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# Jonathan Ekong Memorial Lutheran Seminary

Obot idim, Nigeria, Africa

\$5,927

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**Student Graduates**



**Graduation Ceremony**

Nigeria is Africa's most highly populated nation with approximately 150 million people. The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod (LCMS) began work in Nigeria in 1936. The LCN is the LCMS's oldest partner church in Africa and a member of the International Lutheran Council (ILC). It reports to have a presence in 19 of Nigeria's 36 states. Many of the remaining states are in northern Nigeria, where an estimated 60 million Muslims live. Over the years, the Lutheran Church of Nigeria (LCN) has grown to a baptized membership of more than 100,000 in 410 congregations and preaching stations, with a national staff of 260 pastors and lay preachers.

The LCN operates a seminary in Obot Idim. Jonathan Ekong Memorial Lutheran Seminary, located at the headquarters of the Lutheran Church of Nigeria, trains both evangelists (two-year, junior minister program) and pastors (three-year, leading to ordination program). Students participate in active evangelism outreach among both existing congregations and among the unreached. Therefore, students are taught not only with words, but also by doing. Currently, 67 students are enrolled. The women of the churches continue to help the seminarians with food throughout the year. While they cannot fully support this, they are doing their part. In the Lutheran Church of Nigeria, the seminary is often referred to as the powerhouse of the church. The seminary prepares

men for ministry and mission throughout Nigeria. The seminary regularly trains Lutheran students from other countries as well.

The seminary also conducts lay training workshops in the Ogoja area, a distance from the seminary. More than 70 congregations participate in four week-long training sessions.

In addition, Concordia University, St. Paul, Minn., is partnering with LCMS World Mission and the LCN to provide a master's degree in Christian outreach to Lutheran leaders in Nigeria and other countries of West Africa. The Master's of Arts in Christian Outreach (MACO) program not only provides coursework, but also practical mission initiatives as projects for the students. Two students from Liberia and Ghana are currently enrolled in the MACO program.

The church also operates a hospital and 16 clinics. Physical and spiritual care is given through facilities at Yahe in Ogoja and Eket in Akwa Ibom State, where rural health programs are fighting yellow fever, measles, malaria and guinea worm.

In addition to regular parish ministries being conducted in more than 35 languages, the LCN emphasizes theological education, evangelistic outreach to both urban and rural settings, Bible translation and literacy ministries. This work is focused primarily among the Eleme and Gokana people in Rivers State and the Ejagham people of Ogoja in Cross Rivers State with community development services. The LCN also owns and operates a radio station, which produces tapes used by 11 additional radio stations in Nigeria.

In 2001, the LCN began partnering with LCMS World Mission to carry out mission work in another country, The Gambia. Through this partnership, Rev. Samuel W. Essien was sent in 2001 as an Alliance missionary to a group of 256 Christians representing four preaching stations in that country. The first church building was dedicated, and the first Baptisms of 104 people and confirmations of 84 people were celebrated in May 2002. Alliance missionary Rev. Obot Ite has been serving in Jamaica since 2008, where he is shepherding the congregation of St. Andrews Lutheran Church and reaching out to local families and children through relationships in schools and contacts gained through the local branch of Lutheran Hour Ministries.

For more information, go to the LCN's website <http://lutheranchurchnigeria.org>  
Funding will be used for:

Funding received from LCMS World Mission this year will be used for salaries of the seminary staff, food, materials, medical supplies and other general expenses.

Prayer needs:

- Pray for the students as they actively participate in outreach in their communities so that their training is not only with words, but by doing.
- Pray for the students that travel to Nigeria from other countries, that they will be able to handle being away from home for long periods of time.
- Pray for the women of the local congregations, that they can continue to support the seminary students by providing food.



**Nigeria Rector**



**Nigeria Students And Staff**



**Nigeria Students In Suits**