



Asia Ablaze! Newsletter

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 2

JUNE 2006

Igniting the World with Christ's Love

Papua New Guinea Ablaze!

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World AIDS Day Service

Today throughout Papua New Guinea and in the Gutnius Lutheran Church, the prevalence of HIV and AIDS is forcing the church body to rethink what it means to be a member of the Body of Christ. On Sunday, May 21, the semi-urban congregations of Wapenamanda District joined together to commemorate World AIDS Memorial Day. Members gathered at sundown to remember loved ones who have been lost to the disease, to hear the word of God and to pledge to more intentionally live the life of Christ. To conclude the service,

candles were lit and placed in the shape of the cross, casting light into the darkness. The candles were lit by members of a dozen different congregations, all united by their love for the Lord and their commitment to share this love with all of His children. Most especially, they remembered those suffering from AIDS and HIV and how the Lord's grace and love was sufficient for all. The service was a good reminder that God embraces both the infected and affected.

Flames at Dusk

In late February, LCMS team members along with Gutnius Lutheran Church members were able to take part in a large clearing and relief effort, providing rice, fish, wheelbarrows, medical supplies, and other needed items. The objective for the trip was to

assist in making a clearing for a much-needed airstrip along with providing relief in response to the needs of workers and a tuberculosis outbreak. In addition to providing for the physical needs of the people, the group was also able to meet their spiritual needs as well, baptizing 62 children of God and confirming an additional 40. Three new "work mission" congregations were also established.

The team spent eight weeks helping to clear trees for the airstrip and burning them at dusk in addition to taking advantage of the ample opportunities for prayer and song with their fellow workers. The airstrip work provided a wonderful locus for preaching and teaching, modeling daily Christian living, and exploring what it means to truly trust Jesus as their Savior.

Indonesia Ablaze!

Nias Island Outreach

On May 30 Rev. Bob Smith from Pelita Harapan University near Jakarta and Dennis Denow with LCMS World Mission conducted a one-day seminar for church workers on Nias Island in western Indonesia. Guided by Bob's teaching, approximately 80 church workers spent the day focusing on prayer. It is estimated that up to 95% of the Nias Island people are Christian, yet most church workers have little or no training and virtually no resource materials.

During the seminar, church leaders from both the northern and southern districts of Nias Island met with Dennis to ask if the LCMS could provide training programs for pastors, evangelists, Sunday school

teachers, deacons, and elders from across the island. They are eager to improve the quality of their ministries, but are unable to do so alone.

Please pray for LCMS pastors, teachers, and Sunday school teachers to go and help provide training for the hundreds of church workers on Nias Island who are requesting assistance.

Hearts Ablaze! in Indonesia

Sekolah Pelita Harapan - Cikarang (SPH), a school of 318 national and international students, has become *Ablaze!* for Aceh. This past year, working with Dennis Denow, LCMS World Mission Tsunami Relief, students have taken the challenge to provide reference materials for local Aceh schools that lost their

Rev. Bob Smith leading prayer on Nias Island



libraries in the tsunami.

The kick-off for their projects began in Feb. with a "Loving and Caring Week," with Aceh the focus. Students collected coins in Joy Jars in hope of collecting RP5,000,000 (US\$550.00) in one month. Each grade level also scheduled Food Bazaars and a single cookie sale raised over RP800,000 (US\$90.00) in 20 minutes! The two projects together brought in over

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RP16,000,000- (US\$1,750.00)

Two SPH teachers later joined Dennis at a Teacher's Training workshop for over 100 Aceh teachers. They took with them letters from SPH elementary students to be distributed to students in Aceh with the goal being for the children in Aceh to know there are other children praying for them. Another team of six is making plans to visit again over the coming school holiday!

With the money collected the students were able to purchase three sets of encyclopedias and 200 Atlases. There are 19 schools that need help, so SPH students know that their job of Caring and Sharing is not finished. Their hearts continue to *blaze* and next school year will see them continuing to support their hearts *Ablaze!* endeavor.

Other Indonesia Highlights

LCMS missionaries, Alice and Rev. Bob

Smith are preparing to leave Indonesia soon. Some highlights from their final months include:

Dr. Richard Carter from Concordia University—St. Paul visited for two weeks. Dr. Carter and Rev. Smith gave a one-day seminar at a Lutheran seminary for students and led a three-day workshop for 24 church leaders. Topics included Luther's catechism, prayer, and stress management. The training was well received and there is an open invitation for Lutheran pastors to help with continued growth.

During the last three months, Bob finished writing a book for the university entitled "Reaching an Understanding – Practical Ideas for Witnessing." The book's goal is to motivate university instructors and staff to witness and share the Christian world with their students. He was able to present a

published copy on June 13 after preaching his final chapel service to his colleagues at Universitas Pelita Harapan. They were challenged to be partners in the *Ablaze!* movement.

A final highlight was the distribution of Arch books during the last several months. Nearly a thousand books of the resurrection story were dispersed at an Easter Egg Hunt in Lippo Karawaci. 500 copies were also distributed on the trip to Nias. Everywhere the Arch books have been well received by parents and children.



Rev. Bob Smith with young Arch book readers

China Ablaze!

345 Concordia Students Participate in Charity Run

Concordia International School Shanghai (CISS) hosted its third annual Charity run on April 5 to raise money for the Yunnan Education Project (YEP) – CISS's flagship charity to provide schooling to children in China's Yunnan province.

The run, for all Middle and High School students (grades 5-12), was held in the neighboring Green Villas housing complex. One lap around the inside of the complex is 1.33 kilometers, and the students set goals on how many laps they could achieve in the allotted 30 minutes.

In preparation for the run, all students trained in physical education classes to improve their stamina and learn how to pace and set personal goals. They also collected pledges to reach their fundraising goal of RMB100,000 (US\$12,500) for YEP.

The funds raised will be used to cover the RMB33,000 cost of installing a drinking water system in one small village in the Yunnan province, school resource materials (SRM), and student scholarships in the cities of Zhaotong and Shuang Jiang.

As a fundraising incentive, 50 percent of all funds exceeding the overall goal will be used to purchase recreation and recess equipment for the CISS Middle and High School student body.

The sun shone brightly making it perfect for such a run, and it was encouraging to see many of the participants surpass their own personal goals.



Steven Curtis Chapman in Shanghai

On Friday, May 19, 2006, ten high school students from Concordia International School Shanghai joined 60 Christian youth from schools all over Shanghai for what they were told was an evening of prayer and worship in support of Grammy-winning artist Steven Curtis Chapman's premier concert in China slated the next day in the Shanghai Oriental Arts Center. What they didn't know was that Steven would be making a surprise appearance at the event.

Steven spoke to the students about encouragement. He affirmed his belief that they were not in China because of their parents, but because God has a purpose for them here. He also told a story about the power of young people praying, relating how it was his daughter Emily's prayers that led his family to adopt three Chinese daughters. Steven concluded his visit by playing his hit song "Dive," signing autographs and posing for pictures.

After Steven left, the students continued their worship with a renewed sense of spirit and commitment.

Prof. Craig Molitoris of Concordia University Irvine (CUI) visited the Greater China Region this spring making plans to bring a team of students from CUI to Macau. He was also able to spend time encouraging friends and leaders in the Hubei church. Prof. Molitoris also presented a paper on the Lutheran distinctive of distinguishing law and gospel at FuDan University in Shanghai.

Dr. Henry Rowold of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis met with leaders in Hubei, China about the basics of the Old Testament. For these rural church leaders who are participating in a one year intensive training course, every chance they have to study the Bible and gather for prayer and worship is a blessing from God.

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR CONTRIBUTORS:

- Rev. Jonathan Blanke (Japan)**
- Mr. Dennis Denow (Indonesia)**
- Rev. Ted Engelbrecht (Vietnam)**
- Ms. Jeanette Groth (Cambodia)**
- Rev. Carl Hanson (Greater China)**
- Rev. Kyung-Man Hong (Korea)**
- Mr. Anton Lutz (Papua New Guinea)**
- Mr. James Manning (Hong Kong)**
- Rev. Malte Rhinow (Korea)**
- Mr. Tony Rivera (Philippines)**
- Ms. Michelle de Rozario (China)**
- Rev. Bob Smith (Indonesia)**
- Ms. Dang Thaweesin (Thailand)**
- Mr. Doug Werth (Hong Kong)**



After 20 years of mission service in Asia, Dr. James Rimbach retires. Most of Dr. Rimbach's work has been in teaching Old Testament studies at both Lutheran Theological Seminary and Concordia Theological Seminary in Hong Kong. He has also played a significant role in connecting with the LTS graduates in Southeast Asia over the years.

Celebrating 40 Years of Service

During the 06-07 school year, Hong Kong International School (HKIS) celebrates 40 years of serving and educating in Hong Kong. It was in mid-1960s that a handful of visionary Christian businessmen had the idea to start a new school to help make Hong Kong a home away from home for the children of expatriates relocating to the city. It would be among the first schools in Asia to educate the whole child: mind, body and spirit.

The first classes were operated out of makeshift premises, including residential flats, in Sept. 1966. However, with the support of the LCMS, it took less than a year for the cornerstone to be laid on the school's first permanent building.

Today, over 2,600 students and 480 faculty and staff occupy the two separate campuses of Hong Kong International School. Although the school has grown

manifold since its inception, the central vision of the school's founders remains the same: to offer an excellent education grounded in the Christian faith. HKIS has accomplished much so far and is now looking to the future and ways to progress on to the next level of excellence in student learning in praise to God and service to others.

Planning for the celebrations to mark the 40th year are in progress with the biggest event, the 40th Reunion, scheduled for June 14-19, 2007. Alumni and former faculty and Heads of School will gather in Hong Kong. The Anniversary year will be a time to celebrate the past, thank God for the many blessings and look forward to the next 40 years.

Please join with HKIS in thanksgiving for 40 years of God's blessings and service to the Hong Kong community.

Sending Disciples in His Service

Each year around mid-June, Church of All Nations (CAN) in Hong Kong goes through an emotional time for its members. This marks the end of the school year and means that many of its expatriate members will be heading elsewhere for the summer break, as well as coping with the fact that many relocate for work or continuation of studies abroad. In the past, this Sunday was known as "Farewell Sunday" with the congregation saying goodbye to 25 - 40% of its members with no return after the summer break.

What's different this year? Sunday, June 11 was "Sending Sunday". As the congregation has embraced the *Ablaze!* movement, they have recognized their role in equipping its members for His

Service. Whether CAN members are in Hong Kong for one year or 15 years, they will be equipped with an awareness of mission work, service and study of what it means to be a disciple of Christ. This past spring, each Sunday morning for 14 weeks, members gathered for an hour of Bible Fellowship as they looked at what Mark and Acts tell us about our call to be disciples and how the work of the early church is still applicable today.

On "Sending Sunday," CAN sent 54 members to new places for work or study, and also to share their story of Jesus and the work of Holy Spirit here in Asia. They also sent another 100 or so away for 6-8 weeks to witness and share stories with family, friends, and other congregations as they go to the ends of the earth for summer break. Please pray for these disciples, wherever the Lord may take them.

Rev. Dr. Yung Re-Elected

Rev. Dr. Allan Yung was re-elected president of the Lutheran Church - Hong Kong Synod during their convention in April. At the convention, President Yung unveiled the following four step plan of the HK Synod to set Hong Kong *Ablaze!* 1) reach 1,000 families in need and already connected with the synod; 2) initiate a "Ministry to the Least" to help break the poverty cycle; 3) partner with the Hong Kong Lutheran Hour in providing a "Parent's Hotline" for the families of the 20,000+ students in Hong Kong Synod schools; and, 4) focus on directly sharing the gospel to these Hong Kong Synod students through international short-term teams sent by LCMS World Mission.

Philippines Ablaze!

LCP- SLD Ablaze Summit

The South Luzon District (SLD) of the Lutheran Church in the Philippines (LCP) with 50 participants from five congregations of Metro Manila, Cavite and Olongapo held a three day seminar workshop on Apr. 30 - May 3, 2006 at the Communication Foundation for Asia and Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in Manila. Rev. Ted Engelbrecht provided a moving and refreshing experience from the *Ablaze!* movement around the world, especially in Asia.

LCP president Rev. James Cerdeñola also shared about the history and

purpose of the *Ablaze!* movement. Rev. Christopher del Monte, Vice-President of LCP and President of the SLD led the workshop activities.

Rev. Teodorico Taran, Dean of the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Baguio City spoke on ways to use money as a moving factor in missions. "The Church in its Mission" was one of the highlights in a message given by Rev. Wilando Roa, Chairman of the Board of Control.

Laymen from the five congregations shared inspiring messages in the morning devotions and evening vespers.

Some young people led touching songs during the devotion by Henry Paul Roa, SLD Vice-President.

The group vowed to support the *Ablaze!* movement by involving themselves in the different ministry areas of LCP, especially in worship, fellowship, evangelism and service. The Mindanao District is planning a similar *Ablaze!* Summit at the beginning of July, and the other two districts of the LCP— the North Luzon Highland and North Luzon Lowland Districts— will be holding their *Ablaze!* summits later in the year.

Thailand Ablaze!

Phong Phet Church Camp

On May 5-7 Phong Phet Lutheran Church held a camp with 23 in attendance. The theme selected for the camp, "The Body of Christ," was chosen to illustrate the role of each individual in the church today. The camp also helped to build stronger relationships among church members. The teenagers in the group also bonded which helped them feel closer to the church, showing a great interest in the music ministry. The church, in turn, plans to foster this interest by providing musical training. Two of the teenagers came to Christ through this camp. Give thanks to God for this wonderful blessing and welcome them with open arms!

Day Care Ministry

There are currently 75 children enrolled in the Concordia Welfare and Education Foundation—Thailand (CWEFT) day care program. A new evangelist has been hired to teach Bible stories to the children every week. Bible classes are held each Saturday.

In addition, a much needed First Aid/CPR training is also being offered for the poor people in the area led by experienced volunteers. There were 12 people who attended the first meeting and the next meeting is scheduled for July. It is anticipated that even more community members will take part in the second

class. Please continue to pray for this ministry, that it may continue to provide a means to share the Good News with the children, parents and staff.

Northern Flood Relief

The rainy season this year brought with it the worst flooding Thailand has seen in the last 60 years. Ms. Dang Thaweesin, LCMS World Mission, led a group which surveyed the recent flood damage in Uttaradit province, northern Thailand. More than 200 homes had been destroyed and 80 people died. The LCMS group joined with nine local churches in Uttaradit to provide emergency aid and supplies such as kitchen ware, charcoal stoves, rice, oil, clothes and other much needed items. Please remember these families and their loss in your prayers.

Relief Continues in Tsunami-affected Southern Thailand

May 14-16— Bangkok-based LCMS team members led by Ms. Oratai Thaweesin made the 10-hour van ride from Bangkok to Phuket to assist with ongoing tsunami relief efforts in cooperation with LCMS World Relief and local LCMS partners in the South.

The group visited a total of nine schools on some of the smaller islands which were devastated by the tsunami in late 2004, providing much needed items such

as school uniforms, shoes, book bags, school and teaching supplies, book cases, blankets, rice cookers, food, oil, and many other items.

One of the more remote schools also received a water cooler and filtration system. It was a joy to be able to provide this as their water source was very limited; they had been using a nearby stream for much of their needs.

Another school is located in Maipai, a village built completely on the water. In the library, water marks were still visible on the walls with little remaining of the library itself. LCMS plans to continue with its support at Maipai, especially in providing supplies and resources for the library.

Please continue to pray for this ministry. LCMS World Mission Thailand will return to the area and continue to foster relationships in the area through summer camps, giving needed supplies, and connecting communities with local churches.



Distributing relief supplies

Comings and Goings

Matt and Kim Myers Re-deployed

Matt and Kim Myers and their children John Mark and Emily are leaving Vietnam after eight years of service. The Myers came to Vietnam to teach and manage the ESL program, but they were involved in many aspects of outreach during their stay. During their years they opened their home to dozens of volunteers, and Matt also took care of the mission accounts for six years. Matt and Kim were also faithful members of and contributors to the Hanoi International Church where enriched the music, Sunday school and other programs. The Myers will be greatly missed and the mission team and their many friends in Vietnam wish them



The Myers family

God's speed and many blessings as they move to Indonesia and their new ministry. The Myers will be teaching on the faculty of the Universitas Pelitah Harappan, a Christian University in Jakarta where they have been called to by the LCMS World Mission Board.

Tursic Family Farewell

After 10 years of missionary service in Asia Rich and Kathy Tursic, and their children, Andrew, Kelly and Scott, will be returning to the USA. Rich's work in the area of leadership development has been richly blessed by God over the years and has opened many new opportunities. Rich has also been instrumental in developing curriculum to be used in lay training centers. Kathy's skills in ESL will also be sorely missed in Asia. She has been a huge support to ESL teachers for the past six years. God's speed and blessings on the Tursic family.



The Tursic family

Japan Lutheran College Launches New Sister School Agreements

May 19, 2006 was a special day at Japan Lutheran College/Theological Seminary (JLC/TS). This day marked the expansion of the LCMS college "network" around the world, as new partnerships between JLC/TS and two other Lutheran institutions, Lutheran University/Seminary (Korea) and Concordia University, New York, were officially signed. Concordia University is a part of the LCMS Concordia University System and Lutheran University in Korea is an institution of the Lutheran Church in Korea (LCK). It is hoped that the new partnership will give rise to cooperation between these schools for educational exchanges at the undergraduate level and collaborative research opportunities for our graduate schools.

God's Word is Light unto My Path: Orientation Forum 2006

New school years in Japan don't begin with fall colors and football, but with cherry blossoms and baseball! Otherwise,

the beginning of a new academic year in Japan is much the same as it would be in the States.

Part of new student orientation at Japan Lutheran College is its orientation forum weekend, a two-day retreat for new students, attended by faculty and some returning college students. One of the activities during the retreat is daily devotions, during which time matriculating students get their first taste of a very important part of campus life: worship.

This year students on the campus ministry committee planned the devotions with our new college campus minister and chaplain, Rev. Yu Kawata. There were opportunities for students and faculty alike to speak personally about God's love, given through Jesus, and the light of God's Word that leads to true wisdom and understanding. Not only that, but the many opportunities for fellowship and conversation during the two-day retreat allowed faculty members to take time to get to know students and so take the first steps of making the love

of Christ tangible and real for the newcomers.

A questionnaire by the college religion committee revealed that of the roughly 150 new students present, only 16 percent were baptized and over 2/3 had never been to a Christian worship service before. Please keep the evangelism efforts of the college in your prayers, as together with the quality education that it strives to provide, it also reach out with the Good News to those who have never heard.

Volunteer Coordinator Visit

In a recent visit to Japan Lutheran Church headquarters in Tokyo, Mr. Matt Wasmund met with Rev. Kimio Tankno, JLC president, and other leaders to explore opportunities for short term mission service in Japan. Mr. Wasmund recently began serving LCMS WM as a Strategic Volunteer Coordinator for Japan, Taiwan, and Korea.

Korea Ablaze!

Forum for Long-Term Planning of LCK

As part of the Lutheran Church in Korea's (LCK) ongoing emphasis on evangelism and outreach, Rev. Dr. Hyun Sub Um called for a gathering of the LCK's leadership to discuss its long term plans. During the three day conference, April 3-5, many reports were given from the various standing committees highlighting both the challenges and opportunities that lay ahead. What was particularly exciting was not only the emphasis on beginning new congregations and how to go about that, but also how to begin to be a part of a global mission effort to reach the lost.

Just one example of this came from one young pastor in particular, Rev. An, who pointed out their congregations mission vision as 3/12/2000. He explained that "3" is for the three types of mission work they hope to support - schools, hospitals and church planting. "12" is for the number of different locations they hope to support and "2000" being the number of cross-cultural missionaries they want to send. More than a dream, they are well on their way to fulfilling this calling with 2 missionaries already: a doctor in

Uzbekistan and a nurse in Ethiopia!

American PLI Visit

On invitation by the U.S. Pastoral Leadership Institute (PLI) because of the translation services of Rev. Sangik Moon and Rev. Hyojong Kim, three Korean pastors participated in the PLI Conference in Wisconsin on April 18-23. Five pastor couples then visited Lutheran Churches in Minnesota and Southern California from Apr. 23 to May 4.

Other LCK News

After graduating from Graduate School of Theology at Luther University, five candidates passed the pastor-in-training examination on Mar. 20-21, 2006. They now are receiving training in various local churches.

Three Thanksgiving worship services were held recently. The first on Mar. 27 celebrated the new LCK church headquarters in downtown Seoul; the second on Apr. 9 in celebration of the completion of the "Happy Church" remodeling project; and the third on Apr.

10 for the opening of the new Korea Lutheran Hour office.

Pastor-in-training Dong-Jin Lim, a well-know South Korean actor, was appointed as Church Ambassador of the LCK to spread knowledge about Lutheranism in Korea.

The LCK has given approval for the foundation of three new Lutheran Churches in Kangwon and Gyeonggi Provinces.

A worship seminar entitled "Practice of Worship Service" was held at the LCK headquarters on May 22-23 led by Rev. David Petersen from Redeemer Lutheran Church in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Prof Dr. Wenz from Ludwig-Maximilians University in Munich visited South Korea and Luther University on May 22-28 giving lectures and sermons at six Universities.

ASIA ABLAZE! PHOTO EXTRAS:

Once again, there is more Asia Ablaze! news than can be included in a 6-page newsletter.

Visit the Asia Ablaze! website at:

www.asiaablaze.org/extra.html

for more photos from CHINA, HONG KONG, KOREA, TAIWAN, and THAILAND.

DID YOU KNOW?

The June 2006 "Pray for Us" calendar is all about Asia & the Asia *Ablaze!* Movement and can be found in the LCMS publication "Mission News."

View online at:

<http://www.lcmsworldmission.org/resources/prayforus>

Cambodia Ablaze!

Stoking the Fire

While a blaze lights the fire, the flame must also be fanned by continued teaching and learning about God's Word. This is especially important for Christian Leaders who will go out to share the message of salvation with countless others. Working with Open Gate Christian church in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, Rev. Charles Groth gave a teaching seminar on the church year that was attended by 60 Christian leaders from provinces throughout Cambodia. The group explored scripture readings for the Sundays of the church year. A local youth leader led songs to fit the season of the Church year. The goal was to make worship richer and to help these leaders use a wider range of scripture readings in their teaching. Working in groups,

seminar participants prepared six-weeks worth of themes and ideas for coming Sundays. "How many lives and hearts will become *Ablaze!* with this renewed teaching?" is a question only the Spirit can answer.

Tuk Tuk for Jesus

In Cambodia a common means of transport is the tuk tuk. Since Missionaries Chuck and Jeanette Groth have chosen to use this transportation style rather than own a car they have several drivers they especially trust. Riding in a tuk tuk is an experience. Often the driver goes against traffic directly into opposing traffic. Weaving through lanes and beside moving cars is the norm. You know it sounds scary but much of the fear is gone when you know who your



Jeanette arrives home in a tuk tuk

driver is. Isn't it the same for our life as Christians? It really helps to know that Jesus is the driver when we seem to be heading straight into oncoming traffic and problems.

One day Jeanette's favorite tuk tuk driver was listening as she shared words of sympathy with a local pastor over the death of a church leader. She commented what a great day this believer would have and what joy in Jesus was His in his heavenly home. When the pastor left the driver asked about heaven. It was an easy time to share the message that heaven is ours by faith in Jesus as our Savior. She told him about the sure hope that is ours in Christ.

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