



# Asia Ablaze! Newsletter

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 4 DECEMBER 2006

## ABLAZE! EXTRAS

Available online only at:

[www.asiaablaze.org/extra.html](http://www.asiaablaze.org/extra.html)

This month's extras come from

**CAMBODIA, CHINA, HONG KONG, KOREA, THE PHILIPPINES, THAILAND, and VIETNAM.**

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## International Lutheran Council Meets in Shanghai

Asia church leaders from the International Lutheran Council (ILC) met Oct. 29-30 in Shanghai to discuss being *Ablaze!* for Christ. The meeting was an opportunity for various church leaders to share their efforts and ideas as well as to network.

Robert Roegner, LCMS World Mission Executive Director, noted that the Church Growth movement promises that by following stipulated rules, churches will get new members. The *Ablaze!* movement



Pres. S. Rajagambeeram, of the India Evangelical Lutheran Church (IELC), reported that 300,000 have heard the Gospel through IELC efforts as the *Ablaze!* evangelism movement spreads across their church. Pres. James Cerdenola, from the Lutheran Church in the Philippines, described how the message of *Ablaze!* has spread through his church with *Ablaze!* events being held in the districts which has led to increased evangelism efforts, growing social work, and new attention being given to the seminary, which now has nine students.

Pres. Hyum Sub Um, of the Lutheran Church in Korea, sharpened focus of the *Ablaze!* movement by contrasting it to the Church Growth movement. Dr.

is different and focuses on evangelism. Bishop David Piso, from the Gutnius Lutheran Church (in PNG), added that "the bottom line of *Ablaze!* is about sharing the Gospel with people."

Pres. Richard Yi, from the China Evangelical Lutheran Church, described how they want to use Concordia Middle School for outreach, and how they are networking with the Japan Lutheran Church in exchanges to draw people to church. Pres. Kimio Takano, of the Japan Lutheran Church, stated that they want to expand their network to include working with the Lutheran Church in the Philippines to reach Filipinos in Japan.

Pres. Allan Yung, of the Lutheran Church-Hong Kong Synod (LCHKS), gave a PowerPoint

describes the LCHKS's four *Ablaze!* projects:

1. The Extended Care Program to serve poor families.
2. Lutheran Parents' Hotline for counseling parents.
3. Serve The Destitute to help poor children.
4. International Interface which focuses on interaction with students.

Guests to the meeting also made presentations. Dr. Jack Preus, the president of Concordia University in Irvine, California, suggested the Asia ILC churches develop a regional approach to Lutheran higher education. Dr. Allan Buckman presented a picture of where the *Ablaze!* movement has been and offered some challenges for the future. Dr. Robert Roegner described urgency of the need to evangelize and how important the ILC churches are in this work of proclaiming the Gospel.

### DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE WITH A HEART FOR SERVICE?

**LCMS World Mission is continually seeking individuals to serve on short- and long-term missions in Asia. For more information and a list of current service opportunities, visit**

[http://www.lcms.org/ca/mission/service-ops/results\\_Asia.asp](http://www.lcms.org/ca/mission/service-ops/results_Asia.asp) or email [mission.recruitment@lcms.org](mailto:mission.recruitment@lcms.org).

## ALEA Holds 3rd Bi-Annual Conference

The 2006 Asia Lutheran Education Association (ALEA) Conference was held at Concordia International School Shanghai, China on October 26-28. The theme was "The Collaborative Work of Caring Professional Communities" and was attended by 231 educators from 16 different countries. The focus was on schools and churches sharing God's love in Christ with students and people in need. Included with Asia Lutheran school teachers and administrators were ILC churches and other partners

along with LCMS World Relief and LCMS World Mission workers who participated in disaster relief workshops.

The keynote speakers were Mr. Marty Schmidt, international educator at Hong Kong International School and part-time missionary with LCMS WM and Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb, pastor of Christmas Lutheran Church in Bethlehem, Palestine.

Also offered was a Leadership Academy by Dr. Tom Buck, Superintendent of The Lutheran



High School Association of Greater Milwaukee and Lori Land, the Director of Advancement at the Lutheran High School Association of greater Milwaukee.

A total of 45 workshops were offered by experts in a variety of education and human care related fields. Over 150 Lutheran schools and churches were represented by participants.

### CONTACT US:

General inquiries & comments:

[The Editor](mailto:editor@asiaablaze.org)

[editor@asiaablaze.org](mailto:editor@asiaablaze.org)

Address change or to unsubscribe:

[Ms. Adelina Balunsat](mailto:Ms.Adelina.Balunsat@icable.ph)  
[lcmspmso@icable.ph](mailto:lcmspmso@icable.ph)

# Vietnam Ablaze!

## CAN Team Reaches Out in Vietnam

From Sept. 28 to Oct. 2, 18 members from Church of All Nations (CAN) in Hong Kong traveled to Hanoi, Vietnam, to do service in a rural commune about 2-3 hours outside Hanoi. Under the direction of LCMS World Mission's Rev. Ted Engelbrecht, team members worked in a garden, led songs and games in a school, played volleyball with village officials, visited families in homes, toured a nearby orphanage and presented gifts to children, families and the local townspeople. A special monetary gift by retreat members will also provide for the future upgrading of another rural commune kitchen, so they are able to serve lunches to children in their school, much like the one visited by the CAN team.

For CAN team member Donna Koehneke the trip was all about people. Donna said, "CAN adults shared their friendship, joys, and concerns, and ate many new and unfamiliar foods. There was also sincere praying, joyful singing, and taking long bus rides and hikes with kids who never got tired of leading the praise singing. The team really got below the Sunday morning smiles and got to really know the people of God."

The children who joined the CAN team were also instrumental in making the trip a success. It would not have been half

a meaningful or successful without those energetic bundles of joy. They didn't care where they were or what age the people were, they were always willing to sing and play another circle game with a prospective friend.



CAN team members with some of their new Vietnamese friends

Another highlight of the trip was the "moving" worship service as the team bussed back from rural Vietnam into Hanoi early Sunday morning. God was present in the midst of the people, bulletins, crayons, songs, prayers, praise and thanksgiving.

### INTERESTED IN VIETNAM & CHINA?

For more articles & photos regarding Vietnam & China, visit the *Asia Ablaze!* Extras website at [www.asiaablaze.org/extra.html](http://www.asiaablaze.org/extra.html).

## INDONESIA ABLAZE!

LCMS volunteer work in Banda Aceh, Indonesia is featured in an article in the October 2006 edition of *The Lutheran Witness* (pg. 14). To view the article online, visit: <http://www.lcms.org/graphics/assets/media/Lutheran%20Witness/Witness%20Oct%2006.pdf>

## Comings & Goings

### New ALEA Executive Director

At the recent Asia Lutheran Educators Association (ALEA) Conference, Rev. Dr. Greg Sawyer (left) was approved as the new Executive Director of ALEA, replacing Dr. Allan Schmidt (right), the founding director since 2002.



### Dr. Oswald Returns to China Lutheran Seminary

Dr. Jeffrey Oswald, current professor at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis and former professor at China Lutheran Seminary (CLS) in Hsinchu, Taiwan, returned to CLS Seminary to teach two New Testament courses for two months during the Fall semester. Dr. Oswald's visit helped to encourage teachers, staff and students to be mindfully *Ablaze!* in their ministries.

### Lives Touched, Yunnan Teacher Recognized

Recently a "Colorful Yunnan Awards Ceremony" was held in Kunming, China. This event honored foreign experts living and working in Yunnan for significant contributions to the people of Yunnan. There were

ten honorees from about 2,000 foreign experts working in Yunnan. Most were businessmen who have generated billions of yuan in revenue in Yunnan. ESL teachers in Yunnan were also recognized.

Trish Rondema, a long-term ESL teacher in China, was one of those honored. Trish has spent the past five years of service using modern teaching techniques in the classroom, caring for students and attending to special needs and many extra activities including movies, cultural programs, English corners and extra English practice in the home. Trish and her husband John have touched the lives of many people in Yunnan and demonstrated in word and deed the impact we can make in whatever our calling. The Rondema's will be returning to the U.S. this summer to connect with their family and reach out to international students.



Trish receives award from Yunnan officials

## China Ablaze!

### Concordia International School Shanghai & Concordia Welfare and Education Foundation Work Together on Yunnan Human Care Projects

On Dec. 11, Globy Trans Relocation generously sponsored the shipment of 18 boxes of new clothing (shirts, sweaters, sweatshirts and fleece jackets) donated by Concordia International School Shanghai (CISS) to children and families in China's rural Yunnan province. Summer clothing was sent to subtropical southwest Yunnan province, and winter clothing was sent to mountain villages in northeast Yunnan province. CISS works in partnership with the Concordia Welfare and Education Foundation (CWEF), a non-government organization that provides education and human care services in China. Globy Trans Relocation generously donated all the boxes and transportation of clothing to the CWEF office in Kunming, Yunnan. To date, Concordia's Yunnan Education Project (YEP) - a student-founded charity which was established in 2002 - has supported more than 260 local students with scholarship funds for all six years of their elementary education throughout Yunnan province; provided drinking water systems in three villages; installed and stocked eight school libraries, supplied school resource materials and supplies in twelve schools (teaching materials, classroom desks etc.); and constructed three school buildings in separate villages. In 2005, YEP raised and distributed 640,000 RMB (US\$80,000) to those in need in Yunnan province through CWEF. For more information on YEP visit <http://concordia.ciss.com.cn/yep/> and for more about CWEF, visit <http://www.cwef.org.hk/>.



CISS students with the recent clothing shipment for YEP

### Nawaan Mission Growth

A year ago Christ Lutheran Church of Cagayan de Oro City started a mission outreach project in Naawan, Misamis Oriental, located in the northern part of the Mindanao district of the Philippines. Naawan is approximately 65 km. outside Cagayan. Rev. Antonio Reyes and some members of Christ Lutheran Church have served this mission station every Sunday since Sept. 2005. There are currently 11 confirmed members in Naawan.

Through the Word and Sacraments, God's Holy Spirit is working wonders in the Naawan Mission! Church attendance is growing and many are now taking regular doctrine class. 13 children have been baptized, and on Sept. 27, Rev. Reyes conducted the first wedding ceremony in Makawa, Don Pedro, a remote barrio of Nawaan, which took more than two hours to reach via a donkey cart. The people were very happy as this was their first pastor visit and wedding with Rev. Reyes. The ceremony was well attended and provided a good opportunity to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to those in attendance!



**Rev. Reyes presides over the wedding ceremony in Makawa, Don Pedro— a remote barrio of Nawaan**

The people of Makawa, Don Pedro have asked that Rev. Reyes serve them regularly and have pledged to help build a small chapel. They currently worship and study the Bible with a group in nearby Patag, Naawan.

### Lutheran Church in the Philippines is Ablaze!

The Lutheran Church in the Philippines (LCP) desires to intensify its mission outreach. It has embarked on the promotion of mission consciousness among its members which includes assorted *Ablaze!* summits throughout the Philippines. Previously, Summits have been held in the South Luzon and North Luzon Districts of the LCP (see article in the Sept. 2006 *Asia Ablaze!* newsletter for more details). This past quarter *Ablaze!* Summits were also held in the Mindanao District (MDD) and the North Luzon Lowland District

(NLLD) of the LCP.

Just over 30 pastors, lay people, and young people gathered at the MDD Summit which was held in Cagayan de Oro, Mindanao. Participants were grateful for the funds which were raised to make the Summit and training possible. The Summit was timely, designed to awaken and ignite congregations and church workers with the fire to double their efforts in doing mission work.

The NLLD held its Summit most recently with more than 50 pastors and lay people in Tamurong, Candon, Ilocos sur. Mrs. Lita Gallang, one Summit participant, had this to say about the Summit, "I am thankful that we are having this *Ablaze!* Summit. This is what we need in LCP. We need people who are equipped and zealous in the

task of sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ clearly to people in the communities where we live. Now I will no longer be alone in doing this from the congregation where I am a member."

More than 300 church workers attended the four *Ablaze!* Summits throughout the Philippines and the impact of the Summits on the participants has been positive. There have been many encouraging reports, stories, and feedback. Many pastors and LCP church members have realized the urgency of the mission task of the church, and many members are now much more conscious of their mission responsibility as members of the body of Christ to witness what they believe, to teach and confess—things which they now understand are not limited to pastors and church leaders.

### Filipinos Ablaze! Around the Globe

In addition to the local *Ablaze!* movement in the Philippines, Filipinos are also *Ablaze!* globally. Pastor James Cerdenola of the LCP has talked to two of the eight confirmed Filipino Lutherans working in Qatar. They indicated that they are meeting regularly every Sunday in one of their homes for fellowship and to review Luther's Small Catechism. One Filipino in Qatar indicated to Pastor Cerdenola that, "A bigger meeting place is our problem. [If we had a bigger place to meet] we could invite more Filipinos to join us."

The LCP also hopes to increase its cooperation and mission outreach with



**LCP Ablaze! Summit participants**

the Lutheran Church Hong Kong Synod (LCHKS) in 2007. The LCHKS was previously a mission church and is now a missionary sending church. LCP has begun talks with LCHKS about the possibility of working together in providing Filipino mission workers to serve in Hong Kong.

In addition, other Lutheran Church bodies within the International Lutheran Conference (ILC) have expressed a desire to work with LCP in intensifying its mission efforts in areas overseas with high concentrations of Filipinos, some of whom are already confirmed members. The leaders of the Lutheran church of Taiwan, the Japan Lutheran Church and also the Evangelical Lutheran Church of England have all expressed a willingness to cooperate with LCP in doing mission outreach among the thousands of Filipinos working in their respective countries.

**INTERESTED IN THE PHILIPPINES?**  
For more articles & photos regarding The Philippines, visit the *Asia Ablaze!* Extras website at [www.asiaablaze.org/extra.html](http://www.asiaablaze.org/extra.html).

### SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR CONTRIBUTORS:

**Ms. Bethany Bauman (Southeast Asia)**  
**Rev. James Cerdeñola (Philippines)**  
**Ms. Kim Galinat (Thailand)**  
**Ms. Emilie Guenther (Taiwan)**  
**Rev. Carl Hanson (East Asia)**  
**Rev. Robert Hedtke (Thailand)**  
**Rev. Dr. Herbert Hoefler (India & Sri Lanka)**  
**Rev. Khung Man Hong (Korea)**  
**Ms. Donna Koehneke (Vietnam)**  
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**Mr. James Manning (Hong Kong)**  
**Ms. Robin McCoy (Thailand)**  
**Rev. John Mehl (Hong Kong)**  
**Rev. Dr. Stephen Oliver (Taiwan)**  
**Ms. Sharon Owens (Hong Kong)**  
**Rev. Michael Piescer (Japan)**  
**Rev. Antonio Reyes (Philippines)**  
**Rev. Malte Rhinow (Korea)**  
**Rev. George Hilbert Riemer (Korea)**  
**Ms. Michelle de Rozario (China)**  
**Rev. Dr. Greg Sawyer (Taiwan)**  
**Dr. Allan Schmidt (Hong Kong)**  
**Ms. Yukie Shimomasu (Japan)**  
**Ms. Oratai Thaweesin (Thailand)**  
**Ms. Chawesa Thienprasert (Thailand)**  
**Mr. Matt Wasmund (Taiwan)**  
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**Ms. Peg Wolfram (Cambodia)**

# Cambodia Ablaze!

## **Ablaze! in Cambodia**

Twenty high school teenagers led by Church of All Nations (CAN) Youth director Bill Leese and Director of Christian Education Intern Kelly Pokorney went on a service trip to Cambodia to work with LCMS volunteer missionary, Peggy Wolfram. The theme for the trip, "Going Deeper," helped these youth to strengthen their faith while providing service to the work of the Church in Cambodia and sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ. They visited and witnessed at a day care facility, an orphanage, and a youth conference of about 150 local youth. They also spent a day helping to build a fence around a local church and fish pond. As post holes were dug, the youth frequently heard - "go deeper", but throughout their five days in Cambodia, they heard the Holy Spirit also urging them "deeper".

After the CAN team's successful trip, some of the youth on the team had the following to say as they reflected on their experiences:

- "While we did dig fence post holes for half a day and clean an orphanage for a morning, the most rewarding and enriching part of the whole experience was simply interacting with the local people. My favorite part of the entire trip was simply talking and playing with the kids in the village we went to. Although there is a very clear language barrier, this does not affect one's ability to communicate and relate to the locals. I sat next to and

talked to one of the girls during the makeshift church service at the village. Through a combination of hand gestures and the few English words she knew, I learned that she wanted to be my sister. I told her that because I had no other siblings, that she could. This is the type of acceptance and experience that everyone should encounter on a trip of fellowship like this one. Where else will a stranger call you a brother because you sat down next to them and smiled?

- "The village we went to was a newly founded Christian community. Nowhere is the work and actions of God more apparent than in a community of new believers. God is alive and truly means

### **INTERESTED IN CAMBODIA?**

**For more photos regarding Cambodia, visit the *Asia Ablaze!* Extras website at [www.asiaablaze.org/extra.html](http://www.asiaablaze.org/extra.html).**

something to the people there. When they say 'God bless you', you can feel that it comes straight from their soul. Before we said our goodbyes, a teenager asked if he could pray for me. While he prayed for me and my family, I could feel God's presence. God and religion matters and mission trips like this one showed me so clearly why that was the case."

- "This trip was very special to me not only because it was in a new place but because it was my final service trip with the entire youth group. Having done the



**CAN team members at the project site.**

trip three years in a row, I have seen the way I have grown spiritually each year. Each trip has led me to new experiences that have challenged my faith and desire to serve. The biggest thing that I get out of each of these trips and especially this last trip is the appreciation and understanding of service. I have come to realize that each day I spend playing with orphans, or digging fence post holes, or putting up barbed wire, I end the day feeling that I have gained more than I have given. The giving of my time, skills, effort, and love to people that don't necessarily have the ability to give anything back to me but their smiles and appreciation is more than enough payment - ten times over. The people that I meet on these trips serve me just as much as I serve them."

It was clear from this and other feedback that witnessing and serving others helped team members to "go deeper." The Holy Spirit works in wonderful and mysterious ways. More than 150 children and youth who were uncommitted to Jesus heard the Good News during the five day trip. Praise God!!

# Taiwan Ablaze!

## **University Bible Study Reaches Out to Students**

"Seek and ye shall find." Or, sometimes, it shall find you. Such was the case of a recent ministry opportunity at Chia Yi University in Taiwan. Through some Taiwanese friends, the chance to start an English investigatory bible study at a local university arose. Within a few weeks, there were nearly 50 college students and four adult leaders excited about studying the Word. The first few studies were the basic ideas of sin and salvation, with all the students hearing the Gospel message in just the first few weeks of study.

The Bible Study currently enjoys regular attendance by 22 core students, and the enthusiasm of the young adults is inspiring. It is an amazing group ranging from those who are Christian to those who have never heard of God, let alone Jesus. Each small group is distinct; one group is working through the basic introduction of who

the "Triune God" is, while another group is discussing dilemmas about following Christ. May the Lord continue to bless the Chia Yi University Bible Study!

## **China Lutheran Seminary Building Project is Ablaze!**

*Ablaze!* offerings have been used in the support of China Lutheran Seminary's (CLS) building project, which has rapidly advanced to the 8th and final floor (of the skeletal structure). This new building will be utilized as God's instrument in which to prepare His future servants to spread the Gospel throughout the whole Chinese world, and has come at an opportune time to ambitiously spread the Gospel! Praise and thanks to God for the many who have given their support!

### **CLS Ablaze!**

On Oct. 31, China Lutheran Seminary in HsinChu, Taiwan celebrated its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary by hosting a Lutheran forum on the Reformation. With the theme, "The

Teachings of the Reformation Anew in Our Day." CLS attracted over 200 partici-



**China Lutheran Seminary's building project has reached the 8th floor.**

pants. Two LCMS presenters, Dr. Jeffery Oschwald and Rev. Michael Paul were also on hand to help make the Reformation writings of Luther's day more relevant in today's context.

## Concordia Day Care Center and Urban Outreach Ministry

The Concordia Day Care Center (CDCC) and Urban Outreach Ministries are located in the Bangna slum area on the outskirts of urban Bangkok. Both programs are part of the Concordia Welfare and Education Foundation - Thailand (CWEFT). There are currently 70 children who regularly come to the day care. Programming for both the day care and the urban outreach is currently expanding due to increasing needs in the community. Assistance and activities provided under the CWEFT projects in Bangna aim to meet the spiritual and physical needs of community residents, both young and old. On Tuesdays, LCMS volunteers teach the children Christian songs.

Praise God for the six children who have expressed an interest in learning more about God and studying the Bible! As a follow-up to the children's interest in learning more about the Lord, staff will be talking with parents in the community to explore the possibility of starting a mid-week worship service for children and adults. In addition, CWEFT plans to coordinate with Lutheran churches in Bangkok to further reach out to the children, parents, and community residents in Bangna during Christian holidays and other important times throughout the year.

## Hmong Ministry in Thailand

A displaced and refugee people ever since the American pull-out from Southeast Asia in 1975, the Hmong fled Laos with many landing in the Highlands of Thailand. With an approximate population of 60,000 Hmong in Thailand, they reside now primarily in the Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Kamphaengphet, Petchabun, and Tak Provinces. Settling on the hill-tops of Thailand, they, like others, raised poppies for their lucrative opiate product. Now, however, they cultivate corn and other non-drug related products.

Ministry among the Hmong has been difficult, but recently there have been

reasons for renewed hope. A number of recent visits by LCMS World Mission representatives have been made to the Hmong in Thailand with the aim of revitalizing interest and exploring areas where LCMS World Mission may aid in the Hmong's social, and most importantly, their spiritual needs. On Sunday, Nov. 26, a team from LCMS World Mission visited villages and ministries among the Hmong, both in the Chiang Rai and Chiang Mai provinces of Northern Thailand.

The team provided kitchen items and supplies to be used in the church plant in Chiang Rai led by Pastor Pongsak. They also delivered a used computer and some educational supplies. A visit to the clinic, schools and Hmong villages was also con-

ducted to help the team understand the people, their needs and the possibilities of serving them more fully.

Please pray that this very exciting Mission Field may open up even more than it has and that many may know the joys of Jesus!

## Introducing the Luther Institute of Southeast Asia

A new tool has been added to Lutheran



**Rev. Dr. Harms (front left) & Rev. Hanpradit (front right)**

resources available for use in bringing Christ to the people of Thailand. The Luther Institute of Southeast Asia (LISA) installed

Rev. Dr. Len Harms as executive director and Rev. Sompong Harnpradit as Coordinator on Nov. 6. The Installation Service, presided over by Rev. Ted Natalang and Rev. Jeff Ehlers, had an international feel. Participants came from America, Myanmar, Vietnam, Hong Kong and Thailand. The service concluded with the laying of hands by all Pastors in attendance. Please pray for Rev. Dr. Harms and Rev. Harnpradit as they begin their service with LISA.

LISA's objectives include the following:

- Provide training for Christian leaders;
- Prepare men for the office of the holy ministry of Word and Sacrament;
- Provide instruction in the Lutheran Doctrine as well as topic-specific conferences throughout the year; and,
- Certify laymen and Christian ministers as Lutheran pastors.

## Concordia Lutheran Church - Phong Phet to Start Child Care Center

In Jul. 2006, the Concordia Lutheran Church - Phong Phet (CLCP) located in Bangkok, Thailand, decided to initiate a Child Care Ministry. The primary objective of the project is to reach out to the families in the community while also sharing the Gospel with them. Construction and renovation of the Child Care Ministry facilities is now complete and CLCP, under the direction of the Child Care Ministry director, Ms. Chawesa Theinprasert, is now seeking to fill staff positions and make the final arrangements before opening the doors of the child care center in Jan. 2007.

The child care center aims to more actively involve local staff and church members in the outreach ministry of the church. Child care center staff will work closely with the CLCP pastor, especially with regards to evangelism. LCMS volunteers will also provide support and help with the children's programming.

While providing quality, Christian child care, it is also anticipated that the center will also provide an opportunity to reach out to the families as well.

# Japan Ablaze!

## Japan Evangelism Forum

On Oct. 8-9, the Japan Lutheran Church held its tri-annual Evangelism Forum at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Asahikawa, Japan. Under the theme of "The Why and What of Mission," over 80 people from all over Japan attended this year's forum. The guest speaker was Dr. Sagsu Arai, a Japanese Biblical scholar who has been very active in Japan Bible Society. He shared with the group from his own personal experience.

As the son of a pastor, Dr. Arai shared from a personal perspective the two extreme trends in Japanese Christianity. From the Military oppression of Christianity during World War II through the boom of Christianity in post-war Japan, Dr. Arai reflected on the goal and mis-

sion of the Church— to follow God no matter how the world reacts and to walk with Jesus Christ all the way.

Another highlight of the forum was having the gathering at the newly refurbished St. Paul Lutheran Church. The building had been in need of repairs and with the help of congregations from across Japan the new building was dedicated to spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ to the people of Hokkaido.

## Holy Hope Lutheran High School Advent Ablaze!

Seibo Gakuen Lutheran Junior & Senior High School in Hanno, Japan held its annual Christmas Tree Candlelight Worship Service on Dec. 1, in front of the school's junior high school. All of the junior high school students attended along with teachers, dozens of high school students, parents, and visitors from the community. Altogether there were over 600 partici-

pants. The highlight of the service was when the lights on the 30-foot pine tree in front of the school were turned on and illuminated the dark, cool night sky. Seibo Gakuen's hand-bell choir and concert choir added to the atmosphere with their almost angelic sounding music and choruses. The guest speaker, who is a pastor at a local Christian church, emphasized that Jesus shines forth as God's light to bring us hope and new life in the midst of our dark world. Please pray that those in attendance, most of whom are not Christian,

were able to think about Jesus who truly is the reason for this Advent and Christmas Season.



**Holy Hope students**

# Hong Kong Ablaze!

The Zach Zehnder team in Hong Kong

## New Scholarship to Honor Dr. David Rittmann

Since the death of Dr. David Rittmann, former headmaster for Hong Kong International School (HKIS), in July of this year, HKIS has been pondering how to best honor David and the unique legacy he left to the school. The HKIS Chinese Language Center at the elementary school is already named after David out of deep gratitude for his 19-years of service and dedication. But at the heart of David's work and ministry at HKIS and elsewhere were the students. He loved the fact that HKIS was a school richer and stronger because of its diverse student body comprising children of 40-plus different nationalities.

It is therefore fitting that it has been decided to honor David's immense contribution to HKIS by naming a new Alumni Scholarship in his Memory: *The Alumni Scholarship in Memory of David F. Rittmann*.

The scholarship will go to a local student from Hong Kong to attend HKIS for grades 10, 11 and 12. Through this scholarship, the memory of David will literally live on in the recipient. What better tribute to David, who spent a full life serving the Lord and making a difference in the lives of so many students.

**For more information on Dr. Rittmann's career and legacy, please visit the Dec. 2006 *Asia Ablaze! Hong Kong Extras* available online at [www.asiaablaze.org/extras.html](http://www.asiaablaze.org/extras.html).**

## Short-term Team Visits Hong Kong Synod Lutheran Schools

In Nov. 2005 planning began to bring short-term teams to the Hong Kong Synod Lutheran schools. Nearly one year later in Nov. 2006, the first team from LCMS World Mission was sent to serve at Ma Chan Duen Hey Memorial College. There were 13 people on the Zach Zehnder Team which included St. Louis seminary students, seminary wives, and other mission-minded believers.

The mission assignment was to provide the school with an interactive, oral-based English program and share the Good News. The Zehnder team was broken down into sub-groups who were then assigned to home classrooms, thus enabling them to build relationships as they taught the same students throughout the week. The team took over some of the non-essential classes like art, music, PE, study hall, religion, etc. They talked about American culture, shared testimonies, taught Christian songs, and introduced American teaching styles through a variety of fun and interesting activities. Principal Francis Lee also said he could feel the students were more open to speak to the foreigners.

Some of the highlights of the trip for team members included meals off-campus with students (especially home visits), student-led excursions exploring Hong Kong, seeing the appreciation and

thanksgiving that the children showed during the closing ceremony, having an opportunity to share their faith with students, and being asked specifically about their faith. Many team members could both see and feel the students' hunger for God's love.

Ma Chan Duen Hey Memorial College was the first school in Hong Kong to receive a team of this nature. Principal Lee was very pleased with the program and said there was a renewed excitement for learning English and many of the students' spoken English was noticeably better. He has extended an invitation for many more teams to come to Hong Kong Lutheran schools. There are more than 200 mission opportunities in Hong Kong Synod Lutheran schools for 2007. For more information contact Sharon Owens at [Sharon.Owens@lcms.org](mailto:Sharon.Owens@lcms.org).

## Messengers of Life

James Chu, the Hong Kong businessman who opened China for the McDonalds Corporation in 26 provinces across China has a new mission "to spread the good news of Jesus Christ with as many people as I can!" James grew up in Hong Kong and attended Lutheran schools and later even became a called teacher and Lutheran principal before expanding into the business world. Six months ago, after a serious illness that nearly took his life, James recovered to found a new ministry organization called Messengers of Life ([www.molife.hk](http://www.molife.hk)). Since June 2006, MOL has held 18 evangelistic events with over 7,000 people in attendance. Already 23 events are planned for the next six months bringing the message of Life in Jesus to churches and schools in Hong Kong. MOL also hopes to expand to work with outreach to Chinese people dispersed around the world.

## Hong Kong Hotline Ablaze!

In the last issue of *Asia Ablaze!*, the Lutheran Church Hong Kong Synod's (LCHKS) four *Ablaze!* programs were highlighted. In a follow-up conversation, Rev. Dr. Allan Yung, president of the LCHKS, shared that the Parent's Hotline is already attracting a lot of attention. The LCHKS received initial technical support from the Lutheran Hour Ministry in Hong Kong, who have been working with a call-in program for children, another example of collaborative work in *Ablaze!*

Originally planned as a way to connect with the 40,000 plus parents who send their children to the 40 schools of the LCHKS, the Parent's Hotline is even gaining the interest of other non-Lutheran schools and their parent organizations. The hotline has already received 3,000 calls and has expanded into two other district parents groups. "This has the potential of reaching far beyond even our own schools and could be an example for other schools which are trying to help parents."



## CTS Turns 50!

The Lutheran Church Hong Kong Synod (LCHKS) celebrated 50 years of theological education on Nov. 19 as Concordia Theological Seminary marked this jubilee anniversary. CTS has been ministering to and training teachers and pastors for the past half century. While the needs today are different than they were fifty years ago, the challenge remains the same—to equip leaders for the church. In his remarks to the seminary and churches of the LCHKS, Rev. Dr. Allan Yung encouraged all not to fear inadequacies. "With such a cloud of witnesses under which we were trained and brought up, we need to be that kind of encouragement to young people today," Yung said.

## Pastoral Leadership Institute – Hong Kong IGNITED!

Pastoral Leadership Institute – Hong Kong (PLI-HK) kicked off Nov. 12-15 with 34 participants. 30 of these went on to sign up to form collegial groups and four will be picked for additional training in the U.S. to continue to develop PLI-HK.

The purpose of PLI-HK is to fan into flame (2 Tm 1:6-7) the mission of the LCHKS by training and nurturing pastors, ministers, and partners as courageous, committed, and visionary leaders who will connect people to Jesus, resulting in the salvation of many and the growth of the church.

The PLI-HK program will include:

- An annual teaching conference with expert teachers from PLI International;
- The formation of collegial groups that will meet throughout the year to encourage participants in their ministry;
- The formation of groups to meet bi-annually to experience creative ministries and churches in Hong Kong; and,
- The ongoing training in leadership through reading and on-line PLI courses.

## PLI participants & leaders meet in Hong Kong



### Luther Theological University Approved for Expansion

On Sept. 15, Luther Theological University (LTU) was granted permission by the Korean Education Department to open a total of four new departments which will include: theology, humanities, social welfare (general/elderly), English, arts performance, language therapy, and counseling. Under this new license, LTU will be allowed to expand from its current enrollment limits of 50 incoming freshmen to 200, for a total possible enrollment of 1,000.

On Nov. 26, LTU hosted a LTU Vision Festival, including a thanksgiving worship service and fundraising evening to celebrate the government's decision to increase the number of departments and student admissions at LTU. About 100 alumni, supporters, and friends of LTU participated.

### Korea Bethel Series

Mr. Choi is the event coordinator for the Korea Bethel Series events held in Korea and recently reported that since its inception in Korea in 1974, the Lutheran Church of Korea (LCK) has held 164 seminars and trained 11,000 ministers in Korea. Over 410,000 lay people have used the material and graduated from the course. One of the participating churches has 8,000 participants alone! In 2006, 17 seminars were held with 644 pastors participating and another 22 seminars are planned for 2007. LCK has added new courses on worship and liturgy and a new faith series to the original Bethel Bible series.

### Lutheran Church in Korea Plans New Building

At their annual convention, the Lutheran Church in Korea (LCK) approved the construction of a new office building to be used to expand the financial strength of the church as it gears up to begin 500 new congregations in the next 50 years.

The total project cost is US\$60 million and will begin in July of next year. Situated in Seoul's financial district the new Luther Building is expected to annually generate a substantial amount above costs.

### 36<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of Lutheran Church in Korea

On Oct. 12-13, the Lutheran Church in Korea (LCK) held its annual Assembly at Luther Theological University (LTU) in Yongin-City near Seoul. The Assembly concen-



36th General Assembly participants

trated on issues of administration. The reconstruction of Luther Building in Seoul Shincheon-Dong was decided, intensification of the world mission in China and North Korea was adopted, and a more active foundation of new local churches was also adopted. LCK presently consists of 40 local churches, 46 Korean pastors and two ordained ecumenical co-workers from abroad. Total church membership is about 5,000.

### Installation of New Ecumenical Co-Worker From the U.S.

On Oct. 13, Rev. Patrick O'Neal from LCMS World Mission was installed during the 36<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of LCK. The Director for World Mission and the Asia Regional Secretary of LCMS, as well as pastors and laity, participated in the installation and congratulated the new ecumenical co-worker.

INTERESTED IN KOREA?

For more articles & photos regarding Korea, visit the *Asia Ablaze!* Extras website at [www.asiaablaze.org/extra.html](http://www.asiaablaze.org/extra.html).

### Two New Lutheran Congregations

On Sept. 9 in the Jecheon City, northern Chungcheong Province, a new local church was opened called "Lutheran Blue Sky Church". Senior pastor Rev. Hong-Yeol Lee, former Church President of LCK, was installed in the opening worship service under participation of many Lutheran and other guests. For more information visit <http://bluesky.lck.or.kr>.

On Sept. 17, another Lutheran congregation, the "Lutheran New Life Church," was founded in Hwaseong City, Gyeonggi Province. The opening worship service included the installation of Rev. Seung-Jin Baek as senior pastor of the congregation. LCK plans the foundation of three more new local churches in 2007. For more information visit <http://www.nlife.or.kr>.

### Luther Theological University News

On Nov. 24, the Social Welfare Center for the Elderly at Luther Theological University (LTU) had its official opening ceremony. The Yongin City mayor, members of Parliament and some 100 guests attended. This was a good opportunity to make the Social Welfare Center at LTU for the Elderly widely known and show its importance to the elderly of the area.



*The Asia Ablaze! Newsletter staff would like to wish all of our supporters, contributors, and subscribers a blessed Christmas season. We look forward to sharing how Asia continues to be Ablaze! in 2007.*

## India & Sri Lanka Ablaze!

### Changing Lives and Families One Student at a Time

The Lutheran Bethesda Hospital School of Nursing and the Women's Training Institute both in Ambur, India are making a difference in the lives and families of their graduates. Both the School of Nursing and the Woman's Training Institute provide professional training for women from rural areas in the state of Tamil Nadu in Southern India.

The School of Nursing has such a good reputation that every graduate from a recent class was offered a nursing job at one of the most respected hospitals in India. The Lord has used the dedicated teaching staff and the hard work of the students to change the lives of these young nurses. The lives they touch through their nursing care will bring healing and comfort to many people in India.

The income they will receive from their professional career will enable them to help support their family still living in rural parts of India.

The Women's Training Institute prepares women to work in leather and textile factories located throughout Southern India. These factories seek skilled labor and the graduates of the Women's Training Institute are known for their high level of training and skill. This training allows these women to secure jobs and income that will help support their families.

The India Evangelical Lutheran Church (IELC) is changing lives and families through these educational institutions. Each day lives are touched and the flame of Ablaze is spread by the ministry of Lutheran Bethesda Hospital School of Nursing and the Women's Training Institute.



Recent graduates from the Women's Training Institute receiving their certificates of completion.

### India Church Administration Restored

The Supreme Court of India has passed a judgment restoring the administration of the India Evangelical Lutheran Church (IELC). A state court ruling had put this partner church of the LCMS under court-appointed administrators for the past two years. The court will be conducting the next IELC elections in June 2007.

### Ablaze! Summits

The India Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Lanka Lutheran Church are planning to hold their *Ablaze!* Summits in Feb. 2007.