

# **Asia Ablaze! Newsletter**

## **Volume 7, Issue 1**

### **March 2011**

## **Japan Earthquake**

On Friday, March 11, 2011, Japan experienced a catastrophic earthquake, which was followed by a deadly tsunami. The Japan Lutheran Church (NRK) and the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS) have been in regular contact to coordinate missionary activity and disaster relief.

Current information and an array of resources for all ages to aid awareness and response in wake of the disaster can be found on the LCMS site at <http://www.lcms.org/help/>. Please keep the people of Japan in your prayers.

## **ALEA Conference**

The Asia Lutheran Education Association (ALEA) will hold its fourth international conference on October 21-22 of this year. The conference theme is "Christ, Conscience and Curriculum." Attendees will experience, share and discuss how schools can more actively and effectively teach and live out the Gospel in their curricula and school programs in order to make a difference in their students' lives and communities.

The keynote speaker will be Rev. John Nunes, Lutheran World Relief CEO. The conference will also feature Dr. Marty Schmidt and Mike Kersten of Hong Kong International School (HKIS), who will share the findings of Marty's doctoral work on service learning and teaching for conscience and how it is being applied in their classes and school. Participants will take part in a simulation experience run by David Begbie's team from Crossroads International in Hong Kong. Crossroads holds these simulations at the World Economic Forum (Davos) to great acclaim, and attendees can look forward to sharing that. Rev. Andy Whaley of Texas, will help the whole group and various panels get the most of the conference and workshops by helping with a final debrief – and to find ways to go forward - together.

The Conference venues will include the Lutheran Church-Hong Kong Synod's Tuen Mun Lutheran School and HKIS. All are welcome!

For more information, you may visit [alea.lcmsworldmission.org](http://alea.lcmsworldmission.org)

or email ALEA Director, Rev. Ted Engelbrecht, at: [Ted.Engelbrecht@lcms.org](mailto:Ted.Engelbrecht@lcms.org).

## **HONG KONG**

### **New Member Celebration**

December 25th was a special day for the Lutheran Church in Hong Kong as recently-planted congregations of the Lutheran Church-Hong Kong Synod (LCHKS) held a joint Christmas worship service at Ma Chan Duen Hey Memorial College. They not only gathered to celebrate the Savior's birth, but also to recognize their life together as Lutheran Christians *Ablaze!* What was truly amazing is that ten years ago most of the six hundred people that were gathered together were not part of any Christian church.

Those in attendance represented members from three established congregations and four mission starts of the LCHKS. Dr. Allan Yung, LCHKS President, said that the event was very encouraging for the new members. It was a place and time to meet and have fellowship with other new Lutheran Christians and receive the gifts of Christ in worship. the LCHKS congregations and members celebrated recent church plants and looked forward to witness and fellowship with new congregations and Christians in the future.

## **Baptisms**

On December 26, Holy Word Lutheran Church in Hong Kong held its annual baptism service. Hong Kong churches traditionally perform all baptisms for the year in a single service, usually on or immediately after Christmas.

Pastor Samuel Leung performed the ceremonies during the regular Sunday service. After the sermon, each new Christian proceeded to the altar, sometimes accompanied by family members, and was baptized.

In total, sixteen people entered into the body of Christ. They came from a broad range of ages: four were children or teenagers, and the remaining twelve were adults who had come into the church in the past year.

Located in Tuen Mun in the New Territories of Hong Kong, Holy Word Lutheran Church is a member of the Lutheran Church-Hong Kong Synod.

## **More Baptisms**

“Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved...” These words from Mark 16:16 are simple but powerful. We, as the family of believers, are blessed with the gift of salvation and by the fact that our family is growing! Abiding Grace Lutheran Church (AGLC) in Hong Kong continues to grow, having recently baptized eight new believers of all ages.

AGLC is a young and energetic congregation that recently celebrated its sixth anniversary. It is located on the property of, and partners with, Concordia Lutheran Secondary School – North Point (CLSNP). Both school and church work to witness to the student body of CLSNP and their families.

It was a day full of joy and special blessings. Praise God for his love, gift of salvation, and these eight people who are new members of God’s growing family!

# **PHILIPPINES**

## **Second National LCP Lay Leaders’ Training Conference**

Ninety-eight Lay Leaders and Pastors gathered at St. Stephen’s Church in Baguio from February 7–11 for the Second National Lutheran Church in the Philippines (LCP) Lay Leaders’ Training Conference. With almost 100 churches and only 33 ordained pastors, the LCP depends heavily on Lay Leaders to do much of the work of the church. LCMS World Mission provided support to conduct the first lay conference in 2009, as well as this second conference, both of which were organized under the leadership of LCP President, Rev. James Cerdeñola. The LCP continues to plant churches, with substantial Lay Leader participation, working toward its *Ablaze!* goal of planting 100 new churches by 2017.

LCP pastors took turns in leading worship each day, which included Matins and Vespers. LCP Seminary Professor, Pastor Abel Cesar Villos, taught a session on the supremacy of the Word, and LCP President, Pastor James Cerdeñola, taught a session on church discipline. There were also breakout sessions with discussion.

LCMS World Mission sent two trainers, Rev. Carl Hanson (Asia Theological Education Facilitator) and Dr. Stephen Oliver (China Lutheran Seminary Professor), both of whom taught at the first conference two years ago. Rev. Hanson taught the Psalms, and Dr. Oliver taught the First and Second Epistles of Peter. All of the presenters provided uplifting edification and training for the pastors and lay leaders of the LCP to press forward in God’s Word.

Other special guests included Rev. and Mrs. Walt Winters, former LCMS missionaries in the Philippines, and Rev. Ted Natalong, Chairman of the Lutheran Church in Thailand and Lutheran Heritage Asia Coordinator.

## **CHE Trainers Visit the Philippines**

This February a team from Lutherans in Medical Missions (LIMM) visited the Philippines to introduce and offer training for a program called Community Health Evangelism (CHE).

CHE is designed to seamlessly integrate evangelism and discipleship with disease prevention and community based development. The work is holistic, seeking to meet the whole need of individuals and communities through complete obedience to everything that Jesus commanded.

The CHE team traveled to the village of Tinoc in the mountains of Northern Luzon. 23 women and several men came from several area villages to attend the training. The CHE team taught various concepts of how to work together as a team with a “river-crossing” activity, medical care vs. prevention, how to prevent the spread of disease, and how to respond to a choking infant and adult.

Local leaders are very excited to implement and make use of the CHE program, which will allow them to be intentional and active in doing outreach within their local communities. Please pray for the Lord to raise up the best leadership team in order to develop a strong and effective CHE ministry within the LCP.

## **News from Concordia Children Services**

Concordia Children Services (CCS) employs 18 people to handle the day to day operation of the center. Jean Benavidez is one of the 18 and has been serving as a nurse at CCS for 10 years. As a nursing student Jean felt that “life

in a hospital was too hectic.” She started volunteering as a nurse at a children’s home run by Catholic nuns in Bicol province. Jean soon realized that this is where her passion was as she had a big heart for the children she worked with.

When children at CCS are sick, it is Jean who is responsible for making the appropriate and proper decisions for how to care for the children. In addition, Jean and the other nurses also teach the children proper hygiene and eating habits. A weekly menu is prepared by the nurses to help regulate and control a balanced diet for the children.

Other responsibilities include being aware of any allergies, as well as assisting to fill prescriptions and prepare health and medical profiles for each child. Furthermore, local doctors and pediatricians come and perform thorough checkups for each of the residential children on a weekly basis. An important task for the nurses is to accompany the children with the doctors. Jean finds great joy interacting with the children of CCS and being an integral part in their early years to give them the best chance for a healthy and balanced life.

## **TAIWAN**

### **CELC Youth Camp**

On February 27-28, 2011 the China Evangelical Lutheran Church (CELC) held a national Youth Gathering. Youth from all over Taiwan gathered to learn what it means to be Lutheran. The theme of the weekend was “Saved by Grace.” The nearly 120 participants joined together in games, Bible studies, devotions, singing, and worship.

The gathering was a partnership event between the CELC and LCMS World Mission, with the goal being to help young people in the church learn what it is the Lutheran church believes. One student commented, “I know Jesus loves me. I didn’t know it was free!”

The CELC hopes to make this an annual event and involve more churches from around Taiwan. It is through events like this that they hope to root their youth firmly in the faith.

### **Taiwan Sends Team to Australia**

Lunar New Year provided an opportunity for LCMS missionaries in Taiwan, Mark Wolfram and Petrea Schwahn, to travel to Southern Australia to connect in ministry with Pastor Michael Lockwood of Immanuel Lutheran Church in Kadina, South Australia. Traveling alongside Mark and Petrea were Mei-Ya Lu, Jia-Hua Lin, and Jia-Hua’s son. The group was able to share about God’s mission in Taiwan with congregants and people from the local community. They were also able to visit a Christian school and a nursing home to encourage them by sharing their time and talents.

### **Book & DVD Project Nears Completion**

Concordia Middle School (CMS) in Chia-Yi, Taiwan is nearing the completion of producing a book and DVD on the educational curriculum and philosophy used by Dr. Merle Golnick while he and his wife, Dorothy, served as missionaries for over 20 years at CMS.

The project began in January 2010 and has been headed up by Mr. Yang and his wife Sandy Chien. These two teachers have been leading the endeavor to create two books with accompanying DVDs. One book focuses on the impact and service of Merle and Dorothy, both through education and sharing the Gospel. It describes why they came to CMS and what God did through them. The other book focuses on curriculum and education tools to be used for teaching English as a Second Language. The DVDs will provide interviews and visuals to help enhance the text. Both books are being written in Mandarin Chinese, and the school hopes they can be used to improve education and English teaching throughout Taiwan.

Dr. Golnick and his wife are returning in early March to help with final editing of the books. Merle will be helping to lead an English teaching seminar for Taiwanese English teachers on March 30. On April 2, the couple will participate in a school-wide celebration to mark the completion of the project.

Praise God for the work He has done at CMS, both through the Taiwanese teachers and the Golnicks. Pray that God will specifically use this project as a resource to serve the people of Taiwan and to help bring the good news of Jesus Christ to those who do not yet know him.

## **THAILAND**

### **CHE Trainers Visit**

From February 8-11, Lutherans in Medical Missions (LIMM), in cooperation with the Concordia Welfare and Education Foundation—Thailand (CWEFT), presented Community Health Evangelism (CHE) trainings led by Steve and Toni Hayes in Hmong communities in Chiang Rai, Northern Thailand.

They traveled to northern Thailand as a follow-up training to a vision trip that Toni had taken in November 2010. Here they met with Ms. Oratai Thaweessin, CWEFT Executive Director, and held a four day training which focused on identifying and preventing high blood pressure. They trained local villagers in how to use blood pressure cuffs and held a clinic for the village where the local volunteers measured and recorded the blood pressure readings for people in the village.

### **Hmong Ministry Continues**

From February 24-25, LCMS World Mission staff, with help from Hmong International Mission (HIM) pastor Rev. Suphan, drove to Tak Province to assess the needs of Ban Lo Ko Village and to encourage brothers and sisters in Christ there. Ban Lo Ko Village is located in the northwest corner of Thailand on the Thai–Burma boarder and is inaccessible during the rainy season.

HIM and LCMS World Mission support ongoing outreach in this village, despite its many logistical challenges. Pray for Rev. Suphan, Hmong pastor trainee Ning Sangchan, and his village ministry team from Pakamai Lutheran Church as they continue to minister in Ban Lo Ko.

### **Christmas Outreach with Hill Tribe Congregations**

More than 60 people attended the Christmas outreach celebration held at Concordia Lutheran Church—Baan Kung Huay Khrai, which is a member of the Thailand Concordia Lutheran Church (TCLC) Association. Pastor Suphan and Pastor Pongsak of the Hmong International Mission (HIM) partnered with LCMS World Mission and Concordia Welfare and Education Foundation—Thailand (CWEFT) to lead the songs, games, crafts, and service. Pastor Sompong Hanpradit from Into Light Church in Bangkok also visited to share the true meaning of Christmas.

Pakamai Lutheran Church, under the care of HIM pastor trainee Ning Sangchang, held its own Christmas celebrations with more than 70 church members and students from a nearby school. Pastor Sompong Hanpradit from Into Light Church in Bangkok was also able to attend this service to encourage participants and share the meaning of Christmas. In addition, Ms. Monta Denow with the Lutheran Hour in Thailand donated copies of the movie “Red Boots for Christmas” for use at the event. Pakamai Lutheran Church works closely with HIM, CWEFT, and LCMS World Mission in reaching out to the Hmong.

Concordia Lutheran Church, an outreach to the Akha hill tribe in Don Sanloon, also held its own Christmas celebration which included two days of relationship building activities with church and community members. Activities included a sports day led by Deacon Chomwee’s son and games led by CWEFT staff members Waan and La. In the afternoon there were activities for the children, but this did not stop many parents from also taking part. In the evening, Pastor Sompong Hanpradit gave a sermon and Deacon Chomwee translated to Akha, for the more than 120 people in attendance.

Please pray for the Hmong, Akha, and other ethnic minority hill tribe groups in Thailand as they are reached through local church leaders and leaders-in-training.

### **CDCC Christmas Celebration**

More than 120 children at the Concordia Day Care and Community Center (CDCC) in the Bangna slum area of Bangkok celebrated Christmas at the annual CDCC Christmas Party. More than 80 parents, family members, and friends joined the celebration. In addition, local Christian volunteers, Thai government officials, and community leaders also attended the event. Rev. Sompong Hanpradit and his wife Thongtip from Into Light Church in Bangkok also attended and shared their evangelistic expertise.

### **Water Project Completed**

A water project in the Akha hill tribe village of Don Sanloon was completed recently in cooperation with the Concordia Welfare and Education Foundation—Thailand (CWEFT). Deacon Chomwee and members of the Concordia Lutheran Church in Don Sanloon worked with CWEFT and the local district office to coordinate the installation of a water pump and tank which will allow everyone in the village to have year-round access to running water in their homes for the first time. Previously, women and children had to walk 3 to 4 km. to get the water from a nearby stream, but there would be no water at all during the hot season. This project would not have been possible without support from Grace Lutheran Church in Visalia, California and other U.S. donors.

## **VIETNAM**

### **Arkansas Team Visit**

During a recent visit from a group from Bella Vista Lutheran Church in Bella Vista, AR, team members traveled to Hung Vuong University, where volunteers Karen and Jerry Markin teach English. The group participated in an in-service training session taught by Karen in order to boost the teaching methodology at this rural university with which LCMS WM has partnered for more than ten years.

The team then traveled to two communes in Phu Tho province, where they visited day care centers which were built with support from friends in the Bella Vista community. In fact, one of the donors was there to see the school that her funds had built! Toys were presented to each school, as well as heart necklaces for each child that were handmade by friends at Bella Vista Lutheran Church.

They also were able to spend time with one poor family in Phuong Vien commune. On behalf of the group, Rev. Ron Pfluger and his wife Sally presented the family with funds for them to receive a loan to purchase a cow as a part the joint National Institute of Nutrition—LCMS Cow Project. The family was overjoyed with this help, and immediately wanted to show the team the cow they had chosen. Repayment of this loan will mean that another family will receive a loan as well!

### **Outreach in Rural Vietnam**

Jerry and Karen Markin are currently serving as volunteer English teachers at Hung Vuong University in Vietnam. They have found that it is about caring for individuals, developing relationships and sharing educational expertise. Ah-ha moments happen when students become aware of the correct pronunciation of words and increased ability to speak, read, and write, but more importantly when life dreams and hopes and questions are shared during a study session or over a game of UNO or Yahtzee.

Living in a more rural setting in Pho Tho, Vietnam, limited resources and frequent power outages do not matter in the bigger picture when enthusiasm and the desire to learn far outweigh anything that may be “missing.”

Jerry and Karen Markin served at Hong Kong International School for 12 years as teachers and coaches.

## **INDIA**

### **CISS in India with ALEA**

This February the Asia Lutheran Education Association (ALEA) helped to coordinate a visit by Dr. Jim and Joanie Koerschen, Head of Concordia International School Shanghai (CISS), to some of the Lutheran schools in the Ambur Synod of the India Evangelical Lutheran Church (IELC). The IELC runs some 80 schools in three synods (districts) in India, some dating back close to a century.

The immediate purpose of the visit was to explore how CISS could partner with schools in India. ALEA was also able to provide CISS the chance to get a better understanding of the situation of Lutheran schools in India. It is hoped that ALEA, together with Dr. Koerschen and others at CISS, will be able to work together to come up with strategies and ideas for ways the entire network of Lutheran schools and colleges in the U.S. and abroad can more effectively work with schools in India.

There has already been some pioneer work in this. Bill Leese has been taking groups of students from Hong Kong International School (HKIS) for three years now, and enthusiasm for his trips grows every year. Students from HKIS generally work building relationships and sharing English and other interests with the students there. But they also bring donations for computers and other materials which help the very great infrastructural needs many Indian schools face.

Beth and Dave Hoepfner, former HKIS teachers, have also been working with the IELC schools for the last two years. In addition to making a directory of the schools which included contact details as well as strengths and weaknesses for each school, the Hoepfners have also developed and shared a new Religion Curriculum with all the schools, which was the first such project in decades.

## **KOREA**

### **Retreat for Evangelists and Pastors in Training**

The Lutheran Church in Korea (LCK) held its 2011 retreat for evangelists and pastors-in-training from December 14-15 at Luther University under the theme “Workers of the Gospel” (Is 60:1). The members of the related committees led the opening and closing worship service as well as the morning and evening prayers. Rev. Dong-Jin Kim, pastor of Malgeunsam Lutheran Church in Gyeonggi province held a special lecture on church development, and a pastor-in-training from Daejodong Lutheran Church in Seoul gave a report of his one-month church experience in Germany.

At the annual retreat in December, the LCK holds individual interviews with evangelists and pastors-in-training, and commissions them to congregations for their practical training. The evangelists and pastors-in-training committee of the LCK receives requests from congregations and commissions them as assistants in ministry. The congregations in which they receive their training change every year. At present, the LCK has 11 evangelists and 9 pastors-in-training.

The committee consists of the church president, four officers of the General Assembly, and a dean of Luther University.

### **Retreat for Lay LCK Members**

On January 16, 2011, some 160 church members came together at Pallbok Lutheran Church in Yongin City, Gyeonggi province, for a lay church members' retreat for the church districts of Seoul and neighboring Gyeonggi province. The program consisted of three parts and started with a worship service, followed by a special lecture and dinner. Lecturer was Prof. Jeong-Gu Lee (Historical Theology) from Anglican University, who received his Ph.D. from Birmingham University in Great Britain. His lecture had the theme "Theological Esthetic of Church Architecture." The retreat was organized by the church association of Lutheran congregations in the suburban areas. It takes place every January and aims at faith education for laity and unity of the church members of the area. On this day, as successor for Rev. Kyungman Hong (Nambu Lutheran Church in Seoul City), Rev. Yeong-Seok Jin (Somyeong Lutheran Church in Incheon City) was introduced as the new chairman of the committee, and Rev. Yeong-Ho Lee (Creation Lutheran Church in Seoul City) was reappointed as its Secretary.

### **Luther University Graduation Ceremony**

On February 10, about 350 students, their parents, guests, and teachers participated in the 2010 graduation ceremony at Luther University. In total 107 students received their degrees. This included eight students of theology and four students of social welfare who received their master's degrees, and 38 students of human science and theology, as well as 57 students of social welfare who graduated with bachelor's degrees. Rev. Dr. Hyun-Sub Um, Lutheran Church in Korea President and chairman of the board of directors at Luther University, preached about "The Calling of the Commissioned" (Lk 4:16-21). He emphasized that graduation is not the end, but rather, a new beginning, and went on to say, "You are now people prepared and able to serve church and society."

### **Continuing Education Seminar**

From February 14-16, the education committee of the Lutheran Church in Korea held its 2011 pastors' continuing education seminar at Luther University. The seminar is held annually for the theological promotion of Lutheran pastors. This year's theme was "Public Theology." Some 30 pastors participated. Special lectures were given by Prof. Seon-Bin Im, who holds a Ph.D. degree from Princeton Theological Seminary and teaches Church Ethics at Presbyterian College and Theological Seminary in Seoul, by Rev. Seung-Ryeol Lee, President of the Korean Religious Social Welfare Association who holds a doctorate from Heidelberg University in Germany, by Prof. Jae-Yeong Jeong who holds a Ph.D. from Yonsei University in Seoul and teaches Sociology of Religion at the Graduate School of Practical Theology, by Rev. Gi-Jun Won, director of Mining Region Society Research Institute at Taebaek City in Gangweon province, and by Prof. Ji-Hun Hong who teaches Historical Theology at Honam Theological University and Seminary and holds a doctorate from Bonn University in Germany.

### **Winter English Camp**

Luther University / Seminary hosted its annual Winter English Camp for elementary aged children in the community. Short-term LCMS missionaries Nick Teller and Rebekah Schumacher served for three weeks by leading Bible time and English classes for nearly 100 students. Nick graduated from Concordia University – Ann Arbor and Rebekah currently attends Concordia University – Wisconsin. Both did an excellent job and were able to effectively communicate the love of Christ through their service.

## **ALEA**

### **ALEA Seeks Support for International Schools**

Former and current Asia Lutheran Education Association (ALEA) Executive Directors Al Schmidt, Darrell Van Luchene and Ted Engelbrecht visited some Concordia Universities in the U.S. recently seeking more cooperation and student teachers for ALEA international schools. They also met with CONFEDEX, a group of LCMS District Education Executives, to talk about how more seasoned Lutheran teachers could be sent to ALEA international schools. For more information, visit the ALEA website at:

[alea.lcmsworldmission.org](http://alea.lcmsworldmission.org).

## **CHINA**

### **YEP Project Outreach**

Students from Concordia International School Shanghai (CISS) recently took part in a Yunnan Education Project

(YEP) outreach event and traveled to a mountain village in Yunnan province. There they held educational outreach activities with more than 700 students from the local middle school. Through different activities, CISS volunteers were able to share basic English skills with the local students.

The Yunnan Education Project (YEP) started at CISS not only to provide scholarships to students in rural China, but also to supply schools with teaching materials, teacher training, and new facilities such as libraries. Apart from helping the local students in Yunnan by inspiring them to study, the YEP program also allows CISS students to broaden their own horizons.

### **Orphan Outreach**

This year 16 students from Concordia International School Shanghai (CISS) were chosen to travel to Xi'an and take care of infants at the Starfish Orphanage. Prior to the trip, the 16 students, with some help from family, friends, and CISS staff, made 52 blankets to distribute to the orphans. During the trip, the students helped to care for the babies at the orphanage and were encouraged by the positive impact their visit had on the children.

### **Disabled Children Outreach**

Sixteen Concordia International School Shanghai (CISS) students and two adults recently visited Huge Grace Disabled Children's Center, a home for children classified with special medical needs, which is located in Fengxian, a county situated a few hours away from Concordia International School Shanghai. The purpose of the visit was to offer children at the center with one-on-one attention. Volunteers also split into teams to offer the children different theme days, which included arts and crafts day, English teaching day, water day, sports day, and princess day.

Many understand service to be giving to the less fortunate, but in the end, this week surpassed the team's expectations. They realized that while they had gone to Huge Grace Disabled Children's Center to deliver joy to the children and caretakers, it was the children who had, in turn, enabled team members to discover the simplicity of happiness.

## **SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR CONTRIBUTORS**

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