus.

MAF Calls : The board went into executive session with Rev. Craig Mueller to discuss a MAF call. After returning from executive session, the board issued the following call:

Rev. Jaime Nava, Chaplain, Active duty, Navy

Missionary Calls: The board then went into executive session with Christian Boehlke and Rev, Dr. Mark Rabe to discuss missionary calls. After returning from executive session, the board issued the following calls and appointments:

Career Missionaries:

Rebecca Bartelt

Called

Asia

Quinten Cundiff	Called	Eurasia
Lindsay Cundiff	Appointed	Accompanying Spouse
Rachel Krause	Appointed	Eurasia

GEO Missionaries

Gary Kessler	Appointed	Latin America
Sue Kessler	Appointed	Latin America
Jerry Mays	Appointed	Africa
Mark Winterstein	Appointed	Eurasia

International Educators

Martha Seibel	Called	CISS
Angela Steinbacher	Called	CISS

It was also reported that David Preus has transitioned from Latin America to Eurasia.

The Board also approved the following peaceful releases:

Mark Rabe	Career	Africa
Steve Schumacher	Career	Africa
Cynthia Schumacher	Career	Africa
Courtney Zalmanoff	GEO	Latin America

Resolution 4-04A Subcommittee Update: The board members then reported briefly on their district visitations. Members were encouraged to submit written reports if they had not already done so.

Policy Committee Update: Pastor Zwick reviewed an initial draft of proposed BIM policies and solicited comments from the other board members. The committee will continue to draft the policies for future consideration.

International Schools: The board entered into executive session for a report on recent developments at the International Schools. After returning from executive session the board endorsed the appointment of Hans Lopez-Vito to the Concordia International School Shanghai Council.

Wrap-Up/Other Business:

Next meeting: May 26 and 27, 2022
 The May 2023 will be moved to May 4 and 5, 2023

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m. and was closed with a devotion by Pastor Nare.

K. Allan Voss
Secretary