

Body Building



The Roebkes together again in Madison, AL

I am exhausted. In five weeks, I covered 20,000 miles and made 62 presentations about our Africa missions to churches, schools and individual donors. I am also energized by what I have seen on this speaking tour. I have an even greater appreciation for the diversity within Christ's Body.



Hannah Schmiede and Missionary Roebke. Hannah is the international student coordinator at St. Croix Lutheran HS

Christ's Body includes St. Croix Lutheran Academy, an Area Lutheran High School in Minneapolis whose student body includes 125 international students from five continents. Christ's Body includes Lutheran Elementary Schools in Milwaukee like St. Marcus, Risen Savior, and Mt. Lebanon that bring Christ's peace to students growing up in an urban and often chaotic environment. The Body of Christ includes churches and schools located in up and coming suburbs, as well as those situated in traditional farming communities. Although the students look and act very different from one another, they all responded the same way to my presentation - with great interest in what life is like in Africa, and a greater appreciation of what God has given them in this country.



Chapel at Risen Savior Lutheran School in Milwaukee

It's not our missions abroad or at home that make us successful. It's not our stained glass and pipe organs that make us attractive to God. It's not our schools and colleges that draw God's attention to us. Whether we meet on Sundays in a cathedral or a mud hut and whether we sing in European time signatures or in African rhythms, our Heavenly Father accepts our praise because his Son has made us worthy. We belong to Christ's body because he reached out and brought us to life, and we will remain in his body only because of his continued mercy and undeserved love.

In Zambia and Malawi there are over 60,000 Lutherans, and membership continues to increase. Our African brothers' and sisters' faith is deeply rooted, and they

express that faith beautifully through worship and acts of service. When I consider the extreme poverty and day to day hardships of life in Africa, I can only give God the credit for the men and women of faith that he has raised up here. By contrast, our church body, the Wisconsin Synod, currently has just over 360,000 members. Like most churches in the United States, our numbers are decreasing [watch video].



Morrison Zion Lutheran School was founded in 1866, over 150 years ago

But although there are many different kinds of people, churches, and church bodies, the only number that matters is ONE - Christ's Body is ONE, with ONE purpose and ONE Head. We who live in the Developed World are ONE with them, joined to the Body of Christ by God's grace. Whatever resources God has given us, let us use them to build up Christ's Body. You don't have to be a high-powered executive or a financially independent millionaire to support foreign mission work. You don't have to be fluent in foreign languages to advance God's kingdom overseas. Because you are a part of Christ's Body he will use you with great effect and power.



Pastor Dan Voigt and Missionary John Roebke attended Northwestern College together

My body is tired, but my spirit has been renewed. "May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom 15:5-6)

Missionary John Roebke lives in Malawi and serves as the Communications Director for One Africa Team. He would like to give special thanks to WELS World Missions Scheduler Ginny Mundstock (ginny.mundstock@wels.net), without whom his tour would have been impossible. If your organization is interested in hosting a missions speaker for your event visit www.wels.net/speaker-request