

Asia Ablaze! Newsletter

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Korea Ablaze!

LCMS World Mission Visits North Korea

“Incredible!” “Amazing!” “Once in a life time!” These are just some of the impressions felt by Rev. Carl Hanson and Rev. Patrick O’Neal who recently traveled to the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea (North Korea) on Jan. 22-29, 2008 to visit 4 farms and explore how the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod and other *Ablaze!* partner churches might be involved in the lives of the North Korean people. The LCMS delegation, along with 3 men from the Church of the Brethren in the U.S., were invited by Dr. Kim Joo, a Korean American who for the last 18 years has been looking for ways to support agricultural development in North Korea.

In 2003 Dr. Joo’s non-profit organization (Agglobe Services International, Inc.) formed a joint venture with a North Korean company (Unpasan General Trading Co.) to oversee the operation of

four collective farms with 2,428 cultivated hectares and four villages that have about 15,000 people who are dependant on the farms. The goal of this work is self-sustainability and food security for the people.

Incredibly, the delegation was allowed to visit all four farms south of the North Korean capital of Pyongyang. The farm managers and other workers reported increased crop production and a 2-5 fold increase in their standard of living since the joint venture began just five years ago.

North Korean host to the delegation, Mr. Kim Myong-su, V.P. of both Unpasan and the joint venture, told the delegation that they were the first group of Americans allowed to enter North Korea to work with a joint venture agriculture project. “This historic trip is just the beginning” says Hanson. “With the kind reception of our North Korean hosts, the LCMS and her partners have a chance to make a difference in the lives of ordinary people who are looking for ways to improve their everyday situation.”

In 2007 a bumper harvest was expected, but massive flooding in August destroyed about 60% of the



(L-R) North Korean farm manager, Rev. Patrick O’Neal, and Rev. Carl Hanson stand in front of grain donated by LCMS World Mission

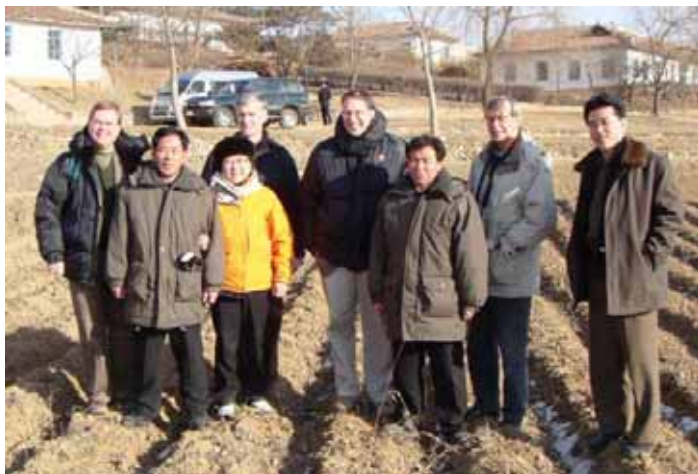
crops. A total of 261 metric tons of corn was provided as emergency food relief (34 MT by LCMS WM for \$10,000). The flood also destroyed the seed they hoped to plant in 2008.

About 1,000 hectares on these farms are growing cotton which is a high profit crop. With the right equipment, the farmers could also process the cotton seed, selling the products for hard currency. They could then purchase needed food, seed, and other goods and import them into North Korea.

LCMS World Mission is excited about its continued involvement in North Korea and is looking at ways to help with the immediate needs for this season’s planting, as well as longer term projects. For more information about this exciting work please feel free to contact Rev. Patrick O’Neal at

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Delegation in North Korean cotton field

Papua New Guinea Ablaze!

Gutnius Lutheran Church Appoints New General Secretary

Mr. Ezekiel David Peter is the new General Secretary for the Gutnius Lutheran Church (GLC). He was appointed by the Bishop's Council on January 3 at St. Paul's Lutheran Secondary School, Enga Province, Papua New Guinea.

An installation ceremony was held on Mar. 2 at Peiman Lutheran Congregation at the GLC headquarters in Irelya. GLC Head Bishop, Rev. David Piso, performed the installation which was attended by members of the clergy, department heads, as well leaders in the public service and the government, including the Enga Province governor, Mr. Hon Peter Ipatas, who is a GLC member.

The GLC is a member of the International Lutheran Council, and was founded by the LCMS in 1948. The church now runs



Bishop David Piso installs Ezekiel David Peter as the new General Secretary for the Gutnius Lutheran Church.

three secondary schools, a hospital and six health centers and many primary schools. In joint arrangements with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea, the GLC runs the Martin Luther Seminary, Balob Teachers College and the Madang Lutheran School of Nursing. The two

former institutions will now form the Lae Lutheran University.

Mr. Peter has over 15 years working experience in the public and private sectors in PNG. He was Deputy General Secretary and District Advisor for the GLC from 2003.

The GLC looks forward to the next 10 years of growth, especially boosting its membership by 80-100% to meet *Ablaze!* targets by 2017.

Dancing on Mt Mongaru

Despite tensions, warriors and a blackening sky, the Christians at Waimas would not give way to fear. Instead they were planning to do the more important thing – to praise and worship our gracious God.

LCMS missionary Anton Lutz and four of the six Region Bishops made the precarious trip to Waimas, despite tribal infighting, and arrived safely in time to spend two days with the Christians there.

During their visit they presided over 23 baptisms, Word and Sacrament, an ordination and the dedication of a new church building.

On a sunny Saturday morning there at Waimas, a woman stood and began singing the long litany of history – of Creation itself and of her people, then of the coming of the Gospel. As this woman sang, others joined her near the altar and blended their voices with hers. The newly ordained pastor stood with them and together they sang their heavenly praises and began to dance.

India & Bangladesh Ablaze!

Urban Church-Planting

On Feb. 17, the India Evangelical Lutheran Church (IELC) inaugurated a church-planting training course for the lay people of four language groups in

the metropolis of Mumbai. President Rev. J. Samuel conducted the ceremony and 18 students participated. It is anticipated that 30 students will be in the course, to be conducted in the evenings and on

weekends. The two-year course will be conducted by local IELC pastors, under the supervision of Concordia Seminary, Nagercoil.

Street Children Ministry

The Lutheran-run organization Seva Sagar conducts training for street children in Mumbai, India. They are fed, taught a skill, and given spiritual training. 1,700 children are served daily.

Self-Support for Widows

Two Portland-area congregations and Wheat Ridge Ministries provided funds for Lutheran widows in India to develop a means of self-support for their families. LCMS Area Director Rev. Dr. Herbert Hoefler distrib-

uted the help to twenty widows of one district in February.

Most widows live in rural areas and will use the funds (\$270) to purchase a cow; others will use it to purchase goats or to start a small shop. The emphasis is on widows with children in school.

New Work in Bangladesh

The People of the Book Lutheran Outreach and Children's Christian Concerns mission societies have joined with LCMS World Mission to start Lutheran schools in rural Bangladesh. The government has invited any organization to start schools in the country, so LCMS World Mission is responding to that open invitation.



Participants and leaders at the recent urban church-planting course held in Mumbai, India

Greater China Ablaze!

Short Term Team from Arkansas in Macau

In late 2007, God blessed the ministry in Macau through a mission team from Arkansas. The team stayed in Macau for just under one week and taught free English Bible classes in the local church, St. Paul's Lutheran Church. The format for the classes was essentially the same as the usual free English Bible classes taught by long-term LCMS volunteer missionaries at the Concordia English Center. The only differences were the volunteers and that the classes were taught on four consecutive evenings rather than the usual Tuesday and Friday evenings.

By the last day, God had brought about 15 new faces through English instruction to St. Paul's to hear His message of hope. Several of the students invited their friends and family to join the later classes. Most of them continue to be connected to the Concordia English Center's activities.

One particular student, James, who continues to come to the English center's free classes, expressed his excitement openly. He is an English student at one of the Universities in Macau. He was excited to learn new English words unique to Christianity and to learn more about the Bible as well. Even today, James continues to comment on the Biblical instruction that he re-

ceives. He explains how he had heard the stories in one of the local Christian schools, but never really understood. He also continues to bring a close friend of his. By the power of God's Spirit and the faithfulness of a few volunteers, these two young men are hearing the Gospel message and beginning to understand God's promises for them!

Missouri Team Teaches English in China & Macau

"Great potential exists to make an impact here" was the lasting impression of Rick Holtz, one of the members of a team sent by Webster Gardens Lutheran Church in St. Louis, Missouri. The group of 11 served as English teachers in Macau and Guangdong Province in China from March 4-11.

The group began their trip by assisting the staff at the Concordia English Center in Macau with their weekly free English class and bible study. Afterward, the team received their first opportunity to connect with the students, who were eager to practice their English with native speakers, especially Americans. "I was overwhelmed with the receptiveness of the Chinese people," commented Al Lange, another team member.

From Macau, the team traveled north to visit two cities in



Jim Lange talks with several Chinese students after an English lesson

students they had met the week before. Reflecting on her time building relationships with students, team member Susan Fauser said, "I found it to be amazing that we started the night out as strangers and ended the night as friends."

Guangdong Province, China. The first destination was a city that is being explored as a possible site for a new English teaching center. The team from St. Louis visited the Christian church there, where they again joined a free English class. The team contributed to the weekly event by leading an icebreaker and then serving as conversation partners for the local students.

This was a good preparation for the next destination – a larger city in Guangdong Province. This city is the site of an English center which began its work in 2005 and has been growing and thriving ever since. The Webster Gardens team had the privilege of teaching and talking with hundreds of students during the two days they served there. The team planned lessons and helped teach lessons to different groups of students. After each class period, the students stayed at the English center to take advantage of the opportunity to chat with native English speakers. Wayne Knolhoff, one of the volunteers, commented: "The hardest thing so far has been getting everyone to leave after an English night. They just want to stay and talk with us all night."

Before leaving to return home, the team returned to Macau to help lead another free English night and re-connect with the

Sharon Owens, director of the Concordia English Center in Macau, hopes that the team from Webster Gardens will go on to share their positive experience with friends and family, and that many more teams and individuals will volunteer to serve in this area of the world. "God is blessing and growing the work here, but we need more volunteers. We need all types of volunteers – we need short term teams, we need volunteers for three month commitments, and we need long term teachers."

For more information about serving in Macau and China, contact Ms. Sharon Owens at smomacau@yahoo.com.

Shanghai Hosts Christian Women's Conference

A Christian Women's Conference was held in Shanghai on Mar. 8 with more than 120 women in attendance. Joanna Weaver, author of the book "Having a Mary Heart in a Martha World," was the guest speaker. Participants were uplifted and encouraged to see the Lord working in the hearts and lives of the women of China through this unique opportunity. Follow the link below for more about the conference: www.youtube.com/watch?v=6wlkJHTUfI

More Greater China on pg. 7



Wayne Knolhoff and Randy Fauser chat with Chinese students after an English lesson

Vietnam Ablaze!

Taiwan Teachers Lead Workshop in Vietnam

From Jan. 27 – Feb. 1, seven English teachers currently serving in Taiwan, along with Jeanette Groth (LCMS volunteer coordinator in Cambodia) had the opportunity to travel to Vietnam to work with volunteers there to lead an English workshop held at Hung Vuong University in Phu Tho. During the six days, the teachers worked to build relationships, learn more about Vietnam and the people, and share knowledge and experience in three areas related to teaching English—writing, peer observation,

and EFL (English as a Foreign Language).

With the help of countless people, many long hours and lots of planning, the English workshop was a success, with more than 100 participants. University students, who are training to be English teachers, were able to gather together to learn and share their knowledge and experiences.

College teachers carried out the administration of the workshop. Most of the participants were students who are in training to become English teachers. Also, high school teachers from the local school systems were

excused from their teaching responsibility so they could attend the day long workshop.

Mr. Nguyen Van Hung, the dean of the Foreign Language Department at the university, said on many occasions, “LCMS Volunteers are people with golden hearts.”

Pictures and video from the workshop can be found at the following web links:



Teachers and students who participated in the recent “Teaching English as a Foreign Language Workshop” in Phu Tho, Vietnam

<http://gallery.mac.com/cimafam/100337>

<http://gallery.mac.com/cimafam/100417>

Cambodia Ablaze!

Business Workshops Held in Cambodia

This past month Jon Hitz, a Lutheran member of SCORE (Special Consulting Of Retired Entrepreneurs), gave a month of his life to God’s mission in Cambodia.

There is a need for church leaders in Cambodia to look at ways to support themselves. Jon held four workshops in different locations that taught business principals and a wealth of business

knowledge. These workshops shared the Christian message of hope that is brought about by a loving God. Jon started his trip by saying that his goal was to change the lives of four people. By the end of his visit he said, “I know my visit did change the life of at least one person. That person was me. I will never see the world the same way after my time on the mission field.”

While Jon’s visit gave support to LCMS missionaries Chuck and Jeanette Groth, he also

gave encouragement to Cambodians who need to feel and appreciate their place in the Body of Christ. The *Ablaze!* movement is more than the initial contact and sharing of the Gospel. Through personal visits and short-term teams the Gospel is shared in a real way on a daily basis. Jon says that for him the opportunity to work with Christians in another part of the world was a



Jon Hitz working with Cambodian students

real eye-opener to what the Great Commission is all about. While Jon came to “set *Ablaze!* people in Cambodia” through bringing them a better life for now, he also saw the spiritual dimension that God provided in his work.

Thailand Ablaze!

Baby Steps

It has been a year already since the Concordia Child Care Ministry Prachachuen opened its doors for children and parents to be part of the program. Just 13 months ago in Feb. 2007, the first registration admitted two children to be part of the child care ministry. Since that time, the child care ministry has been growing each and every day with the loving support of a small but splendid group of staff and volunteers—each of

whom help build trust for the parents and form a good relationship with people in the greater Prachachuen community.

Praise God that the children enjoy coming to the center and that parents are happy with the program. Some have also gone on to make positive recommendations to other families.

At the moment, there are six children at the center full-time, and it is expected that those children who graduated to kindergarten will return to the

child care center during the upcoming school break in April.

The child care center is also blessed to have been recognized as a high-standard childcare program by the Thai State Department, as it was issued an official child care license in Jan. 2008.

Through all of these positive developments in the past year, the child care ministry has been blessed with opportunities to share His love with the children. Each baby



Children enjoy their time at the Concordia Child Care Ministry Prachachuen in suburban Bangkok

step has truly been a step walking with faith in Him!

For more information on the child care ministry, please contact Ms. Goi Thienprasert at goithai@gmail.com.

Japan Ablaze!

Placement Day for VYM

Feb. 8 marked the annual placement day for LCMS World Mission missionaries serving in Japan with the Volunteer Youth Ministry (VYM) Program. Eight participants in the program were officially placed in congregations by the Japan Lutheran Church, an LCMS partner, to cooperate in the ministries that take place in the Tokyo metropolitan area and the northern city of Niigata. Reaching out to the local communities through Bible studies, English classes, volunteer days, and other similar forms of involvement, the VYM missionaries have a long history (almost 40 years) of committed service in Japan.

Japan Lutheran Theological Seminary Holds Evangelism Seminar

From Feb. 12-15 Japan Lutheran College held its 42nd annual Pastoral Theology Seminar. This year's gathering was the second in a three-year focus on how to do evangelism and mission work in Japan, and was entitled "Evangelism: The Gospel We Proclaim to the World."

In addition to discussing what topics or themes work best to communicate the Gospel in a Japanese context, a topic first taken up by seminary president, Rev. Dr. Naozumi Eto, guest lecturer Bishop Kazuhiro Morihe stressed the need for churches to depend less on the clergy and develop models for all members of churches to evangelize.

Another speaker this year included Rev. Dr. Makito Masaki, assistant professor from Kobe Lutheran Theological Seminary and recent Ph.D. graduate from Concordia Seminary St. Louis, who introduced evangelism methods utilized by Lutheran evangelicals in West Japan. Rev. Dr. Masao Shimodate, professor of Exegetical Theology at Japan Lutheran Theological Seminary and the Japan Lutheran Church pastor, presented a Bible study on Romans 5 and used the text to demonstrate the importance of this portion of Romans for understanding the theological foundations for evangelism.

Feedback from pastors attending from four major



Rev. Dr. Masao Shimodate speaks at the recent Evangelism Seminary at Japan Lutheran Theological

Lutheran bodies in Japan was very positive, and all taking part were blessed by the event.

Philippines Ablaze!

LCP Evangelist Still Ablaze! at 75

Evangelist John Geking does not allow his age (he is 75 years old!) to stop him from going to Babadi, Kayapa Nueva Vizcaya to do mission work. Mr. Geking has expressed his earnest desire to be actively involved and help the church accomplish its *Ablaze!* goal of establishing at least 100 new congregations in the Lutheran Church in the Philippines (LCP).

Last December, he and some of his youth walked for 12 hours just to be able to join the other young peo-

ple among the Kalangoya congregations for their youth camp.

Now, having been involved in mission work for three years, the Lord has blessed his efforts. A new congregation has been accepted as part of the Lutheran Church in the Philippines (LCP). May his "tribe" increase in the LCP.

Ablaze! Seminar Held at Mt. Nebo Lutheran Church

An *Ablaze!* seminar was held at Mt. Nebo Lutheran Church in Asipulo, Ifugao. North Luzon Highland District President, Rev. Felipe

Ehican, and Rev. Jerry Lomicio, together with lay leaders and women from St. John Lutheran Church, Tinoc Ifugao, hiked for six hours to reach the venue for the seminar. More than 50 lay leaders and members eagerly awaited their arrival and were happy to welcome them in the evening. "The six hour hike is nothing if you meet warm and smiling faces upon your arrival," said one of the *Ablaze!* trainers.

Most attendees were lay workers including preachers, Sunday School teachers, and women leaders. On the third day, a couple who

had been taught the basic doctrines of Luther's catechism, along with 14 children, were accepted as members of the LCP through the Sacrament of Baptism.

Two lay leaders from the Mt. Nebo congregation who attended the *Ablaze!* seminar have since established the Belec Lutheran mission. They are being supported by the Lutheran Women's League and other Lutheran congregations in the Kalanguya area. Currently more than 15 adults meet every Sunday at the Belec Lutheran Mission.

Korea Ablaze!

(Continued from page 1)

English Camp is Ablaze! at Luther University in Korea

Luther University's (LTU) Winter English Camp on Jan. 7-25 was a success. Rev. Mark and Lynelle Hansen and Jeremiah Dost were recruited by LCMS World Mission to serve as short-term missionaries for 3 weeks in this first-of-its-kind program at LTU. They taught along with Mr. Robert Collin who is a full time professor at LTU.

The work load was quite heavy, with six 40 minute classes each day and preparing the next days' lessons covering reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Each day the teachers had the opportunity to lead a class based on a Bible story.

The ladies in Pastor Hansen's congregations (Faith and St. John in Kiron, Iowa) had prepared books on the Christmas story. In the final week, the classes prepared a Bible-story skit to perform for their parents. Pastor Hansen preached at the closing program. He rejoiced in being able to proclaim Jesus' power over death.

Not only was this event good for LTU, but it was also good for the individual students. About half of the 45 students were non-believers, so these children had the opportunity to hear the Good News. There were also 30-40 parents who attended the closing service who had the opportunity to hear the Gospel.

Rev. and Mrs. Hansen, and Mr. Dost willingly answered the call to serve so that these beloved children could not only learn more English, but also hear the Words of eternal life. That's what *Ablaze!* is all about.

2008 Graduation at Luther University

On Feb. 14, the annual graduation ceremony was held at the main hall of Luther University. Five students from the Graduate School of Theology and 13 students from the Graduate School of Social Welfare received their Master degrees, and 12 students of theology together with 14 students of social welfare received their Bachelor degrees.

During the time of their studies at the Graduate School of Theology, the LCK nurtured the candidates for the ministry through scholarships and other support to the students. After their examination for pastor-in-training and their commissioning, these graduates will go on to work as founders of new congregations and as evangelists in various fields of ministry.

Oksu-Dong Church Reaches out throughout Asia

Located in Seoul, Oksu-Dong Lutheran Church is showing great fervor for the spread of the Gospel through overseas mission. From Jan. 2007 to Jan. 2008, the church has spread the Gospel to theological students and believers outside of Korea five times through Bethel Bible Study and Biblical theology training, reaching an average of 60 participants each time. Together with its mission program, Oksu-Dong Church also extends social welfare work and diaconal help. Last summer, the church gave beauty care to 95 Chinese citizens, offered an English Music Class to 40 children, provided medical care for 128 people, and organized a seminar on "Singing and Praise" to 35 church musicians.

For 2008, the church plans an even more active mission program with three visits



Korean pastors (in white) help with the clean-up after an oil spill in Korea's Yellow Sea

throughout Asia in the spring, summer and fall.

Ablaze! Presentation

During the Annual Mission Seminar for pastors, on Feb. 19, Rev. Patrick O'Neal from LCMS World Mission, gave a presentation titled "*Ablaze!* Moving from Perception to Participation." He introduced the motives that led to the birth of the *Ablaze!* vision and how Lutheran churches worldwide are involved in the movement. Concerning the implementation and continuation of *Ablaze!* in Korea, Rev. O'Neal outlined some practical proposals and a general plan for the LCK to consider that could be applied in Korea. After the presentation, there was a time for pastors and Rev. O'Neal to share their opinions of how *Ablaze!* could be carried out in Korea more effectively.

LCK Proposes How to Put Ablaze! Into Action

In a Feb. meeting of the Mission Committee of the Lutheran Church in Korea (LCK), a policy was established for effective evangelization. First, it was decided to set a mid- and long-term goal for the mission (2008 - 2017), and to promote this mission policy in coordination with the *Ablaze!* movement. The goal for the LCK mission is 70 local churches

with 10,000 church members by 2017. Second, the mission committee wants to strengthen mission education for lay church members and organize a mission team. To that end, mission materials will be produced for congregations. In addition, a special mission team of the General Assembly will be organized to support the mission of local churches. Third, it was decided to create a corner on the LCK website at www.lck.kr in which the *Ablaze!* movement and the goal of "70 congregations and 10,000 church members" are introduced so as to maximize the distribution of information.

Pastors Help with Yellow Sea Oil Spill Clean-up

LCK pastors volunteered their time on Jan. 21 & 22 to help clean-up a massive oil spill on the west coast of South Korea. Pastors cleaned clusters of tar from the sandy beach, worked on building a sand wall, and scattered oil-absorbing sheets. It was a good opportunity for the church leaders to give an example of Christ's love and service. The participants agreed that churches should serve as an example and do their best to be more actively engaged in diaconal service. They prayed for the oil spill to be quickly cleaned and for God's creation to be restored to its original beauty.

More Korea news on page 7

Korea Ablaze!

(Continued from page 6)

LCMS Professor Arrives at Luther University in Korea

After a few hurried months of preparation, Ms. Karla Konrad arrived in Korea on March 6 to begin the new academic year as an English Professor at Luther University (LTU). Ms. Konrad is serving as an EFL professor, teaching university English classes, community English classes, and TESOL

(Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) courses.

LCMS World Mission was asked by LTU to help recruit a Lutheran EFL Professor to keep up with demand as the University continues to expand its English department under the leadership of Dept. Chair Dr. Sung-bin Roh.

Prof. Konrad is a rostered LCMS Director of Christian Education (DCE). In addition to her primary English teaching responsibilities and being

part of the LTU faculty, Prof. Konrad will also serve as a mission catalyst on campus, and look for outreach opportunities among LTU's students and community. Most recently, Prof. Konrad was teaching ESL at Arizona State University and was also serving as the Director of International Friendship House, the international student ministry at Alleluia Lutheran Church in Tempe, AZ. She previously had served overseas for six



Karla Konrad with LTU President Park

years with the LCMS and the Japan Lutheran Church.

Greater China Ablaze!

(Continued from page 3)

Taiwan EFL teacher accepts position at HKIS

Michelle Cavalli, currently serving as a long-term missionary teaching EFL in Taiwan, has recently signed a contract to serve at the Hong Kong International School Lower Primary Campus. Michelle's

three years of service in Taiwan have been filled with instruction at various levels as well as active participation in local and international outreach events.

Local teacher accepts position in Indonesia

Elaine Chen, Concordia University – Nebraska alumna and long-time friend of LCMS

missionaries in Taiwan, recently accepted a Mandarin position with Sekola Perita Harapan in Karawaci, Indonesia. The connection with the Christian international school was first made by LCMS long-term missionaries from Taiwan during a workshop they led in the area last Spring. Elaine is currently an English professor at

a university in southern Taiwan and looks forward to sharing her faith in new environments and the challenges that lie ahead for her in Indonesia.



Elaine Chen

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR CONTRIBUTORS

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 Ms. Michelle Cavalli (Taiwan)
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 Rev. Dr. Herbert Hofer (India & Bangladesh)
 Rev. Kyungman Hong (Korea)
 Ms. Kay Lambert (China)
 Mr. Josh Lange (China)
 Mr. Anton Lutz (Papua New Guinea)

Rev. Patrick O'Neal (Korea)
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EXTRA! EXTRA! EXTRA!

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