

Unexpected Discovery

Pastor Jon Bilitz is a member of the WELS Commission in Inter-Church Relations (CICR). He recently returned from a meeting with the leaders of the Confessional Lutheran Synod of Uganda (CLSU).

Have you ever reached into a pocket and discovered money you didn't remember putting there? The discovery is completely unexpected—and delightful.

First Impressions of CLSU

That is how I felt after a recent trip to Uganda to visit the Confessional Lutheran Synod of Uganda (CLSU). At the end of March, I accompanied One Africa Team missionary Ben Foxen on a visit to Ibanda, located in the western hills of the country. Because it was my first time representing the WELS Commission on Inter-Church Relations (CICR), I wasn't sure what to expect. In the end, the experience far exceeded anything I could have imagined.

The purpose of our visit was to explore a potential partnership between WELS and the CLSU. Together, we studied CLSU's statement of faith and constitution, asking questions for clarification and deeper understanding. These discussions proved both productive and encouraging. The CLSU holds firmly to the Bible, teaching and preaching in accordance with Scripture. We share a strong emphasis on gospel ministry that keeps Jesus at the center. We pray for and look forward to the day when our synods can formally declare fellowship.



The CLSU consists of 40 congregations across Uganda, with approximately 3,200 baptized members. After analyzing the demographics of their congregations, their leadership has developed a clear plan for ministry. With nearly 80% of their members under the age of 18, they are focusing on youth ministry and strengthening catechism instruction. They are also working to expand access to education through their schools and are eager to encourage more young men to pursue seminary training and become pastors. In short, they have ambitious goals, coupled with a deep trust in God's blessings.

Connected Through Christ

On a personal note, getting to know the members of the CLSU leadership team is something I will carry with me for years to come. Worship on Palm Sunday was a particular highlight. Witnessing the faith and dedication of these Christian men—and forming friendships with them—was a remarkable joy. Though they live on another continent, I now count them among my dear Christian friends. Our time together lasted only a few days, but the memories will last a lifetime.



This trip also gave me valuable insight into the work of our One Africa Team missionaries. Watching Pastor Foxen interact with the CLSU was a joy and an encouragement. God is clearly blessing the efforts of our pastors in Africa as they seek out partnerships with groups like the CLSU. The Holy Spirit is powerfully at work through the Word, bringing souls into God's kingdom. Uganda is a vivid example of the gospel as "the power of God for the salvation of all who believe" (Romans 1:16).

In the end, perhaps the unexpected joy of this trip should not have been so surprising. God is always at work, advancing his kingdom. I look forward to the day when believers from every nation will gather for an eternity in his presence. That joy will far surpass even the happiest unexpected discovery.

Pastor Jon Bilitz serves as a full-time campus pastor at Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel, located on the campus of the University of Wisconsin - Madison.

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>