

## Theologians Without Borders - Blessed to be a Blessing Testimonies & Stories

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The NALC and **China Service Ventures** partnered to send Jim and Carolyn Nestingen to Wuhan, in Hubei Province (next to Hunan), China, as part of the Theologians Without Borders

program. These two provinces are where Lutherans started work more than 100 years ago, and they are among the poorest areas of the whole country of China.

Jim taught an intensive two-week course on Luther's Small Catechism as a document for mission, "to give an account of the hope that is within us." Carolyn taught English both in and outside of the classroom. Both were involved at in coursework at the seminary in Wuhan, an industrial center of 10 million people on the Yangtze River. Classes are held in the building where Paul Martinson went to school, and where he and his family endured the first years of World War II. After such an amazing experience, they are looking forward to future possibilities. To hear stories of faith and kingdom moments, please do not hesitate to visit their blog: <http://www.chinaforcarolyn.blogspot.com>.

## From Texas to Ethiopia – A Story of Grace

Almost everywhere Pastor Mark Braaten went in Ethiopia, he had followers. Maybe it was his light-colored skin that stood out in the African country or the fact that he came from the United States to this country.

Whatever the reason, the children seemed enthralled with the Tyler, Texas, pastor, and the adults expressed much appreciation for his time there. For Pastor Braaten, though, the appreciation went both ways.

“It’s really a nice reciprocal relationship,” he said. “In our country we have some finances and we have teaching opportunities we can share with the Ethiopians. Their church is exploding with growth. They cannot keep up with the growth. ... They can’t keep up with buildings. They have something like one pastor for every 30,000 members, and so when I was there I was clear, ‘I am here to teach you. I’m also a student. Tell me how to do evangelism and outreach because you folks obviously know how to do something we don’t.’”

Pastor Braaten, senior pastor at Our Saviour’s Lutheran Church in Tyler, spent two weeks in Ethiopia last month.

During his time there, he conducted seminars about the Biblical book of Revelation for pastors and church leaders in two cities, Gimbichu and Dessie.

In addition to the full-day seminars, he preached about Revelation on two Sundays at a church in each city. The response, he said, was incredible.

“No one is teaching Revelation over there,” said Braaten, who studied the book extensively while earning a doctorate. “They said they haven’t had a Revelation scholar for 20 years.”

He said Revelation is God’s word of grace and deliverance found in the cross. Revelation shows that God will deliver His creation and destroy the destroyers of the Earth.

“Primarily it’s a book of hope and promise,” he said. “And to help people see that is great fun.”

Written by Emily Guevara and originally published in the *Tyler Morning Telegraph*.

