

Handle With Care

...correctly handling the word of truth. II Timothy 2:15 EHV

For six days, over 30 men of varied theological and educational backgrounds came together as congregational shepherds of the Obadiah Lutheran Synod (OLS) in Uganda. What brought them together was a united confession faith adhering to the Lutheran Confessions, and a commitment to handle the word of God carefully.

In the past year, the OLS has been sharing its confession of faith with many people and throughout the country of Uganda. In response, many individuals, and groups are eager to be part of a church that focuses on the word of God.



The “tabernacle” purchased by OLS with funds from WELS donors

However, as a young church body, it does not have a traditional worker training program and if it did, it would take years to prepare enough preachers to serve all the congregations. Therefore, the OLS has realized that it needs to equip and train the elders and leaders of the congregations in a way that will allow them to continue to serve as they learn.

With this goal in mind, the OLS has asked the One Africa Team (OAT) of WELS World Missions to host workshops that will train the leaders of local congregations to be better equipped to handle the word of truth carefully and share it with their congregations.

Therefore, from August 29 to September 3, Rev. Howard Mohlke of the OAT with the few Pastors of the OLS presented a workshop on basic Bible interpretation, and basic devotion/sermon preparation. The main objective of the workshop was to ensure that all participants could read the Bible and recognize the difference between what God asks us to do, law, and what he has done for us, the gospel. A second objective was that church leaders faithfully share that truth in a clear and simple manner.



Additionally, copies of a Catechism Sermon book, developed in Africa and available through Multi-language Publications were distributed to all the participants. The last two days were used to learn how to use the sermon book for personal and public study and preaching.

Over the week, the progress was evident. As the days went by, the preaching of “what God has done for us” to comfort and motivate became clearer. As a result, the temptation to preach a legalistic message faded away.

After each message was shared with the group, the group would then give feedback. That feedback always began with the simple question, “what the gospel proclaimed?” It was then followed by, “what specific promise of God was proclaimed?” It was encouraging to see such honest feedback given in such an encouraging way. No one was criticized but all criticism was given to help one another improve in their presentation of the gospel.

Little by little, Rev. Mohlke’s participation became less, as the experienced pastors and leaders of the OLS led the training and review. This too was done on purpose, so that such training could continue in the OLS without the need for an OAT missionary.



Overall, the workshop in Uganda is a great example of the work of the WELS World Missions One Africa Team. The need for such a workshop was identified by the leadership of the OLS. The workshop focused on the development of word ministry through the art of shepherding. Then finally, the knowledge and skills shared at the

workshop will immediately benefit the ministries of OLS congregations.

In this way, the OAT carries out its mission of working with partners in Africa to teach the scriptures, gather the lost, and shepherd God's people.

Missionary Howard Mohlke is the Leader of One Africa Team and lives in Zambia

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