

Planning to Move Forward in Tanzania

Planning is a risky business. We don't know the future. We take our best guesses and try to do everything possible so that something goes according to plans we've made. However, all of that still falls far short of guaranteeing the outcome. God reminds us: "Now listen, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.' Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow." (James 4:13,14)

God's Plans Always Prevail

The African Mission Evangelism Church (AMEC) is a Lutheran church of about 13,000 souls in Tanzania. Plans for a declaration of fellowship with AMEC didn't come to fruition at our recent WELS convention. There was a sudden leadership change and a delay on AMEC's side in accomplishing some tasks. Plans that had been made were put on hold. WELS and AMEC mutually decided it would be better to take a little bit more time before proceeding.



God warns us about putting too much hope in our own plans. He also spoke through Jeremiah: “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. (Jeremiah 29:11). Though our plans might not work out, God’s plans always do. He knows what he has in store for all of us, and we know that his plans are good.

I don’t doubt that his plans for the relationship between WELS and AMEC are good as well. We have made progress even in the short time since the delay. It looks like we will be ready to move forward with AMEC sooner rather than later. During a recent visit to Tanzania, Missionaries Roebke and Foxen witnessed good teaching by the leaders of AMEC. They explained to the rest of their called workers a locally written, Swahili-language confession of faith. The called workers thoroughly discussed many of the points in the confession. In the end, 65 men voiced their agreement that these are the things they believe and practice. This was a decision the WELS missionaries certainly rejoiced to hear.



Planning Our Move to Tanzania

Because of these developments, the One Africa Team has decided to relocate two mission families to Arusha, Tanzania. Missionaries Foxen and Roebke will be able to focus on training future church workers in AMEC. Through a program of classroom instruction and practical ministry application, the missionaries are planning to train a select number of AMEC men. Those men will become trainers of future gospel workers within their church body. Our prayer is that these men will be able to pass the same kind of training on to others in AMEC. God-willing, this will ensure a good future supply of gospel workers for their church body.

Such an endeavor requires even more planning. We are currently working with local lawyers to register our mission organization in Tanzania in order to obtain work permits. The missionary families will be leaving their old residences and searching for new ones. Missionaries are making efforts to maximize Swahili language learning when on the ground. The One Africa Team is weighing how these changes will affect the responsibilities of each member of the team. Of utmost concern is securing our families' welfare in an area where we've never had WELS missionaries.



There's a lot to think about and plan for, but also a lot to be gained. As with everything we do in life, we make our plans as best we can. At the same time, we

trust that God's plan is the one that will actually be accomplished. God will reveal in time how our planning lines up with his plan. We will continue to trust that whatever he has in store, it will be good. We know his planning is good for our missionaries and their families, for AMEC, for WELS, and ultimately for the kingdom of God. All glory to his name for his marvelous plan!

Missionary Ben Foxen 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>