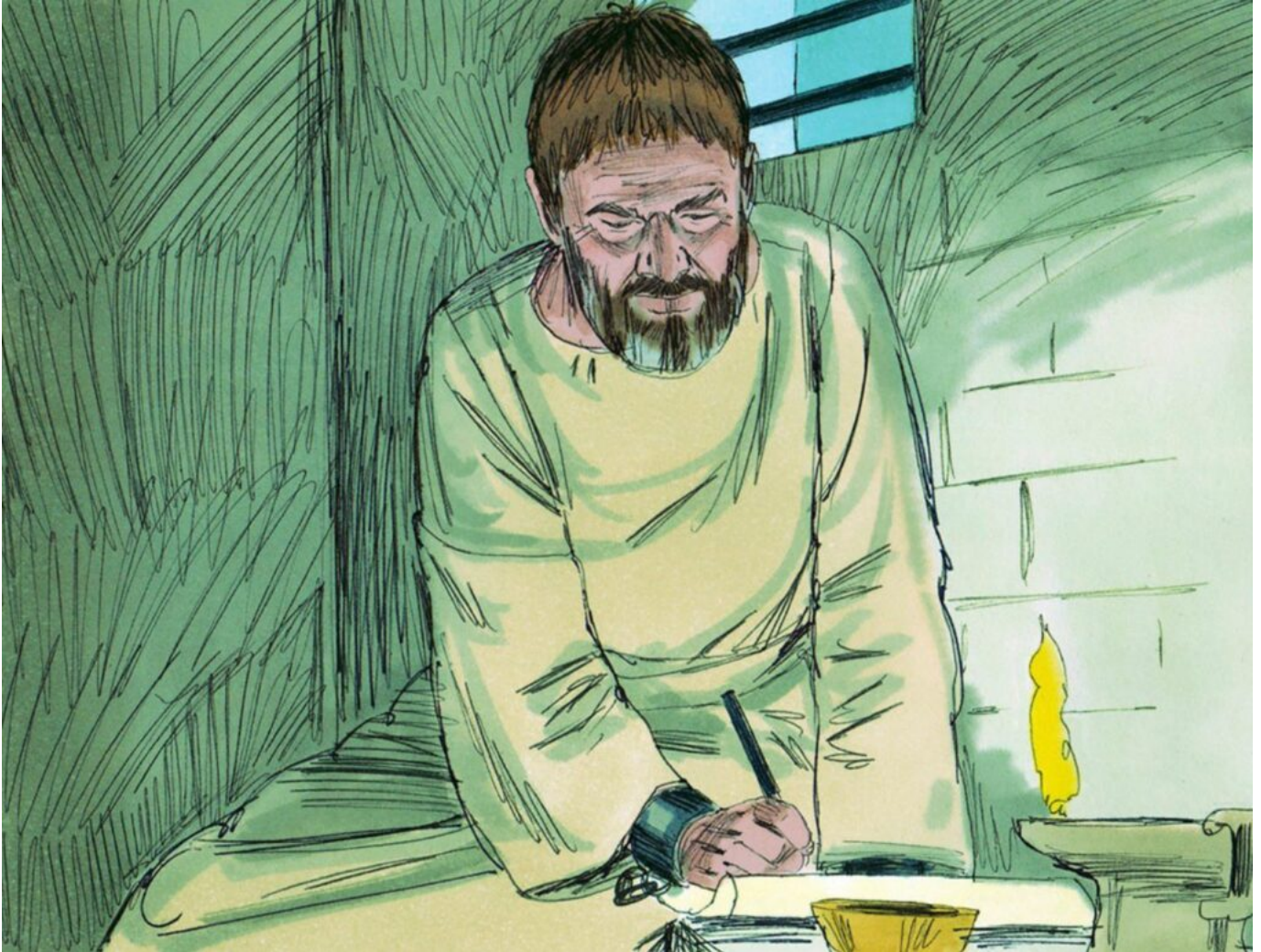


Preach With Patience

“Preach the word,” Paul told Timothy.

Paul was in prison in Rome, facing execution for Jesus.



“Preach the word,” Paul emphasized. “Be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage — with great patience and careful instruction” (2 Timothy 4:2).

A Joyful Celebration in Lusaka

"Preach the word," Harland Goetzinger, head of the Pastoral Studies Institute of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary of Mequon, Wisconsin, USA, told 15 other pastors from 5 countries, plus all the other pastors and other guests in attendance, on May 28, 2026, in Lusaka, Zambia.



Rev. Harland "Skip" Goetzinger is the director of the Pastoral Studies Institute
Guests included CELC synod leaders:

- Matthias Abumbi and Ngalame Gervase (*Cameroon*),
- Paul Mboya and Mark Anariko Onunda (*Kenya*),
- Ephraim Adiauko, Michael Egar, Wonah Johnson, and Stephen Stephen (*Nigeria*)
- Elias Mututwa and Mascrif Mulonda (*Zambia*).

Guests also included:

- Jonathan Bare of Asia Lutheran Seminary,
- David Bivens of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary,
- Anthony Phiri and Chibikubantu Simweeleba of Lusaka Lutheran Seminary, and
- Several WELS One Africa Team missionaries and their wives.



The 15 pastors from 5 countries were graduating in the chapel of the Lutheran Seminary in Lusaka, Zambia, with Bachelor of Divinity degrees from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary.

The 15 pastors:

- Christopher Chisankulo (*Zambia*)
- George Chumba (*Malawi*)
- Mesue Isreal (*Cameroon*)
- Evans Makowani (*Zambia*)
- Stanford Mandevu (*Malawi*)

- Steward Mbele (*Zambia*)
- Titus Mbele (*Zambia*)
- Bismark Ndumba (*Zambia*)
- Richard Ochichi (*Kenya*)
- Samwel Owage (*Kenya*)
- Mathews Owidi-Osome (*Kenya*)
- Du Shawa (*Zambia*)
- Foster Soko (*Zambia*)
- Aniedi Paul Udo (*Nigeria*)
- Idorenyin Joshua Udo (*Nigeria*)

All of these men were already pastors before their bachelor's degree studies began. Classes took place in person just twice a year. That way, men could attend to their main duties and their families without faraway studies getting in the way.

Two past cohorts of the former Greater African Theological Studies Institute (GRATSI) received bachelor's degrees in 2014 and 2019. Those past graduates were all from Malawi or Zambia. This 2026 graduating BDiv cohort came from East, South, and West Africa!



Remember God's Patience

"Preach the word," Professor Goetzinger told them—the full word of God, including the law in all its sternness and the gospel in all its sweetness.

"Correct, rebuke, and encourage, with great patience and careful instruction."

Great patience—what a root of the gospel. And *great patience*—what a fruit of the gospel.

"Great patience," or "total patience," you could even translate—how else could you describe the way God treated our first parents when they rebelled against him?

"Nothing but patience"—finally, God sent his Son to be born in Bethlehem to save the world through him.

And once Jesus rose from the dead, why would he appoint someone like Paul to be

his ambassador?

“I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his *immense patience* as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life” (1 Timothy 1:16).



Jesus showed great patience with St. Paul by sparing his life on the road to Damascus

Total patience—again, what a fruit of the gospel. What a fruit of the Spirit.

One Journey Ends, Another Begins

Our 2026 BDiv graduates and visiting Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary professors showed *great patience* with their first-time program coordinator, the undersigned, when he made rookie blunders.

Visiting professors for this cohort over the years:

- David Bivens
- Kenneth Cherney, Jr.
- Paul Nitz
- John Schuetze
- E. Allen Sorum
- Bradley Wordell



Rev. A. P. Udo of Nigeria

The fifteen 2026 BDiv graduates also showed *great patience* during Covid-19-related delays, long bus rides and flights, internet woes, visa mix-ups, and other class-related difficulties.

They showed *great patience* through daunting learning tasks, personal financial struggles, family sorrows, and other disappointments. One graduate, Mesue Israel, cheerfully went through hip replacement surgery during his studies. God sent all such bad things for good.



Rev. Mesue Israel of Cameroon and Rev. Dan Witte after the service
photo of Mesue Israel and Dan Witte after the service

And now they are back in their classrooms and congregations, showing the same *great patience* by the power of the Holy Spirit to the glory of God.

They are serving the saints. They are training future leaders. They are exemplifying *great patience* in all the ups and downs of living in Africa.

They are teaching the gospel not only with their words but with their lives. They are

modeling *great patience* for people who will, in turn, model the *great patience* of God to others, as God's kingdom comes by God's Spirit.

That's one reason why the last day hasn't come yet. God is so *patient*, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9).

Africa has so many millions, especially in its biggest cities, who need to repent.

As we wrapped up graduation day together, I had all 15 men write brief thoughts on a sheet for each of the others: "One thing I really appreciated about _____ during our time together was ..."

Sheets were passed around until they reached the man the others had written about. Then each man read at least one of his favorites. How we laughed. We treasured the descriptions.

We prayed, we sang, and we hugged. Then went back to our homes in five different countries. The day for which we waited so long had finally come.



Rev. Israel and Rev. Titus Mbele (Zambia)

But we are still all waiting *patiently*.

“Our citizenship is in heaven. And we *eagerly await* a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body” (Philippians 3:20-21).

Daniel Witte is part of the WELS One Africa Team and lives in Lusaka, 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>