

# LB INTERNATIONAL MISSION

DAN VENBERG

The mission of LBIM is to glorify God as we serve with the Church of the Lutheran Brethren to make disciples of Jesus Christ among the nations. Following is a report of our status and future vision.



## CHINA

After 23 years of service, **Joel and Liz Christenson** (*pictured below*) are retiring from field ministry. Joel is transitioning into a role as professor of mission at Lutheran Brethren Seminary, and Liz will be serving LBIM on a volunteer basis, as a resource person for our field missionaries in matters of missionary family care.



### Future vision/plans:

While we are not likely to send more missionaries to China in the foreseeable future, we are exploring options for an ongoing support of Chinese mission and missionaries.



## CHAD

We are partnering with the Chadian national Church to support missionary teams that live in community among the Bagirmi, Bilala and Fulbe people groups for the sake of the gospel. We currently have seven missionary units.



**Paul and Teresa Szobody** serve in a teaching and mentoring ministry in Aderé, where they equip Chadian LB ministry team partners. To date, five student families have graduated from this school. Two new families will commence their training in September 2022.

**Nathanael and Carrie Szobody** live in Boudamasa, among the resident Bagirmi population. Along with Chadian partners, they have engaged in a multi-faceted ministry approach, including a community **elementary school** (*pictured below*), a Bible storying project and Scripture translation.

**Dave and Sonja Narvesen** live and minister in the Fulbe community of Doh. Sonja, a nurse, is actively engaged in sharing the love of Christ through community health care. Dave is engaged in relational ministry in the community and increasingly active in oral Bible storying and developing a French language teaching ministry.

**Jeremy and Sallee Stanton** play a vital support role in managing the Welcome Center, a guest house and conference center in Ndjamena, that serves as a place of rest and renewal for our missionaries. They also are responsible for all the administration necessary to enable our missionaries to serve in the country.

**Matt and Christina Smith** are preparing to deploy to Chad in September 2022. Matt just completed a CTS in mission at LBS, and continues to make great progress recovering from a broken spine resulting from a motorcycle accident in France during language learning in 2020.

**Daniel and Nancy Wen-Wu** are seconded to LBIM-Chad by the LB Church of Taiwan. They have been assigned to the Bilala team. Upon completion of house construction, they will move to Bokoro, where they will be working alongside our Chadian partners there.

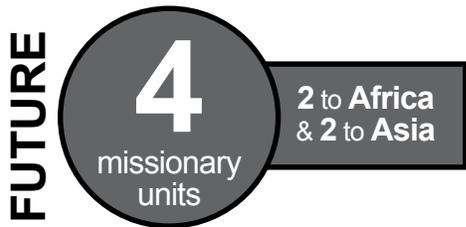
**Dan and Claire Rose** are our newest LBIM missionaries called to Chad. They have been in France this past year, learning French. They will deploy to Chad in June 2022.

### Future vision/plans:

We will continue to invest in our partnership with the Chadian LB Church in mission, believing that together we can better serve our Lord's mission in that context.

Education ministry is proving to be an excellent platform for ministering the gospel among the unreached people groups of Chad. We are prayerfully considering how we might expand this ministry among all the people groups in which we serve.

We are anticipating the addition of another unit from our Taiwan sister Church in the coming year (David and Nancy Kuan-Chang), as well as one more LBIM missionary unit in 2023.



## JAPAN

Currently, there are 28 LB congregations in Japan, and one LBIM missionary unit. We are in the process of evaluating our mission partnership with the JLBC, endeavoring towards an interdependent partnership that fosters a focus on outreach and evangelism.



**Dean and Linda Bengtson** serve in Ishinomaki. They facilitate concerts, cooking classes, and Bible studies at their House of Hope as a platform for outreach. In March 2022, they were joined by pastor Haruya, who has accepted a call to serve as a church planting pastor alongside Dean and Linda. This is an encouragement to LBIM and to the JLBC, as there has not been a new Japanese LB church plant in 20 years.

### Future vision/plans:

Japan remains one of the most unreached places in the world, with less than 1% of the population professing Christ.

Through ongoing communication with JLBC President Wakamatsu, church leaders, and LBIM-Japan missionaries, it is evident that there is a mutual desire to move forward with a mission partnership. A field visit to process this more in depth is an important next step.

**Pastor Paul Fraser and his wife Alexa** have expressed a sense of calling to serve in Japan. They are currently serving Rock of Ages LBC in Seattle, shadowing Roger and Sue Olson in their ministry to Japanese students. This experience will better equip them for ministry in Japan if that door is opened to them.

## TAIWAN

LBIM works in Taiwan to facilitate outreach and church planting among the unreached. There are currently 17 LB congregations on the island, and three LBIM units serving.



**Mike and Delores Kittelson** (pictured below) live in the city of Hsinchu and have an active discipling ministry among the Hakka people. The Kittelsons will be **retiring** from the field in December 2022. We appreciate your prayers for them as they serve out the remainder of this year, that they will finish well and that their ministry will continue to bear fruit into the future.



**Ethan and Sandy Christofferson** live in Qionglin where they are focused on relational evangelism. Ethan is also an active researcher and teacher at the China Lutheran Seminary in Hsinchu.

**Ben and Sara Hosch** and their children have recently transitioned to a new home in Taichung, where they are partnering with a small LB congregation for the purpose of community outreach.

### Future vision/plans:

I am eager to get to Taiwan to familiarize myself more with this field. I am excited about the growing vision and interest on the part of the CLBC (Chinese Lutheran

Brethren Church) to engage in cross-cultural mission, as is evidenced by their support and commissioning of missionaries to Chad.

## THE REST OF THE TEAM

We are blessed to have excellent office and support staff that serve our missionaries:

- Cathy Barlow (full-time) – LBIM’s Administrative Assistant
- Randy and Betsy Mortenson (part-time) – Missionary Care for our Asia staff
- Chris and Suzanne Priestaf (part-time) – Missionary Care for our Africa staff
- Liz Christenson (volunteer) – Missionary Family Care resource person
- Danny Bronson (volunteer) – Chad field assistance
- Gaylan and Joy Mathiesen (volunteer) – Daily Prayer Notes

## CONCLUSION

As we look to the future, I am full of anticipation of how God will continue to work through the global CLB to bring the message of Christ to the nations. By the grace of God, LBIM’s strategic directions going forward include:

1. **Sustaining support** of our current field missionaries, and an addition of four new missionary units to LBIM staff: two in Africa, and two in Asia.
2. **Develop and expand holistic ministry platforms** in our Chad, Japan, and Taiwan fields to foster increased disciple-making opportunities.
3. **Grow our interdependence** with our international sister synods in disciple-making partnerships.

Thank you for your prayers as we continue to take steps of faith in this process, trusting in our Lord to lead and direct.

*Dan Venberg serves the Church of the Lutheran Brethren as Director of International Mission.*