

Foundational Fragments



The missionaries of One Africa Team do not preach, teach or baptize in local congregations today – in fact, they haven’t done that kind of direct ministry for years. Instead, we are focusing all of our efforts on building up local church leaders and pastors, following the philosophy that “strong pastors lead to healthy congregations.”

This is a significant change from the way that WELS missionaries in Africa have operated in past decades. How did we think we could speak the language and understand the culture well enough to build a foundation for a mission amongst a foreign culture? But we did. As Christ’s apostles proclaimed the message of salvation in the tongues of people from all over the world on Pentecost, so during the last eight decades the Holy Spirit has enabled WELS missionaries to bring the Word of God to the remotest areas of Africa.

God has blessed our mission planting efforts with growth, not just in numbers but more importantly in faith and leadership skills. As African men came to the worker training schools that WELS missionaries established, they gained an understanding of the greatness of our God and his work to save us from the depths of eternal

punishment.



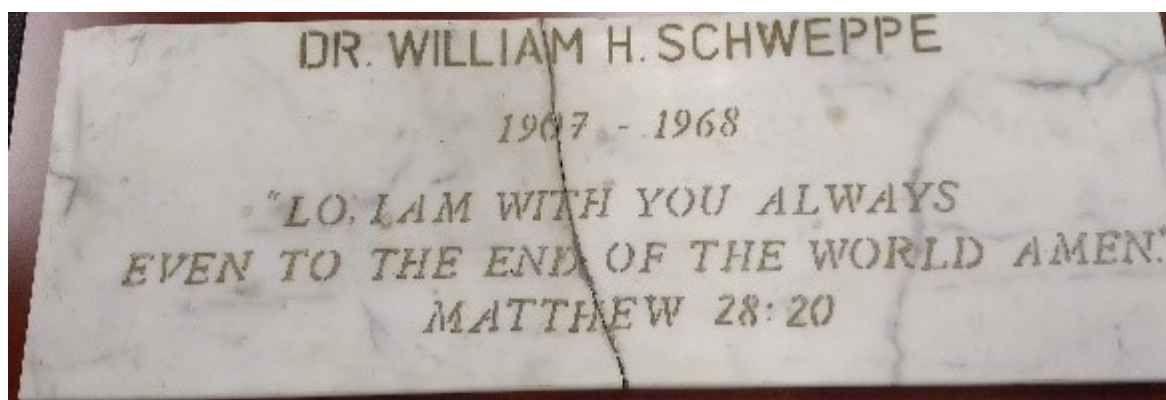
In 1937, Dr. William Schweppe and his wife Leola arrived in Nigeria. They were the first full-time missionaries supported by the WELS in Africa. At that time, the Nigeria mission was co-jointly supported by WELS and the LC-MS, working together within the Lutheran Synodical Conference. Working through schools and clinics, the Schweppes helped people understand God's love - a love deep enough to sacrifice his own Son to pay the price of our guilt and to raise him from the dead as proof that our debt was paid.



When the Lutheran Synodical Conference broke apart in 1961, Bill and Leola left the

mission Nigeria and came to Zambia, where WELS had established a mission four years earlier in 1957. He is one of many “foundational fragments” who helped lay the foundation of WELS mission work in Central Africa. Rev. Schweppe expended countless hours baptizing babies and helping people to understand why we need the Holy Spirit and the forgiveness of sins he brings. After years faithfully serving the mission in Mwembezhi, Dr. Schweppe was called home via a car accident near Mazabuka in the Southern Province of Zambia on 15th July 1968.

His gravestone had deteriorated so badly by 2003 that it was replaced by some of the Zambia missionaries with donations from US supporters. Now in 2019 – we had the blessing of searching for (and finding!) that old burial plot.



The church is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets (Ephesians 2:20). Throughout the centuries, God has continued to build up his church all over the world using dedicated missionaries like the Schweppes. Missionaries are fragile, but those who build their faith on Christ the cornerstone will never be shaken. We thank the Lord for the Schweppes and other “foundational fragments” for bringing the gospel to Africa!

Dan Kroll lives in Malawi and coordinates OAT's work in West Africa

Please

pray for those working in fields that are ripe for harvest. Share their story, engage with future news and receive updates. Go to this link to learn more about our mission fields in Africa and how the Holy Spirit is working faith in people's hearts <https://wels.net/serving-others/missions/africa>