

Asia Ablaze! Newsletter

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TAIWAN ABLAZE!

On Monday, November 29, the China Evangelical Lutheran Church (CELC) elected a new Executive Committee at its annual General Conference. Rev. Andrew Miao was elected president. Executive Committee members include Rev. Jen-Jhu Ho, Rev. Bo-jiang Zhu, Rev. Alexander Wu, Rev. John Wan, Rev. Aaron Chu, Rev. Luther Jen, Rev. Stephen Wang, and Mr. Ji-liang Dong.

President Miao has been the pastor of Eternal Life Lutheran church in Taipei, Taiwan for the past 18 years. Besides his ministry as pastor of a thriving congregation, supervising and providing pastors for area churches, his mission heart has led him to plant churches in the Taipei area, visit China for theological training, and spearhead an effort for the entire Eternal Life congregation to be involved in church planting in the Northern Shan State of Myanmar. Eternal Life Church, together with support from Truth Lutheran Church, also in Taipei, has established a preaching station with word and sacrament ministry as well as human care outreach to the Chinese-speaking people in Northern Burma. They have sent a team of members each summer for the past three years to work with the local people and to reach out to them with God's love.

Keep President Miao and the rest of the new leaders of the CELC in prayer as they forge forward in the Great Commission to spread the Gospel in the Chinese world!

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

Jesus is coming! In the Biblical story of Christ's birth we see a lot of people "coming." Joseph and Mary come to Bethlehem. Shepherds come to worship the baby Jesus. And even magi—or wise men—come. The magi are a little mysterious because we know so little about them. They came from the East guided by a star that "they had seen at its rising." (Matt 2:9) They brought gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. These "wise men" were not Hebrews like the shepherds, and yet they came and worshipped Jesus. The prophet Isaiah foretold of this Messiah for all nations when he wrote, "And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising." (Is. 60:3) And then the magi disappeared back to their homes in the East.

None of these people would have come if it weren't for Jesus. His coming into this world as a baby changed everything. He is still coming to us in the East and in the West and bringing forgiveness, life, and salvation. We come to worship Him, and then return to our homes on hillsides or in faraway lands, rejoicing in God's great love for us, and the certain hope that Jesus is coming!

Rev. John Mehl, LCMS World Mission Asia Regional Director

HONG KONG ABLAZE!

PLI Hong Kong

October 31 through November 3, the Lutheran Church Hong Kong Synod (LCHKS) and Pastoral Leadership Institute (PLI) International jointly conducted a historic training for PLI Hong Kong. Five church workers from the LC-HKS completed the 4th year of PLI training in the second class of PLI Hong Kong alongside 9

missionaries from LCMS World Mission. In addition, 18 new church workers from several LC-HKS churches started year one of the PLI training. This new class of PLI Hong Kong marks the first time that the PLI International curriculum will be taught entirely by local trainers who are previous graduates of PLI International. PLI Hong Kong training equips LC-HKS church workers with leadership skills for service to the church. It also serves to deepen the relationships between church workers from different congregations and to affirm the core mission of the church to connect people to Jesus.

New HKIS Head of School

LCMS World Mission celebrates with the staff and students of Hong Kong International School (HKIS) upon the school's recent announcement that Kevin Dunning has accepted their board's offer to serve as head of school.

HKIS recently shared on their website, "Kevin M. Dunning has been selected as HKIS' new head of school, effective July 2011, has the experience, qualifications and commitment to lead HKIS to our next level of excellence by advancing our mission and championing our Student Learning Results.

"Kevin Dunning serves as the executive director of Faith Lutheran Jr./Sr. High School in Las Vegas, Nevada. Under his leadership, Faith has grown from a school of 475 students to the largest private school in Nevada and the largest Lutheran school in the United States, now with more than 1,300 students. He is a frequent presenter at Lutheran conferences and the author of several published essays and devotional materials.

"During his tenure at Faith, he oversaw the development of a 40-acre campus, with facilities totaling more than 160,000 square feet. In 2009, the school launched a 1:1 Apple program at the high school level, complementing an already technologically rich school campus. Demonstrating his financial acumen, in 2000, Kevin led the school in becoming the first Nevada non-public school to qualify for tax-exempt bond financing, which funded the school's significant physical growth.

"Kevin and his wife of 31 years, Mary, who is also a teacher at Faith, have two adult children, Jeremy and Maggie.

LCMS World Mission gives thanks to God for His gracious provision of such a strong candidate to lead HKIS as it continues to grow in its 21st century ministry to a diverse group of students and families. Please join LCMS World Mission in also giving thanks for the extensive time and effort that was devoted to this process by the HKIS Board of Directors, LCMS World Mission's leadership and International Team and many others.

Rev. Dr. David Birner, associate executive director of LCMS World Mission's International Mission Team, shared, "We rejoice that HKIS will be led by such a gifted and enthusiastic servant of God. The search for a new head of school has been a long process, but the Lord has blessed it and I'm sure that HKIS will continue to be a blessing to its students, families and the surrounding community with its strong educational legacy, emphasis on servant hood and Gospel-centered learning environment."

To learn more about HKIS, and to read the full text of their announcement, please visit www.hkis.edu.hk.

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LCHKS Christian Education Seminars

The Lutheran Church Hong Kong Synod (LCHKS) conducted a special seminar for school board members on October 30 and another for administrators and teachers on November 19. Board members and approximately 800 teachers from the over thirty kindergarten, primary, secondary, and special education schools within the LCHKS were able to participate. The purpose of the seminars was to discuss the theory and practice of Christian Education. The LCHKS Christian Education Committee sponsored the seminars to emphasize the connection between Lutheran schools and Lutheran congregations and the joint mission both share in connecting people to Christ.

Lutheran Rainbow Center Opens

Hong Kong Lutheran Social Services celebrated the opening of its Lutheran Rainbow Center, a counseling center for substance abusers in Hong Kong. In recent years, a sharp increase in substance abuse rates among teens and young people had caused great concern among parents and educators. In addition to the physical harm caused by substance abuse, the emotional damage is also often devastating. The Lutheran Rainbow Center aims to provide preventive education to parents, teachers and students and the community. Christian counseling for both individuals and groups is also available. It is important to address the issue from a

Christian perspective to holistically meet clients' needs as they develop assertive skills, re-establish healthy lifestyles and set life goals.

FPSC Celebrates 23rd Anniversary

On Sunday, September 26, over 40 members of the Filipino Prayer, Share & Care Group (FPSC) at Church of All Nations in Hong Kong observed the 23rd anniversary of its fellowship and ministry. Through anthems and testimonies during the worship service, along with a special message from Rev. James Cerdenola, President of the Lutheran Church in the Philippines, FPSC members shared the importance of the gospel in their lives and outreach to others. After the service they led a celebration dance followed by a feast of Philippine and Chinese foods. For more information on the FPSC go to: can.org.hk/index.php?nid=121888&s=mn.

Worship Hall Renovations Complete

Holy Cross Lutheran School recently completed renovations on its 50-year-old worship hall. On November 27, Rev. Dr. Alan Yung, president of the Lutheran Church Hong Kong Synod (LCHKS), presided over the rededication ceremony. Holy Cross Lutheran School plans to work hand in hand with Holy Cross Church to initiate new evangelistic efforts, many of which will be held in the school's new worship hall. The site also hosts the Lutheran Education Complex, which is home to other LCHKS ministries including its Parents' Hotline, Family Counseling Center, Touch-the-Bug Evangelistic Hotline, and Continuing Education Department. Gathered around the Word in the new worship hall, these ministries together will continue to provide services for the underprivileged and unreached in the greater Tsuenwan District, as well as across Hong Kong.

2nd Annual Funfair

On October 29, Ma Chan Duen Hey Memorial College (MCDH), a secondary school with the Lutheran Church Hong Kong Synod (LCHKS), hosted its 2nd annual American Funfair. More than 350 students and teachers from primary schools in the LCHKS district were able to attend. MCDH partnered with local LCMS missionaries and a team from Redeemer Lutheran Church in Manitowoc, Wisconsin, in the U.S. There were booths representing American states and different subjects unique to the United States, many of which were specifically designed to share the Gospel with Funfair visitors through games, crafts, and simple conversation.

Through activities like its American Funfair, MCDH is able to demonstrate to the local community a sincere dedication to preparing students for interaction with foreign populations through English language training and cultural exposure. The hope is that both current and prospective students and their parents will be encouraged by this dedication. The school faithfully serves the mandate of Matthew 28 by taking the immediate opportunity to share the Gospel through these types of outreach events and by empowering the MCDH Religion Department to engage in long-term outreach through its standardized Christian curriculum which is taught throughout students' middle and high school years.

KOREA ABLAZE!

Luther Tower Dedicated at 40th LCK Assembly

From October 10 to 12, the LCK's 40th Annual General Assembly took place at Luther Tower and Daejo-dong Lutheran Church in Seoul. The opening worship service was held at the newly constructed Luther Tower in Jamsil in Seoul, attended by about 500 church members and guests. It was a very special event, as the opening worship was also the Dedication Service for the new Luther Tower Building which received official permission to open in July 2010. The event also included the inauguration of a Luther statue and an Easter cross, both standing at the main entrance of Luther Tower. The Luther statue shows Luther working on his Bible translation. Honorary guests included Rev. Maynard W. Dorow (pioneer LCMS missionary), Rev. Dr. Albert Collver (LCMS Dir. of Church Relations & Assistant to the President), Rev. John Mehl (LCMS WM Asia Regional Director), Rev. Carl Hanson (LCMS WM Facilitator for East Asia), Rev. Yutaka Kumei (Japan Lutheran Church President), Rev. Mamoru Saito (Japan Lutheran Theological Seminary Associate Prof.), Deaconess Yang Hime (Omiya Zion Lutheran Church in Japan), Rev. Malte Rhinow (Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria, Germany), Mr. Matt Wasmund (newly appointed LCMS WM missionary in Korea), and Rev. Byeong-Ho Jeon (National Council of Churches in Korea President).

New Congregations

The Lutheran Church in Korea (LCK) has founded two new local churches. On September 12, "New Way Lutheran Church" was dedicated in Yongin City, Gyeonggi Province. Along with the Dedication Service, the installation of Rev. Jang-Heon Kim was also celebrated. Rev. Kim graduated from the Graduate School of Theology at Luther University (LTU). He is presently writing his doctoral thesis, after completing his Th.D. course work in Christian Education at the Anglican Theological Seminary. While being assigned to Wangshimni Church in Seoul as Pastor for Education, he received his call for developing a new local church.

On October 3, "New Heaven Lutheran Church" was dedicated in Osan City, Gyeonggi Province. During the Dedication Service, pastor-in-training Rev. Jeong-Ho Choi was ordained and installed. After completing his education as pastor-in-training at Daejo-dong Lutheran Church in Seoul, Rev. Choi received his call to develop a new congregation. He received his M.Div from the Graduate School of Theology of Luther University and is enrolled in a Th.M. course in Pastoral Counseling at Soongsil University in Seoul. He intends to focus his ministry on counseling. With the foundation of these two new local churches, LCK now has a total of 47 congregations, with plans to start four new congregations in 2011.

LTU President Rev. Kim's 40th Ordination Anniversary

On October 5, some 250 participants celebrated the 40th anniversary of Luther University (LTU) President Rev. Hae-Chul Kim's Ordination at the main auditorium of Luther University. Rev. Kim is now 76 years old, and formerly served as pastor of Central Lutheran Church in Seoul, and Palbok Church, located at the LTU campus in Yongin City, Gyeonggi Province. He also served as the second LCK Church President and as a Professor at LTU. After his retirement, he was installed as LTU President in February 2010. The Lutheran Church in Korea organized the Celebration Worship to honor President Kim's lifelong ministry.

New LCMS Missionary

On October 11, on the second day of the 40th General Assembly meeting at Daejo-dong Lutheran Church in Seoul, newly appointed LCMS World Mission missionary Mr. Matt Wasmund was installed. The installation was attended by Lutheran Church in Korea (LCK) President Hyun-Sub Um and LCMS World Mission Asia Regional Director Rev. John Mehl. After his installation, Mr. Matt Wasmund gave a presentation about LCMS WM English education outreach in Taiwan and Japan and explained future mission plans. Mr. Matt Wasmund is responsible for the arrangement and set up of missionaries teaching English in the East Asian region. In South Korea, he also acts as a liaison between the LCK and LCMS World Mission.

493rd Reformation Anniversary

On October 31, around 450 members of the Lutheran Church in Korea (LCK) participated in a Reformation Anniversary Worship Service held at Luther University (LTU). The offering was dedicated to the "1004 Angels for LTU" Project, and the service was aired nationally twice in November on CBS TV. It later was recorded on CD, and is now used as mission material by Lutheran congregations. The Reformation Anniversary Service is held every year in October as a joint worship service of the LCK.

Korean Luther Society Lecture & Assembly

Korean Luther Society President, Dr. Jin-Seob Eom (Professor of Church History at Luther University), hosted the Society's annual Luther Lecture at Central Lutheran Church in Seoul on October 28. The public lecture was led by Prof. Dr. Johannes Schilling, President of the German Luther Society. The theme was "Martin Luther - Life and Letters." Dr. Moon-Kee Ki (Prof. of Church History at Pyungtaek University) and Dr. Deok-Hyeong Hwang (Prof. for Systematic Theology at Seoul Theological University) offered responses. After the lecture, the Korean Luther Society held its Annual Assembly where Dr. Eom was reappointed President. Prof. Schilling, who is involved in preparations for the 500th Reformation Anniversary in Germany, promised to work closely with the Korean Luther Society to ensure Korean protestant churches are actively involved in the celebrations. Prof. Schilling also held several well-received lectures for LCK pastors and students of theology at LTU and other universities.

2010 Autumn Retreat for Pastors' Wives

After the May retreat for pastors' spouses, the education committee of the Lutheran Church in Korea (LCK) decided to organize another retreat during the second half of the year. The retreat took place on November 5-6 in Hongcheon City, Gangweon Province. The LCK President's wife and the LTU President's wife were among the 20 wives who took part in the retreat. The theme was "The role of the pastor's wife in the church." The education committee of the LCK is responsible for the retreats, while the pastors' spouses take

turns organizing the events. The LCK plans to develop these retreats further and increase the role of spouses in the field of ministry.

JAPAN ABLAZE!

Celebrating VYM Japan

Rev. John Mehl, LCMS World Mission's Regional Director for Asia, and Rev. Shinri Emoto, Missions Secretary of the Japan Lutheran Church (JLC), share the following joint announcement:

"Volunteer Youth Ministry Japan (VYM) began as an outgrowth of a forerunner program known as Prince of Peace Volunteers (POPV). Approximately 80 LCMS lay missionaries had served with POPV in Japan since its inception in 1965 until 1973, when the program officially transitioned to VYM. Since then, over 220 lay missionaries have been sent by the LCMS Board for Mission Services to work closely with the JLC as relationship-builders and English teachers, sharing the love of Christ in word and deed.

"After almost 50 years of cooperation between the LCMS and the JLC, it is regretfully announced that the VYM program will close at the end of March 2011 due to recruitment and fundraising challenges. The JLC, in its most recent publication (*Kyokai Dayori*) shared the news while simultaneously 'giving heartfelt thanks for the missionaries who have labored on behalf of God's mission in Japan.'"

"February 26, 2011 has been tentatively selected as the date for a closing worship service and reception to be held at the Tokyo Lutheran Center Church in Iidabashi. Even though this program is closing, new possibilities for continuing joint ministry are being discussed, including long- and short-term mission opportunities.'

In its history, the VYM program branched out to Taiwan (1978 to 2004) and Hong Kong (1980-83).

The Prince of Peace Volunteer (POPV) program was a youth team ministry both in North America where it sent teams to work in inner-city areas, as well as overseas locations, including Japan, India, Lebanon, Nigeria, the Philippines and Venezuela. It was sponsored by the Board for Young People's Work of the LCMS.

The Japan POPV program was a regional branch of the American POPV. The LCMS Board for Mission would receive requests from the JLC and then ask the POPV to recruit and screen applicants, with the Board and POPV approving the recruits.

Additionally, an exchange component included more than 10 Japanese youth serving in the United States and others in Singapore and the Philippines. For example, in 1968, three Japanese youth went to Oakland, Calif., in the East-to-West POPV program. Mrs. Toshiko Taguchi worked at Bethlehem Lutheran Church and Community Center in downtown Oakland and helped at the Head Start program for children there. Mr. Masahiro Ando, another Oakland volunteer, later became a pastor with the JLC.

Give thanks to God for the nearly 300 missionary servants that responded to God's call to serve the people of Japan through POPV and VYM alongside the JLC. Rejoice in how the Spirit has touched the lives of many Japanese people through this joint program since 1965.

You can also learn more about the program at <http://vymjapan.webs.com/>.

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Annual Church Bazaar a Success

In Japan there seems to be a season for everything, and fall is "bazaar season." Like garage sales, they often include handicrafts, as well as new and used clothing and other goods. At Suginami Lutheran Church in the metro Tokyo area, the annual bazaar became more of a church festival with food booths and games as well. Church members and volunteers worked together to coordinate the planning, setup, and actual activities. A steady stream of people including church members, students in the church's English classes, and individuals from the community, attended the event throughout the day. Opportunities like this help to build and strengthen relationships between the local church and the community it serves.

INDONESIA *ABLAZE!*

Successful Eye Clinics

A visiting team of volunteers from St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Columbus, Indiana came to serve in Indonesia for one week. The five-member team included Darin Wettschurack, Scott Krueger, Lisa Likens, Jim Harter, and Daniel Craig. The original focus for the team was to conduct two eyeglass clinics. However, as the planning and scheduling evolved, it turned out there were many other roles for the team members, as they also visited an orphanage and served the students and teachers of Sekolah Pelita Harapan (School of Light & Hope) in the city of Lippo Cikarang.

Due to complications which occurred when ALL of the team members' bags were lost in transit, it looked like they might have to cancel the first scheduled eyeglass clinic because they did not have any glasses. However, all ten pieces of the team's luggage miraculously cleared customs and arrived just 30 minutes before the start of the first clinic in Lippo Cikarang. Despite these unexpected difficulties, the clinic was a resounding success with more than 100 people visiting the clinic to receive reading glasses and sunglasses. A second clinic was later held in Bandung, and people began lining up in the early morning for the clinic which was scheduled to start at 3:00 p.m. More than 150 people were served at the second clinic.

PHILIPPINES *ABLAZE!*

2nd Annual LCP National Pastoral Conference

On December 6-10, 31 pastors from The Lutheran Church in the Philippines (LCP) and four LCMS World Mission missionaries met in Linamon, Mindanao for the second annual LCP National Pastoral Conference. The theme was "How to Live the Christian Life: from a Lutheran and Scriptural Perspective."

Guest presenters included the Rev. John Mehl and Rev. Carl Hanson. During the sessions, Rev. Mehl covered the topics "Understanding the Mission of the Church" and "How to be an active member in the mission," while Rev. Hanson led a discussion on the topic of "A Mission Life of Christian Service to my Neighbor." LCP pastors engaged in conversations and discussions to help create an intentional and realistic plan to best serve both people in the community and within the congregation. Other highlights of the conference included daily and nightly devotions and worship services and times for fellowship.

LCP Continues to Strive Toward *Ablaze!* Goals

In 2005, the LCP made an Ablaze! goal to plant 100 new congregations by 2017. District and congregational leadership have worked to develop outreach programs for all members of the LCP. It is estimated that pastors and members have reached out with the Gospel to 110,000 individuals in 2010 alone. The average member brings more than 5 guests to church each year in two of the districts. Since setting the goal of 100 congregations five years ago, the LCP has started six new congregations and established 40 mission stations. The mission stations are church plants and it is the prayer of the church that these will all grow into strong and healthy congregations. The Holy Spirit is working powerfully through the LCP.

Seminarians and Families Enjoy a Christmas Celebration in Baguio

During the first week of December, eight seminarians from the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Baguio City, Luzon were able to join together to celebrate Christmas. The Christmas celebration included seminarians and the seminary faculty, staff and their families. The evening began with a vespers service and prayer time where the theme was "Making Preparation and Giving Thanks."

Following the worship, everyone joined in fellowship to enjoy many Filipino culinary treats including goat curry, lechon, lumpia and barbeque. LCP President Rev. James Cerdeñola and his wife Evalynn helped with cooking the meal. The evening was capped with a bonfire where people gathered for singing and storytelling.

New Missionary Arrives

Sean P. Harlow packed his bags in October and moved from Sichuan Province, China to Manila, Philippines. Sean will be serving as the Assistant to LCP President Rev. James Cerdeñola for the next two years. Sean's duties will be to assist with implementing LCP plans and decisions, assist with organizing and managing human care and relief programs and assist with communications, including the LCP newsletter. Sean will also help to connect the LCP with partners to further the mission of the church.

Sean comes to the Philippines with more than five years of mission experience. He has served in Taiwan, China, and previously in the Philippines with the Youth Encounter Team New Dawn in 1995-1996.

Please keep Sean, President Rev. James Cerdeñola and the members of the LCP in your prayers as they seek to serve the Lord and His people.

TAIWAN ABLAZE!

CUI Professor Encourages Missionaries in Asia

On sabbatical leave from Concordia University Irvine, Dr. Christine Ross visited Lutheran mission sites and collaborated with Lutheran Education work across Asia. Dr. Ross visited and supported missionaries and local educators in Taiwan, Macau, Hong Kong, and other countries in the region.

In Taiwan, Dr. Ross was able to visit Concordia Middle School where she observed classes and helped the 11 LCMS missionaries who are teaching Bible classes. She was also able to attend several fellowship and Bible study activities, providing support and encouragement for missionaries in Taiwan. In Macau and Hong Kong, Professor Ross observed English and Bible classes led by LCMS missionaries and also connected with pastors and Educators in the Lutheran Church-Hong Kong Synod. One valuable contribution Dr. Ross brought to the LCMS missionaries was instruction on teaching skills that provided reminders about basics of lesson planning, Bible teaching, and tools for emphasizing the gospel in teaching.

A common story Dr. Ross heard from local Christians in all the locations she visited was that they were first reached with the gospel through a foreign Christian teaching English. "For me, an amazing part of the trip was to experience how English can be a medium for gospel outreach," said Dr. Ross at the conclusion of her visit. LCMS World Mission missionaries who are teaching English in Asia are serving a real human need by teaching English and Bible, but in word and deed they are living their Christian faith. In the relationships that are established through English classes, the missionaries are able to confess the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit uses them to bring people to the church.

Dr. Ross returns to Concordia University Irvine where she continues as Director of the DCE program and next semester will teach a class on Mission Theology and Practice. Pray for additional opportunities for collaboration between Concordia University Irvine and missions work in Asia.

Joint Visit to Local School

Five LCMS missionaries and two Taiwanese colleagues were able to travel to a local county school to perform a drama, sing songs, and lead the entire school of more than 80 students in activities in which the Gospel was shared in simple and clear ways. This marks the second visit of LCMS missionaries to this school, where the students mainly come from the rural surroundings and have few opportunities to hear the message of Jesus.

Bibles for All

There are over 200 students enrolled at the Concordia English Language Academy (CELA). CELA recently held a special Christmas concert and other fund raising efforts which allowed the school to purchase a Bible for each student. Most of the students did not previously have access to a Bible at home, and were excited to receive their very own copy. Please pray the Lord would continue to use His Word to plant seeds of faith in the hearts of these little ones.

MACAU ABLAZE!

Scholarship trip

LCMS missionaries from Macau and Hong Kong, members from St. Paul Lutheran Church in Macau, and several friends from Guangdong province in Southern China teamed up with the Concordia Welfare and Education Foundation (CWEF) to provide underprivileged students with grants to assist them in attending school. In early October, over 20 people joined a service team to travel to a rural area in western Guangdong province to deliver the grants and connect with the recipients. Rural families often lack the resources to keep children in school, and so it is common to see children discontinue their formal education at a young age. Grants provided through a partnership between CWEF and the Concordia English Center in Macau enable families to keep the students in school. The team members visited several different locations. They taught adults and children English using songs and stories and also visited grant recipients in their homes and provided extra school supplies. Through these service trips which take place twice a year, team members have been able to establish long-term relationships with grant recipients.

VIETNAM ABLAZE!

Concordia's School Office Opens in Hanoi

December 1 marked a day of smiles and cardboard boxes as the Concordia International School Hanoi (CISH) administrative team moved into their new Hanoi office. The office is located on the 4th floor of the CMC building, sitting directly above three full floors which are currently under renovation and will be the new CISH campus when completed. Architects spent time on the site last week to go over the details of the individual classrooms and estimate the renovations should be done by late April, in plenty of time for the start of classes in mid-August 2011.

Once the building renovations are complete, classroom furniture, books, and all other educational materials will fill the soon-to-be learning space of the new preschool to grade 7 classrooms. Along with the teacher resource library, each grade level will have their own classroom library fitted with materials to suit their reading level. The new campus will also boast its own student/teacher cafeteria, science lab, an outdoor playground, and an auditorium that can be used for school performances.

"I think it's an exciting step forward in the opening of our new school," shared Meg Brainard, CISH Director of Curriculum and Instruction and an Alaska native. "I really like the fact that our school community has started to work together professionally and the building of the Concordia Hanoi family has begun."

Celebrating Partnerships

On November 10, the LCMS team in Vietnam commemorated the 30th Anniversary of the National Institute of Nutrition (NIN) and remembered NIN founder Professor Tu Giay who passed away in November 2009. Guests at the event included Rev. Dr. Dave Birner (LCMS World Mission Associate Executive Director), Rev. John Mehl (LCMS World Mission Asia Regional Director), as well as Rev. Dr. Mike Gibson (Pastoral Leadership Institute mentor). Dr. Tu Ngu (LCMS World Mission in Vietnam Project Manager), who is also Prof. Tu Giay's son, was also in attendance. Give thanks to God for these extraordinary partners who love their country deeply, and pray that God will continue to use the team to be a blessing to the people of Vietnam.

New Volunteers Arrive in Vietnam

Jerry and Karen Markin, the latest volunteers to serve in Vietnam, have arrived! Based in Lancaster, CA, Jerry and Karen have years of international education experience, most recently spending 12 years teaching at Hong Kong International School. After a week of orientation in Hanoi, Jerry and Karen loaded up their things on November 9 and made the three-hour trip to Phu Tho town in Phu Tho province where they will serve as English teachers at Hung Vuong University (HVU). Since 1998 LCMS World Mission has been placing volunteers at HVU, a prominent university in northern Vietnam. All of the 4,000 students who live and study at HVU come from rural areas in Phu Tho and other northern provinces. Karen and Jerry will have the opportunity to know about 300 of these students personally through their classes and other outreach activities.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA ABLAZE!

Lutheran University of Papua New Guinea

On November 15, 2006, the National Parliament of Papua New Guinea authorized the establishment of Lutheran University of Papua New Guinea which was to be sponsored by the Morobe Provincial Government, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea (ELCPNG), and the Gutnius Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea (GLCPNG).

Since then, the University has been taking important steps on the path to officially opening its doors to students. The Morobe Provincial Government and the Papua New Guinea Government have funded the establishment of Lutheran University, and as a result of this official funding, a variety of subsequent initiatives have commenced.

Among these initiatives is the completion of a Master Plan for the University which has also been accepted by the University's Establishment Committee. Based on the Master Plan, architectural designs and schematics for three buildings are being developed. Lutheran University has also installed and is maintaining satellite broadband internet service for the University's Project Office, Martin Luther Seminary, and Balob Teachers College.

Presently over 20 Balob Teachers College Lecturers are completing their Master of Education degrees. One Balob Teachers College/Martin Luther Seminary lecturer is also pursuing a Ph.D. in Old Testament Studies.

The former ELCPNG Communications building (Christian Radio Building) has been renovated and remodeled to house Lutheran University's Project Office and the ELCPNG's Communications Department of the national church. It is hoped that in the future the ELCPNG will be able to introduce a Christian radio station for Papua New Guinea.

A variety of other important initiatives are under way including the development of a university quality primary education curriculum, as well as the development of a bachelor of nursing degree program under the leadership of University of Queensland's School of Nursing and Midwifery in Australia.

For more information, visit the university's website at <http://lupng.org/>

THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION ABLAZE!

Theological Education in Southeast Asia

"Training is springing up all over the place," says Rev. Carl Hanson, LCMS World Mission's Theological Education Facilitator for Asia. "Many emerging and established Lutheran communities are interested in confessional Lutheran teaching and solid Biblical training. They especially want to know what Lutherans have to say (and teach) about Law and Gospel." Fall has seen an explosion in the number of training events across Asia.

In Tarutung, Indonesia, Dr. Jonathan Blanke led a four-day session pastors and deaconesses from the Huria Kristen Batak Protestant Lutheran Church focused on church administration. This proved to be an exciting session as there were many questions about practical everyday ministry.

A five-day training seminar was held in Yangon, Myanmar with the Lutheran Church of Myanmar. Seventeen pastors, evangelists and deaconesses participated in this, the second seminar for their church body. The seminar included an in-depth biblical study of the book of Romans with an introduction to the Psalms. "Many of the students asked real questions that they were facing in their ministries which made our time together extremely practical," Hanson said. While in Yangon, Rev. Hanson was also able to visit with the leaders of the National Lutheran Church of Myanmar, and met with some of the families helped by LCMS World Relief and Human Care and Concordia Welfare and Education Foundation - Thailand in the aftermath of Cyclone Nargis which destroyed many homes on May 2, 2008.

In addition to these remarkable opportunities, 15 pastors and evangelists from the Mekong Delta gathered in Cambodia for two weeks to gain a better understanding of Lutheran doctrine. Afterwards the gathering

formed its own organizing group to continue to explore how they can learn together and work collaboratively.

INDIA & SRI LANKA *ABLAZE!*

India Probationers Making an Impact

In the India Evangelical Lutheran Church (IELC), probationers (vicars) are sent out after their seminary training, and the overwhelming majority plant new churches. In the past three years, 42 probationers have planted 62 mission stations where 135 of the members are new Christians brought into the family of Christ through baptism.

Special Needs Schools in India

The India Evangelical Lutheran Church (IELC) has established six special needs schools that are open to all children regardless of their religious background. All of the children in these schools will be celebrating Christmas with their classmates, as all six schools teach the children that God loves them so much that He sent His Son to save them. These seeds of hope for a child with a handicap send a loving message to the families as well as the children themselves.

David and Beth Hoepfner are searching for additional resources to help the teachers in these schools share the Gospel message with their students. Rev. Dave Andrus from the Lutheran Blind Mission in St. Louis will be sending the IELC Blind School Braille magazines and 10 Catechisms, plus slates for making additional Braille papers. In 2011 Bethesda Lutheran Communities plan to help the two schools for mentally challenged children. The Hoepfners will be giving these two schools along with the three schools for the hearing impaired more posters, puppets and Christian music CD's on their return trip to India in January 2011. Much more is needed, especially materials for younger students. For more information about these special schools in southern India, please contact the Hoepfners at: david.hoepfner@lcms.org.

First Mission Station Complete

The Lanka Lutheran Church in Sri Lanka currently has eight vicars or probationers-as-church-planters. The plan is to build Mission Stations for each of them in the more remote tea plantations where they are serving. Funds were gathered for the first Mission Station, and it has been built. The building plan is a parsonage with a community hall attached for worship, education, pre-school, and the like.

THAILAND *ABLAZE!*

Hong Kong Team Visits Northern Thailand

On October 28, an eight member team from Church of All Nations (CAN) in Hong Kong, along with representatives from LCMS World Mission and Concordia Welfare and Education Foundation—Thailand, visited Pakamai Lutheran Church, a remote Hmong International Mission preaching station situated on the Thai-Burma border. In addition to facilitating human care needs, the team also helped the Pakamai congregation to connect with its community through English classes and other VBS activities that encouraged building relationships. The CAN team was also invited to conduct a hygiene training seminar in the local public school where they were able to testify further to the love God has for the world.

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