

Asia Ablaze! Newsletter

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Rev. John Mehl

Jesus is the Reason

A special Christmas message from LCMS World Mission Asia Regional Director, Rev. John Mehl.

This is such a busy time of year for everyone. With each year the chaos of Christmas only seems to increase. We groan about commercialism. Family celebrations are complicated with travel, large

Philippines Ablaze!

Reconciliation and Unity in the LCP

A Dialogue of Reconciliation was held by the Lutheran Church in the Philippines (LCP) from Nov. 22–24 in Manila. The Dialogue was conducted under the auspices of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the LCMS with the aim of bringing together the two groups in the Church which separated in 1993. The meetings were attended by representatives from both groups, along with LWF and LCMS representatives.

The dialogue was surrounded by worship and prayer and was conducted in a spirit of harmony and mutual respect. Discussions were frank and honest. Participants were aware of a long and troubled past and a history of legal action, but met with the determination under God to bring about reconciliation.

The participants set themselves a single goal which was to bring about reconciliation leading to the unity of the LCP. To that end they produced a series of documents which addressed a list of major concerns and issues which they believed hindered reconciliation.

Basic to the process was the drawing up and signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the two groups in reference to actions before the Supreme Court. It was a highly significant moment on Saturday morning, November 24, when both parties agreed to the MOU.

A copy of the MOU is available at the Philippines Asia Ablaze!

Dec. 2007 Extras page at:

www.asiaablaze.org/extra.html

In order to promote the process of reconciliation the participants made recommendations along with specific assignments and benchmarks. These are all anticipatory of a joint national convention to be held in the latter part of 2008. The leadership committed itself to ensuring that this would happen.

The representatives of the LWF and LCMS shared the joy of the participants at the agreement that was reached and pledged themselves to continue supporting the process of reconciliation in the Lutheran Church in the Philippines.

Overwhelming Joy in the LCP

There is overwhelming joy among pastors and members of the Lutheran Church in the Philippines (LCP) upon learn-



Presidents Lasegan & Cerdenola sign the MOU.

ing the result of the Nov. 22-24 dialogue for reconciliation. On Dec. 6 a joint service was attended by more than 200 pastors, layleaders and members of congregations from Baguio, La Trinidad, Sablan and the mining areas. The service started with a reading of the MOU signed on November 24. Then the two leaders of the LCP, President Benjamin Lasegan and President James Cerdenola, repented, confessed and asked for forgiveness for their part in the conflict within the church. Many attendees shed tears during the service. The two presidents have also met together with leaders and pastors of the North Highland District to make plans for the healing process. In late December the board of directors for the two groups in the Mindanao District also plan to meet to discuss how to eradicate the barriers and obstacles that have divided them for years.

Christmas Greetings

meals and special foods. Obtaining the proper gifts is a challenge, even as we say it's the thought that counts. Jesus' birthday stirs things up, doesn't it?

But hasn't Jesus caused a stir ever since his birth? Pregnant Mary comes into Bethlehem with no place to stay. Shepherds minding their own business are shocked to their toes by angels. Magi come. Herod tries to kill Jesus. Mary, Jo-

seph, and Jesus escape to Egypt.

As an adult, Jesus caused a stir with his teaching, healing, and raising people from the dead. Things really became chaotic with his trial, death, and resurrection. Today, Jesus continues to stir up the world with the forgiveness he freely offers. "Peace on earth, good will toward men" from God is Jesus' birthday gift to us.

In the account of the outward chaos of Jesus' infancy, we read this simple phrase, "Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart" (Luke 2). In the midst of this busy Christmas season, we, like Mary, can treasure and ponder the eternal wonder of Christmas chaos and the love of God we find in the baby Jesus.

May God richly bless all our Christmas celebrations!

Papua New Guinea Ablaze!

Stepping Forward in HIV Action

HIV initiatives have moved forward with vigor over the past few months in Wapenamanda District, Papua New Guinea, led by LCMS World Mission personnel, with the Gutnius Lutheran Church HIV Coordinator, Mr Pinamai Rakapani, and Wapenamanda District AIDS Coordinator, Mr Kia Mapiso. In addition, Linda Davis, LCMS World Mission Volunteer and LDA Deaconess Intern, has joined the PNG LCMS team to work in HIV endeavors.

Some highlights of these initiatives include:

- A Voluntary Counseling and Testing Center at Immanuel Lutheran Hospital.
- LCMS volunteer Liz Neuf led a counseling training session for 20 volunteers.
- Testing and treatment for pregnant mothers is available at Immanuel Lutheran Hospital to diminish mother to child transmission of HIV.
- A Counseling Workshop for

25 was coordinated by Liz Neuf in conjunction with the Provincial AIDS Council.

- World AIDS Day was commemorated as a march to "Stop AIDS: Keep the Promise." 150 joined the 5 km march, many in red shirts, and more than 700 gathered in the Kumbas market for the program.

The challenge is still great as the behaviors which keep the doors of HIV transmission open have not perceptibly changed and continue to be widespread. In fact, a recent newscast for PNG reported that HIV transmission within marriage is now the most common mode of HIV transmission within the country.

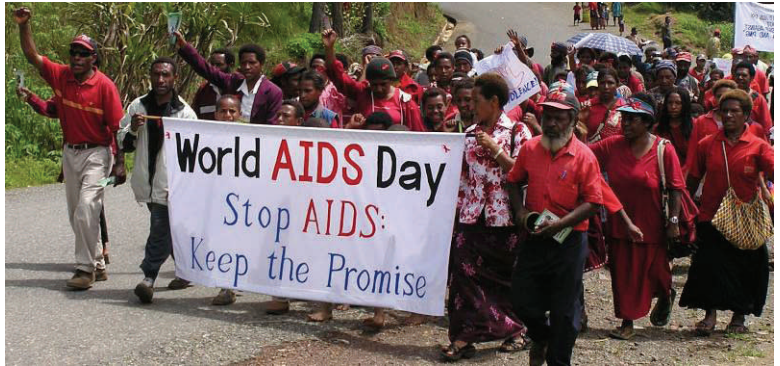
Just as significant, attitudes towards those with HIV or at high risk of acquiring HIV are only slowly shifting. "It's their worry, their sin." The church

has not yet emerged as a clarion voice in the HIV complex to counter these debilitating attitudes with words of informed grace. At times, the church even seems unaware that its voice and presence are needed in the crisis HIV brings to life.

On Dec. 6, 300 participants of the Enga Student Christian Association's annual camp were challenged by Anton Lutz, LCMS World Mission volunteer, to rise above the ignorance, apathy, inaction,

and isolationism surrounding AIDS. After the camp, one participant asked, "Why didn't we ever hear this before?" He was waiting for this personal call to love, faithfulness, and action in the face of AIDS.

The crisis of HIV is a channel through which God will make Himself known to many. Please pray for the Papua New Guinea LCMS team as they seek to be a part of that outflow of grace and respond to others with the love God has shown to us in Christ.



More than 150 participants take part in the World AIDS Day march from Mambis to Kumbas

Cambodia Ablaze!

On Nov. 30 the Open Gate Christian Fellowship Daycare celebrated Christmas with a presentation by the children, part of which was written by LCMS World Mission missionary Jeanette Groth. The children told and re-enacted the Christmas narrative for their parents and other guests on the last morning of classes before the Christmas break. At the end of the event each of the children received a Christmas coloring book and a box of crayons. Smiles were everywhere, on both parents' and children's faces as they sang and told of Jesus' birth.

From Dec. 6-8 a group of 20 women from provinces around

and in the cities of Sihanoukville, Siem Reap, Phnom Penh, and Battambang, gathered at Sihanoukville for some community health training. The women were selected by their pastors as leaders in their churches and communities. A team of LCMS health professionals consisting of Dr. John Lautenschlager from the U.S., missionary Rita Nickel, RN, from Turkey, Eileen Turner, long term missionary and LPN in Cambodia, and Aimee Cima, an American nutritionist from Vietnam, led sessions to train the women in the knowledge of human physiology and good health practices. Under the guidance and direction of Ei-

leen Turner these women will then take what they have learned and in turn teach others in their churches and communities. As these women work with groups and individuals from their communities, they will have opportunity to share both the compassion of Christ for each individual as well as a Gospel message – indeed, they are showing the love of Christ to their communities!

It was exciting to see the women interact with each other, as many of them had never met prior to this workshop. They shared much



Ladies practice washing hands during a recent community health training.

about their own churches and lives with each other. A great spirit of fellowship developed among the entire group as the workshop progressed.

Happenings

Representatives from Korea and Philippines Appointed at Recent ILC Conference

Church leaders, bishops, and presidents from 27 Lutheran churches met in Accra, Ghana during the last week in September at the 22nd conference of the International Lutheran Council (ILC). Rev. Dr. Hyun-Sup Um and the Lutheran Church in Korea were elected to represent East Asia, and Rev. James D. Cerdeñola and The Lutheran Church in the Philippines were elected to represent Southeast Asia on the executive committee of



Rev. Dr. Um



Rev. Cerdenola

the ILC.

The ILC is a worldwide association of established confessional Lutheran church bodies which proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ on the basis of an unconditional commitment to the Holy Scriptures as the inspired and infallible Word of God, and to the

Lutheran Confessions contained in the Book of Concord as the true and faithful exposition of the Word of God.

Blanke Presents Ph.D. Dissertation

This past summer on July 27, Rev. Jonathan Blanke, LCMS missionary at Japan Lutheran College in Tokyo, Japan, presented his Ph.D. dissertation forum at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis. The title of the dissertation is "A Household to Be Gathered: The Anointing at Bethany and the Day of

Jesus' Death in the Gospel according to John." The Ph.D. dissertation forum constitutes the final chapter of all work toward a Ph.D. candidate's dissertation, and means that all work on the Ph.D. is now officially completed. Since the dissertation forum overlapped with the Blankes' term of home service this past summer, his wife Juli was able to attend as well. Jonathan is grateful for the support of family, friends, and colleagues.



Rev. Dr. Blanke

Hong Kong Ablaze!

Youth "in the Game" in Hong Kong

On Nov. 3 Hong Kong International School (HKIS) hosted the 4th annual Christian Youth Conference (CYC) under the theme "The Game: Train, Run, Win" based upon Paul's challenge to the Christian community to enter into training for the spiritual readiness in the "race" of the spiritual life (2 Corinthians 9:24). Partnering with Gateway Ministry, the vision was to equip young people for the unique opportunity of witnessing to Christ in Asia, especially with the coming 2008 Olympic Games in China.

A diverse group of 202 Hong Kong students ages 11-18 gathered from 24 different churches to celebrate faith in Jesus with exuberance and joy while being challenged to live that faith actively engaged in the world. While the students represented 16 different schools, 75% of those registered attend HKIS.

The conference included two "main events" and two "break-out sessions" with a wide range of topics. Dozens of student

leaders assisted at the event as MC's, musicians, dancers, ushers and AV production. Highlights from the conference can be seen at www.cyc.hk.

New English Center Opens

The Lutheran Church—Hong Kong Synod (LC-HKS) recently established the Concordia English Gospel Center which, together with the Holy Word Lutheran Church, will start conducting Sunday English Services in Hong Kong beginning in Jan. 2008. Discussions are underway for English teachers from LCMS World Mission to participate in this project. Sunday English Services will be provided to the English speaking residents and the Gospel will also be preached through various English programs for new immigrants.

LC-HKS Collaborates with Zhongshan City Social Services

The Social Service Department of the LC-HKS is now working together with the Social Service Department of Zhongshan City, China to provide social services for Zhong-

shan residents. The inauguration ceremony of the partnership was officiated by government officials of Zhongshan City and representatives from the LC-HKS on Nov 28.

PLI International—Hong Kong

"Very helpful" and "extremely practical!" "Now I know why I do the things I do." These were just some of the comments made at the end of this year's Pastoral Leadership Institute (PLI) International—Hong Kong training. The meeting, held in Shatin, New Territories, Nov 4-7 2007, included the second year Lutheran Church Hong Kong Synod PLI class (15 students) as well as a new first year class (6 students). Fall 2006 was the first year and so the expansion to a second year and plans for year three and four are a positive sign of the usefulness of the program. This year was also unique in that PLI Hong Kong added a new dimension of an LCMS



PLI Hong Kong training participants

World Mission missionary class – seven career missionaries in all. Fungchatou Lo of LCMS-WM said of the training, "We learned about value clarification and goal setting. We also developed strategies to accomplish the tasks assigned to us in each of our ministries."

The Littlest Part Makes a Big Difference

The high school youth group of Church of All Nations performed the chancel drama, *The Littlest Part*, in November to grade 3-5 students at Hong Kong International School. The drama carried the simple message to the children that each of us, no matter how small and seemingly unimportant, are essential in the body of Christ. The children, parents, and teachers loved the production!

China Ablaze!

CISS Celebrates Two New Facilities

More than 1,000 students, parents, guests and friends of the Concordia International School Shanghai (CISS) gathered on Dec. 4 at Concordia's Jinqiao, Pudong, campus as Head of School Dr. James Koerschen officially opened the Dedication Ceremony for two new facilities: the David F. Rittmann Fine Arts Center (affectionately known as the "Rittmann Center") and the Elementary School building.

The event began in CISS's High School gymnasium early Tuesday morning. Later as attendees moved outdoors for the official ribbon cuttings and fireworks, there was more en-



Rittmann Center ribbon cutting with Mrs. Doris Rittmann and CISS Board President, Mr. Fred Voigtmann

tertainment from Concordia's Middle School band and the Elementary School Orff Band.

The morning celebrations were concluded with an official Groundbreaking Ceremony for CISS's new High School facility, due to begin construction as the CISS Phase IV in June 2008. Dr. Koerschen offered a blessing and word of prayer before "turning the dirt" together with CISS Board President, Frederik Voigtmann; CISS High School Principal, Mr. David Harris; and Concordia students Jasen Tjahjadi (Grade 10) and Jane Chow (Grade 8). Expectations are that Jane will be the first Concordia student to have attended CISS from Kindergarten through Grade 12 when she

graduates in 2012.

The Phase IV development will feature state-of-the-art classrooms and laboratories as well as a gymnasium. The four-to-six story structure, the final building for the CISS campus, is currently in the design phase. Planning is exciting as CISS envisions a physical structure that will meet student needs for years to come.

An evening worship service and reception saw the CISS community come together once again for a first time performance in the new Rittmann Theatre. The service was one of praise and thanksgiving, dedicating the new CISS facilities to the glory of God and the future proclamation of the gospel. Rev. Dr. Donald Muchow, LCMS board chairman, challenged attendees in his sermon to think beyond "seating capacity" and to focus instead on "sending capacity" as it relates to the Lord's mission for CISS.

CISS was founded in 1998 with only 22 students and 14 faculty members in what was then a new section in Shanghai – the residential Jinqiao neighborhood of Pudong. Today, more than 1,000 students representing nearly 30 different passports, taught by more than 100 teachers in four buildings, comprises CISS. This academic year CISS celebrates its seventh graduating class, with graduates enrolled in the world's finest universities.

For more photos highlighting the two new CISS facilities, visit the China Asia Ablaze! Extras at

www.asiaablaze.org/extra.html

MOST Ministries Eye Clinic in Yunnan

On Nov. 3, 20 volunteers from the United States, Canada, and India came to Yunnan province in China to implement an eyeglass clinic. The group was organized by MOST Ministries (Mission Opportunities Short Term), which is based in the United States and sends service teams around the world. Working with local government partners, the MOST team completed five days of clinics. Clinics have five stations: a medical station for examining eye health, distance sight check, near sight check, glass dispensing, and glass fitting. In five days, the 20 volunteers helped 1,300 villagers and dispensed over 1,500 eyeglasses (villagers who need glasses for reading and distance receive one pair for each)!

The clinics were conducted in an area where most people are not able to afford a doctor's visit. Some of the recipients were elderly people who had not seen well for many years. Upon receiving their glasses they were able to see clearly their grandchildren's smiles for the first time. Other recipients were school children who may now have a better chance of success in their studies, as most classroom learning requires seeing the blackboard.

Because interpretation assistance was needed, LCMS long-term volunteer English teachers at Qujing Teacher's University arranged for their English major students to join the clinics and assist with interpreting. For many of these students, this was the first time they have taken part in a service activity. They loved the



A villager shows off his new eyeglasses after attending a MOST Ministries eye clinic.

experience and are looking forward to more opportunities to serve in the future.

Yunnan Education Project

High School Students from Concordia International School Shanghai (CISS) take an annual week-long trip every fall, usually in China or surrounding countries, to gain a lifetime experience unlike any other called "Interim." In September a group of 24 traveled to Gan La Ban village in Lincang to work on the well-known Yunnan water project as part of the CISS Yunnan Education Program, in collaboration with the Concordia Welfare and Education Foundation (CWEF). Team members worked in Gan La Ban village to set up a drinking water system for residents.

For more details and photos from the Yunnan trip, including journal excerpts from Ms. Jen Hsu (one of the participants), visit the China Asia Ablaze! Extras - www.asiaablaze.org/extra.html



CISS students work on setting up a clean drinking water system as part of the Yunnan Education Project

Indonesia Ablaze!

Outreach Continues at UPH

Matt Myers, a Lutheran International Educator teaching at Universitas Pelita Harapan (UPH) in Jakarta, Indonesia, recently taught Christian doctrine to a class of English majors at the school. The class included a Service Learning component where students were able to express their faith through action by sharing their skills in English with some less fortunate children at a local school. They also studied basic Christian doctrine as well as the book of John in detail. There were several Buddhists and one person from another faith in the class.

About the class and service experience, one student wrote, "I knew how to pray, how to confess my sin, and how to sing to God. Still, I had some doubts. Reading the book of John was the first

experience for me to read a book from the Bible. All of that guilt [in me] started to change because my views were transformed. God has revealed his way of salvation to me."

Another wrote, "What I learned from the trip to the school was patience. For me, teaching the children needed a lot of patience and compassion. Just like Jesus. He had great patience for many people who tried to betray, deny and even kill Him. But still, His compassion and forgiveness are with us always. He even sent His Holy Spirit for us. His teaching of 'giving to the poor' is something that we can hold on to. And finally, I learned to 'give thanks always.' Looking at our school and university condition, we have been so blessed."

And a third had this to say, "I learned that for other religions 'Do' means to do your work in this life, while for Christians 'Done' means it has all been done by Jesus on the cross."

New Workers in Aceh

A team of workers is beginning to develop in Aceh with the addition of a long term volunteer and a new career family.

Donna Meyer recently arrived in Aceh after serving as a long term volunteer in Guinea, West Africa for three years. Her responsibilities include mentoring English teachers and bi-lingual math and science teachers, and providing English classes for teachers at government junior high school #6 (SMPN6) in Banda Aceh. SMPN6 is one of the top junior high schools in the district. Donna has committed to working in Aceh for at least one year.

Dr. Fungchatou Lo has been called to be the new Strategic Developer for Aceh and will especially focus on expanding the rehabilitation and development work that the LCMS is doing in areas where peo-



Donna Meyer with SMPN6 Principal Pak Nurzal

ple are still recovering from the effects of the December 2004 tsunami. His wife, Kalia, an experienced teacher, will be home schooling their 10 year old daughter, Gaozong and assisting with some education projects when possible.

The addition of these new team members will significantly increase the LCMS involvement in the Aceh community, enhance the image of the LCMS as a long term partner, and increase the number of contacts that can be made in the community.

Thailand Ablaze!

Outreach in Southern Thailand

In September, Phang Nga province, Southern Thailand was set *Ablaze!* when an LCMS World Mission team visited six local schools and a Lutheran Church there. On this trip the team met with 339 students and their teachers through English as a Second Language (ESL) Camps and one Church Camp, where only a small portion of the children there were committed Christians.

In cooperation with the Concordia Welfare and Education Foundation-Thailand (CWEFT), the LCMS World Mission team conducted ESL workshops as well as led games and songs for the kids.

Mudslide Victims Continue to Receive Long-term Relief

Exciting things are happening in Uttaradit province, Northern Thailand. Some years ago, mudslides brought this town to its knees as many lost their lives due to this natural disaster. CWEFT reached out to the victims who were lost and forlorn via relief items and educational scholarships. In addition to this immediate relief, CWEFT and LCMS World Mission are also committed to providing long-term relief to the area. In October, a team from CWEFT and LCMS World Mission contacted more than 525 school children and their teachers in four schools, all of whom are non-Christians. Throughout the trip, the team reached out to the children,

teachers, and staff with the Gospel of Jesus and the Good News of Salvation through Him alone.

Concordia Daycare Children Enjoy Special Party

The children at the Concordia Daycare Center in Bang Na were treated to a special "Love & Fun Party" on Nov. 30, sponsored by a local German businessman. The daycare targets needy and at-risk children from the nearby slum community by providing child care through clothing, feeding, bathing, and educating children who have little else. On this particular day, things were blazing with God's love as they sang Christian songs and enjoyed special foods and friendships



LCMS & CWEFT team members meet with school children on a recent trip to Northern Thailand

from the Concordia Welfare and Education Foundation - Thailand (CWEFT) and LCMS World Mission teams, as well as special visitors who donated many of the supplies for that day. While most of the children are not Christian, they are continually being reached with the message of God's love and sacrifice for them.

Korea Ablaze!

Lutheran Church in Korea Holds 37th Annual General Assembly

The Lutheran Church in Korea (LCK) convened its 37th annual General Assembly under the leadership of President Rev. Hyun-Sub UM from Oct. 4-5 at Nambu Lutheran Church in Seoul. Participants were from local congregations, church institutions, and associations, as well as delegates from partner churches in the United States and Germany. In May of 2007, the LCK decided to actively participate in the *Ablaze!* mission movement. So there was special interest in a presentation about *Ablaze!* by Rev. Patrick O'Neal, LCMS World Mission. Mr. Matt Wasmund (LCMS WM) traveled from Taiwan to give a presentation that introduced how the LCK might utilize short-term and long-term volunteer missionaries in helping to carry out the vision of *Ablaze!*

Also reported was the completion of the planning stage for the new Luther Building in Seoul and the start of the construction work in the beginning of 2008. The building will have 5 basement floors and 24 above-ground floors with a total space of about

36,000 square meters and is expected to become the foundation for a new future of the LCK.

In 2008 the LCK will celebrate the 50th anniversary of Lutheran work in Korea which was begun by LCMS missionaries in 1958. Preparations for a large-scale commemoration are well under way, receiving keen interest by the Korean church.

LCK Women's Association Supports Scholarships for Luther University/Seminary

On Oct. 9, the LCK Women's Association held its annual autumn fundraising bazaar. The bazaar was supported by women's groups in local congregations. The Women's Association collected money from the bazaar, donations, and other revenue for scholarships at Luther University/Seminary. Luther University is the only fully accredited Lutheran University in Asia and trains future church workers and pastors. Due to the active role of newly elected Women's Association President Gweon and the new members of LCK Board of Directors, the bazaar was an opportunity for the Women's Association to present its activities within LCK and was well received.

LCK Men's Association Holds Conference

The LCK Men's Association held a conference in September. Some 70 participants attended the two-day-conference where their faith was strengthened through presentations, dialogue, singing, and prayer meetings.

On the second day, the LCK "Committee on Worship Service" organized presentations on "Lutheran Worship Service", to which members of the Women's Association were also invited. The presentations helped participants to appreciate the traditional Lutheran liturgy.

Sharing Human Resources to Further Ablaze!

In October and November LCMS World Mission personnel from St. Louis, Taiwan, and Hong Kong visited the Lutheran Church in Korea (LCK) to explore ways that the LCMS can share the resource of people to further the *Ablaze!* goal of sharing the Gospel. This can happen through volunteer missionaries, theological educators, and professional educators coming from the LCMS to work alongside LCK congregations and Luther University/



General assembly participants

Seminary (LTU). As a result of these meetings, three short-term LCMS missionaries have been recruited to serve as English teachers at a Bible-based English Camp planned and hosted by LTU Jan. 7-25, 2008. The details are also being finalized for two more volunteers to work in two LCK congregations this April as they host an after-school English program with an eye toward making new Gospel contacts in their surrounding communities.

With 300 students and 15 full-time teachers LTU is the only Lutheran school that offers bachelors and masters degrees in Korea. God opened a major unexpected door for them last year when the government approved for the school to receive 200 new students each year. Previously it was restricted to 50 because of population controls in the Seoul area.

Vietnam Ablaze!

Vietnam Summit in Orange, California

On Nov. 19, many of the various LCMS related groups of individuals, congregations and organizations who are presently working in Vietnam met together for the first time in the first "Vietnam Summit" at St. John's Lutheran church in Orange, CA. Present were representatives from LCMS World Mission, Lutheran Hour Ministries, Lutheran Heritage, Lutherans in Medical Missions, the Luther Institute of South East Asia,

Friends of Vietnam Mission Society, Pastoral Leadership Institute (PLI), the Northwest District, six different Vietnamese congregations and other congregations and supporters of the work.

The purpose of the meeting was for everyone to share what they were doing and to see if there was the will and a way to work together more closely in the future. St. John's, represented by Pastor Tim Klinkenberg, graciously hosted the event which Pastors Luc Nguyen and Ted Engelbrecht

organized. Dr. Norb Oesch of PLI outlined the history of the early work and each organization or group then shared what they were doing in short presentations. LCMS Regional Director for Asia, Rev. John Mehl, then led everyone in discussions in which a clear goal was decided on and the decision made to meet again in February to hammer out a joint strategy for work.



Participants at the recent Vietnam Summit in California

Rev. Ron Pfluger of Bellavista Lutheran and a member of the Friends of Vietnam Mission Society was made co-coordinator of the 'joint mission' project along with Rev. Luc Nguyen.

India & Sri Lanka Ablaze!

New President for Indian Church

The India Evangelical Lutheran Church had court-conducted elections in August, and Rev. J. Samuel was elected President. All the court challenges to the election process have been withdrawn, and the full administration is able to function at all levels.

Upgrading of Indian Seminary

The 78-year old Concordia Seminary, Nagercoil, India has received permission from its accrediting association to add a BD-level English-medium program. Till now, the seminary was authorized only to offer regional language courses for high school graduates. Now they can provide a degree for college graduates. The new program will begin in June 2008. Several other Lutheran churches and non-Lutheran churches around the country have expressed interest in sending their stu-

dents for Confessional Lutheran training now that it is available in English.

Probationers-as-Church Planters

A new set of graduates of Concordia Seminary, Nagercoil, have been assigned unchurched areas to carry out church planting. After three years devoted to this evangelistic ministry, the deaconess and pastoral candidates will be consecrated/ordained. Over the past six years of this program, God has raised up dozens of new congregations. The great need now is to purchase sites for these new believers to erect a public worship place.

Mission Stations in Sri Lanka

The twelve students in the informal seminary of the Lanka Lutheran Church will receive their ordination in



New Concordia Seminary graduates now serving as probationers-as-church planters

Feb. 2008. They have had theological training along with practical church planting experience over the past four years. The great need now is for "Mission Stations" to be constructed on the far-flung tea plantations where the men have been serving. The building design is a parsonage-cum-community hall where worship, education, pre-school, tutoring, etc. can be conducted. One congregation, Mt. Olive of Austin Texas, has come for-

ward to provide three of the stations, at \$15,000 each, as their contribution to the "Fan into Flame" program over the next three years.

Tent-Making Ministry in Sri Lanka

When twelve young men are ordained as pastors of the Lanka Lutheran Church (LLC) in Feb. 2008, they will go off their seminary stipend and move into a "tent-making" model of self-supporting ministry. These twelve soon-to-be graduates of the LLC seminary are currently being trained in micro-business so that their wives can supplement the family income when they no longer receive their seminary stipend. This is important as the workers on the tea plantations of central Sri Lanka live on daily wages with little to spare for supporting a pastor.

Teaching Opportunities in Asia

This is the time of year when International Schools begin to hire teachers for the next school year. Below are links to four great Christian schools in Asia with LCMS connections. Please pass this information on to Christian teachers you know who might be open to God's Call to Asia.

Hong Kong International School
https://jobs.hkis.edu.hk/online/new_application.asp

Seoul Foreign School—Seoul, Korea
<http://www.sfs.or.kr/aboutSFS/employment/position.html>

Concordia International School-Shanghai
http://www.ciss.com.cn/Employment/Job_Posting

Sekolah Pelita Harapan schools in Indonesia.
<http://www.sph.edu/>

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