

Jumping the Digital Divide



Missionary Dan Kroll is teaching an online course to Christians in Liberia and Uganda with technology that is locally accessible. Watch a video clip of his lesson at <https://youtu.be/iY8UH9E2yTA> or click on the image above

Background: One Africa Team missionaries had intended to make several trips to both Liberia and Uganda to meet with local Christian fellowships that have expressed their desire to learn more about the teachings of the Lutheran Church and perhaps even enter into fellowship with the Wisconsin Synod. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the WELS has suspended all missionary travel to and from any country except the United States and the country where each missionary is based. The OAT Outreach Committee has begun long-distance teaching with these groups, in spite of several technological and social hurdles.

Some months ago the One Africa Team received a gift to assist with phones and

internet expenses to bring the gospel message to new areas via online teaching. Although it's exciting to move into the COVID-techvirtual world, it is a bit scary for us who live in a culture that functions primarily with face-to-face communication. In Africa, we rely much more heavily on non-verbal communication and other contextual cues to communicate than in the United States typically.

The Outreach Committee had a few decisions to make regarding the work in Uganda and Liberia, our two most active Outreach target areas:

Which phones to buy, including memory, battery strength, availability?

How to send the money for purchase of phones, to whom, banking details?

Who would buy the phones and take responsibility for their care?

What platform could we use to present material: Zoom, WhatsApp or email?

I'm happy to say the Holy Spirit has made it possible for us to get started. On 29th October, I (virtually) sat with Pastors Morris, Darlos, Goffah, Kowan and Pajibo from Liberia to look at the material and determine what platform can work for them there.

The first lesson of our fellowship studies is "*God's Great Exchange*." The Scriptural idea of absolute perfection necessary for eternal life, but freely provided for all people only through Jesus is the Gospel's fundamental teaching. Because the material for that particular lesson is set up quite differently from the others, it was a good opportunity to try to send them a video. The great thing about using video is that it allows our contacts to download it and watch it as many times as needed. They are also able to forward the video to others.

The only question that remains is, "how much internet data will our contacts need to carry out this program effectively?" I'll meet with them again via a WhatsApp video call to see how much data they used to meet with me online for one hour and to watch the video I sent. Since there are other possibilities that we need to

experiment with this will be a learning process for us all.

We greatly appreciate your prayers and have confidence that the Lord will provide another way for his kingdom to grow here in Africa. We remember the encouragement Paul offered to the Colossians (1:6): *“In the same way, the gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world—just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and truly understood God’s grace.”*

Missionary Dan Kroll lives in Malawi and serves as the OAT Liaison to West Africa

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>