

Asia Ablaze! Newsletter

Concordia International School Hanoi Receives Government Approval

On July 9, 2010 Concordia International School in Hanoi, Vietnam (CISH) received the long-awaited final approval from the government of Vietnam to begin operations. The school is planning to start classes in August 2011, with students enrolled in preschool through grade 7.

It was in 2006, with Concordia International School Shanghai (CISS) up and running well, that the LCMS began looking for new opportunities for school ministry. One of the options was Hanoi, where LCMS's Ted Engelbrecht and others had established a human care and ESL ministry in 1998 in conjunction with Dr. Tu Ngu and the National Institute of Nutrition. Their holistic program, which was recognized and honored by the Vietnamese national government, had included a vision of a school from very early on as a way of sustaining and extending the ministry in Vietnam.

At the February 2007 meeting of

the LCMS World Mission Asia Management Team the green light was given to begin the licensing process in Hanoi. Ted Engelbrecht (LCMS WM Southeast Asia Area Facilitator), John Mehl (LCMS WM Asia Regional Director), and Allan Schmidt (LCMS Asia School Developer & Retired CISS Founding Head of School) were given the responsibility to start the process. Allan and his wife, Sandy, took leadership in the effort. They helped to establish an advisory board made up of various representatives from CISS, Hong Kong International School, and other capable people. They guided the process of calling a founding head of school, Steve Winkelman, made presentations to donors and lenders, and shaped the thinking of those involved as to what great things are possible. As John Mehl shared recently, "Al and Sandy Schmidt are rare people given to us at just the right time. We thank God



Ted Engelbrecht and Dr. Tu Ngu, early visionaries for CISH

for them."

The goal of CISH is to have 200 students enrolled for the 2011-2012 school year. An additional grade will be added each year up to grade 12.

Since receiving the license to operate from the Vietnamese government, CISH has located and leased a temporary facility. The school will open in the CMC Building, located in northwest Hanoi, and will provide over 25,000 square feet of classroom and activity space.

CISH is another chapter in education for the LCMS that

began in 1839 when Saxon immigrants first built a school in Perry County, Missouri. As CISH opens its doors in 2011, the LCMS looks forward to a long and bright future for this new school's education ministry in Vietnam.

CISH is searching for members to serve on the founding faculty and staff. If you are interested in serving in this unique ministry at CISH, please contact Steve Winkelman at

Steve.Winkelman@lcms.org.

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CISH Establishment Committee. Seated: **Fred Voigtmann** (Concordia Int'l School Shanghai (CISS) Board Chair), **David Dickhudt** (Winds Enterprises CFO), **Steve Winkelman** (CISH Founding Head of School), **Ken Fowler** (Hong Kong Int'l School (HKIS) CFO). Standing: **Jim Koerschen** (CISS Head of School), **Allan Schmidt** (LCMS Asia School Developer & Retired CISS Founding Head of School), **John Mehl** (LCMS WM Asia Regional Dir.), **Ed Strohschein** (LCMS WM Asia Business Manager), and **Curt Larson** (CISS CFO). Not pictured: **Ted Engelbrecht** (Asia Lutheran Education Association Executive Dir. & LCMS WM Asia Education Facilitator), **John Nesheim** (3M Dir. of Talent Acquisition), **Dr Tu Ngu** (National Institute of Nutrition Head of Applied Nutrition Dept.), and **Doug Werth** (HKIS Board Chair).

Thailand Ablaze!

Nineteen Years of Ministry in Bangna

The Concordia Daycare & Community Center (CDCC) has been providing welfare and education assistance to under-privileged and at-risk children and their families in the Bangna Slum community of Bangkok for the past 19 years. The CDCC is a project of the Concordia Welfare and Education Foundation– Thailand and works closely with community leaders, as well as both government and non-government organizations, to best meet the needs of the children and their families. The CDCC serves the community through a variety of activities for children, youth and the elderly.

The community has witnessed the love of Christ through the CDCC, and community members who once did not understand why the CDCC gave so much and expected nothing in return have seen the love of God in action. Nineteen years ago, there were no Christian families in the community; now there are eight. And more than 2,000 children have heard the Gospel through the CDCC.

CWEFT Scholarship Recipient Succeeds

Since its establishment nearly 20 years ago, the Concordia Welfare and Education Foundation – Thailand (CWEFT) has assisted hundreds of children and youth through its scholarship programs. One such student, Waan, has been blessed with a series of successes in recent years.

Waan went to Bangkok to look for work two years after completing the sixth grade and too poor to continue his education. Deaconess Christie Nelson, a former LCMS missionary in Thailand, was made aware of this by his older sister who was receiving assistance from her at the time. Christie enrolled Waan in a free government welfare boarding school just a few hours from his home in the country where he studied through the twelfth grade. Waan has recently completed a five year Law school program of which CWEFT provided 3 years of scholarship, and he is currently seeking full-time employment.

Over the years, Waan has received unlimited support for his spiritual educa-

tion. While at the boarding school, he corresponded regularly and studied the Bible with Christie.

Since moving to Bangkok five years ago, Waan has been baptized and spends much of his free time helping the local churches, as well as helping at the CWEFT office. Most recently, he has started teaching a computer class for children at CWEFT’s Concordia Day Care & Community Center in Bangna as a volunteer. He is also enrolled in an 18-month leadership training program with the Luther Institute of Southeast Asia in Bangkok.

Please pray for Waan and the hundreds of others who have been touched in meaningful ways through CWEFT’s scholarship programs over the years.

Hmong Outreach Continues

In August 2010 representatives from LCMS World Mission and the Concordia Welfare and Education Foundation–Thailand (CWEFT) traveled to Phrae province in Northern Thailand to visit Mr. Sompan, a Hmong leader there. LCMS and



Waan, CWEFT scholarship recipient and recent graduate

CWEFT have worked closely with the Hmong Mission Society in recent years to connect and help build relationships with local Christian Hmong leaders. This particular community consists of about 1,600 residents, of whom 100 are now Christian.

With a growing Christian community, there is a need for Christian leaders and pastors to minister to this growing flock. The Hmong Mission Society holds trainings for local Hmong leaders 3-4 times per year to help meet these needs, while LCMS and CWEFT provide ongoing support whenever possible to further minister to the Hmong throughout Thailand.

Hong Kong Ablaze!

Volunteers Help Make Summer English Program a Success

This summer, LCMS volunteer missionaries in Hong Kong coordinated “Summer English Program” camps. They worked in a total of five Lutheran Church-Hong Kong Synod (LCHKS) schools, teaching Bible stories and helping students improve their English during the one or two day camps.

Many of the students were

initially unsure about the camps, which were filled with activities and crafts. But by the end of the camp, most of the students not only understood the story, but were also beginning to ask in-depth questions about the Bible and faith.

The camps serve two main purposes. The first is to teach current students English and Bible stories, and the second is to show community members that the schools have strong English programs.

Almost all of the schools in Hong Kong are conducted in Cantonese, but many have an English program.

Increasing enrollment is extremely important for schools in Hong Kong.

The birth rate in Hong Kong has been declining over the



A young participant in the Summer English Program offered at LCHKS schools

past few decades, and many
(Continued on page 6)

Korea Ablaze!

Summer Retreats for Women's Association and Men's Association

From August 8 to 11 the Women's Association of the Lutheran Church in Korea (LCK) convened for its 2010 summer retreat on the campus of Luther University. It consisted of lectures on worship and faith, a time for hymn and praise, and time for personal meetings. Four delegates from the Women's Association of the Japan Lutheran Church participated in the retreat as part of an annual exchange of faith between both churches. The retreat received support from various organizations, such as the Women's Association of the Japan Lutheran Church. 110 delegates from 11 Korean congregations and four delegates from Japan participated in the annual retreat. Additionally, LCK's Men's Association held its summer retreat on July 19 at Central Church in Seoul. Twenty-four members convened under the theme "Come Together and Pray."

Teachers' Training and Material Preparation for Summer Bible School

2010

On invitation from the Education Committee of the LCK, about 50 teachers from local Lutheran churches all over South Korea came together on July 4 for an annual training for Summer Bible School in their congregations. The program included singing, teaching methods for the Biblical units, and also a special prayer meeting aimed at a higher sense of calling. The local Lutheran churches receive Biblical study materials for Summer Bible School and instruction for their teachers as broad support by the LCK. The LCK plans to develop the support further. The theme for the 2010 LCK Summer Bible School was "Life Within the Church."

Korea Welcomes New Missionary

Long-term LCMS World Mission missionary Matt Wasmund and his wife, Dee Dee, along with their two children Lily (4) and Olivia (2) have recently transitioned to Seoul, South Korea. While Matt's position (Strategic Volunteer Coordinator for East Asia) will not change, he will be positioned to work more closely with the Lutheran Church in Korea as that local church body seeks additional avenues of ministry.

2010 LCMS Youth Gathering

From July 14 to 27, eight youth and two adults selected by the Lutheran Church in Korea visited the U.S. under the leadership of Rev. Shin-Kwang Ahn. The purpose of their visit was to participate in the LCMS Youth Gathering from July 14 to 21 in New Orleans, Louisiana. Participants paid their individual registration fees, while housing and the costs for public transport within the U.S. were provided by the LCMS. Besides participating in the Youth Gathering, participants also visited several churches within the U.S. and famous tourist attractions. After their return, they handed in written reports to the Church Office. The prevailing consensus of the youth was: "Through the encounter with Lutherans abroad, we were encouraged to live as Lutherans in Korea."

Lutheran Youth Summer Camp 2009

From July 26 to 28, the Lutheran Church in Korea (LCK) held a Lutheran Youth Summer Camp on the campus of Luther University under the theme "Life Within the Church." Seventy-nine youth from various local churches participated in the camp that offered various faith-related programs like worship services, a special lecture on the



Some of the 79 youth who participated in the recent Lutheran Summer Camp at Luther University in Korea

theme, group discussions and presentations, and games based on Bible stories. The bi-annual youth summer camp was prepared by the president of the educational committee of the LCK, Rev. Kyungman Hong. Committee members, as well as all participating in-training LCK pastors and evangelists, received financial support and assistance from the LCK Men's Association, Women's Association and local churches.

2010 Retreat for LCK Pastors' Wives

From May 7 to 8, the Lutheran Church in Korea (LCK) organized a retreat for LCK pastors' wives at the Yuseong Tourist Area near Daejeon City, located in the center of South Korea. Mrs. Jong-Sook Lee, wife of the LCK President, and Mrs. Jeong-Ok Lee, wife of the Lutheran University President, were among the 18 participants. The annual retreat is supported by the LCK and prepared independently by the pastors' wives association. This year's retreat had the theme "Relaxation and Health" and consisted of a worship service, prayer meetings, and mentoring groups, all of which serve to give new energy to the participants. The LCK puts effort into the further devel-

opment of this program so that more pastors' wives can participate and receive encouragement for their ministry.

Completion of Luther Center

On June 10, LCK held a thanksgiving worship service for the successful completion of the Luther Center in Jamsil, which is the economic center of South Korea's capital of Seoul. On July 31, LCK received acknowledgement of the completion of the construction work by the Seoul City authorities. The Luther Center is a memorial building for the 50th anniversary of Lutheran mission in Korea. It replaces the former five story building and has 24 above ground floors and 5 below ground floors with a total space of 35,894 square meters. Luther Center is an office building constructed for lending. It is planned to use the income for mission programs as the foundation of new congregations and overseas mission. The location of the building is across the street from where the world's tallest skyscraper is set to be built. The Luther Center is of utmost value and has received a lot of attention from the Korean Christian community. The inauguration ceremony will be held on October 10, 2010.

(Continued on page 5)

India Ablaze!

Religion Curriculum for India

As part of a 30 month study of the India Evangelical Lutheran Church (IELC) schools, Education Consultants Beth and Dave Hoepfner have developed a new religion curriculum for primary through high school grades. On September 3 they began to introduce and distribute it in Ambur Synod at the IELC Teacher Training Institute in the first of the IELC's three synods. 244 teachers from the 27 schools in the synod attended the morning sessions, which also served as a festive get-together for the teachers.

This is the first new religion curriculum for decades in the IELC and it was received with much excitement and gratitude. Its Lutheran perspective was especially appreciated. It has been translated into both the Tamil and Malayalam languages. Concordia Publishing House has also been very generous in providing materials and granting permissions for the use of their materials in the curriculum. Dave and Beth prepared boxes of materials to accompany the curriculum, including Arch books, posters, puppets and other visual aids for storytelling. In addition, the curriculum contains lots of ideas for covering the material using a variety of activities and teaching techniques which were also introduced in the sessions.

Beth and Dave will hold similar sessions in Nagercoil and Trivandrum Synods in the weeks to come. In total, all 82 schools which are managed by the IELC across Southern India will receive the new curriculum and materials.

LCMS World Mission and the Asia Lutheran Education Association join with the IELC in thanking God, the Hoepfners and everyone involved with this fine project, and pray that it will enhance the gospel outreach of



Beth & Dave Hoepfner (back left) and Rev. Ted Engelbrecht (back right) with the heads of schools from all of the IELC high schools in the Ambur Synod.

the IELC schools and the thousands of students who attend the schools every year.

Reflections from a Longtime Volunteer

For nearly five years, Mike Raha of Rochester, NY has served as an ESL volunteer on four different short-term mission trips to India, ranging in length from three weeks to three months. During his trips, Mike has helped to lead Spoken English Workshops in both Ambur and Nagercoil, Southern India.

After his four trips, Mike observed that at the church level in India there is a passion for Jesus that feels like what many have described the early Christian churches to be like. There is a Spirit *Ablaze!* in local communities fired by faith in a God who lives and breathes among the people.

IELC pastors visit every family in their congregations at least once a month, in addition to hospital visits, prayer meetings, and the like. Congregations note the absence of fellow congregants and reach out to them weekly. Prayer walks through the streets and villages are common as are street meetings after school and in the evenings. Youth rallies, gatherings, and camps are growing as the IELC recognizes the special needs of young folks, especially teenage boys.

Poor people receive food and financial support from other church members and from pastors. Having travelled with pastors on their rounds, Mike has seen firsthand the knocking on village doors gathering any available children into daily circles for songs, stories and prayers. It truly is more than a slogan to say that Christ is *Ablaze!* in India!



Volunteer Mike Raha with junior and high school students at an IELC school where he served for 3 months.

Philippines Ablaze!

LCP Holds Pastors' Fellowship

Pastors and church workers of the North Luzon Highland District (NLHD) of the Lutheran Church in the Philippines (LCP), joined by some pastors of the North Luzon Lowland District (NLLD), recently held a Pastors' Fellowship. It was held at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, in Guinzadan, Mountain Province on August 24-26. Some 30 national and local pastors from the two districts together with congregation members spent the three day retreat studying the Scriptures and fellowshiping with each other. Rev. Abel Cesar T. Villos, an instructor at Lutheran Theological Seminary in Baguio City, spoke to the gathering about the pastoral responsibility of teaching Christian Stewardship. Rev. Felipe Ehican, NLHD President, led the group in studying Pastoral Ethics.

As the LCP is a growing church body, it has a shortage of pastors and these Pastoral Fellowships are held regularly, not only to strengthen pastors in their ministries but also to encourage and inspire the congregations to continually pray for their pastors and also to pray that God would send more laborers to the harvest.

NLHD Holds Parish

Administration Seminar

The North Luzon Highland District (NLHD) of the Lutheran Church in the Philippines (LCP) held a seminar on Parish Administration and Church Practices on September 8-9 at St. Stephen Lutheran Church, Baguio City. More than fifty lay leaders and local pastors attended. Some were encouraged in ways to best direct and manage their congregations. Rev. Felipe Ehican, Jr., NLHD President, encouraged leaders to attend, as there are more than fifty congregations and outstations in this district. Speakers included Rev. Errol Pizarro and Rev. Mateo Cupas, who together supervise eight congregations. Additionally, seven clergy from the district provided clear, honest and responsible answers to questions and concerns raised by the lay leaders. These types of seminars enables church leaders to better lead their constituents, especially while managing church affairs when problems arise within congregations.

In addition, the president of the North Luzon Lowland District, Rev. Reynante Lagadon, also attended with three lay leaders from his district.



Participants at the recent Parish Administration Seminar held in the North Luzon Highland District

Former Missionaries Return to Celebrate 50th Anniversary

Rev. Schneider, a former missionary to the Philippines, arrived on July 12, for a ten-day visit in the Philippines with his wife Darlene, their three children, one daughter-in-law and two grandchildren. Rev. and Mrs. Schneider came to celebrate their 50th Wedding Anniversary. They visited Baguio City north of Manila and toured various places in Metro Manila, as well as met with Lutheran members and old friends.

Rev. Schneider served as pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church in Quezon City from

1961 to 1970, and then served as professor of the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Baguio City. Rev. Schneider is often remembered as the pastor instrumental in setting up the Trinity church building in 1964. Trinity Church was established in October 1947 by the late Rev. Alvaro Carino, the first LCMS missionary to the Philippines. Trinity Church had moved to several locations prior to Rev. Schneider's arrival.

Trinity, which has 250 baptized members and 400 confirmed members, is currently being served by Rev. Ruben Caldito. Trinity Church has also expanded its ministry to include a ministry to the deaf and people with special needs.

Korea Ablaze! cont.

(Continued from page 3) LCK's 40th Annual General Assembly Meeting

From October 10 to 12, the Lutheran Church in Korea (LCK) has a very special event planned- the opening of its 40th General Assembly Meeting. The place of the meeting is

special, too, as it will take place at Daejodong Lutheran Church which is also celebrating its 40th anniversary. The opening worship service will be held on October 10, 2010 and will coincide with the inauguration ceremony of the new Luther Center, which is the memorial building for 50 years of Lutheran mission in Korea. On this occasion there

will also be an unveiling ceremony for the first statue of Martin Luther in Korea.

New ALEA Website

The Asia Lutheran Education Association (ALEA) has a new website. Check it out at:

<http://alea.lcmsworldmission.org/>

China Ablaze!

CISS Continues to Excel and Expand

Concordia International School Shanghai (CISS) students have achieved amazing milestones in external assessments. CISS's Class of 2010 earned a median score of 2030 on the SAT college entrance exam. Last spring, 26 students took the SAT Subject Test: Math Level 2, and 12 received perfect scores of 800. Concordia's AP scores continue to stand out with 94 % achieving a passing score of 3, 4, or 5, and 79 percent achieving a 4 and above.

CISS is committed to building on best practices in education, but also continues to seek new and innovative ways to create an optimal environment for both teaching and learning. Planned upgrades to the surrounding landscaping have aspirations to not only support interaction, but also allow for introspection. This newly developed area will provide years of enjoyment for CISS students, faculty and families.

CWEF's Summer English Program is a Success

During the month of July, Concordia Welfare and Education Foundation's (CWEF) Summer English Program enabled seven Americans to teach English in Asia. It was remarkable to witness how God brought together seven strangers and molded them into a team. Each person was different - different personalities, different ages, different levels of teaching experience - but they all had one common trait: their desire to serve while teaching English. And this they did without reserve, wholeheartedly.

The teachers poured their time and energy into the classroom, developing relationships with their students. One planned a birthday party for her students; another presented a culture lesson about American music by playing songs from each decade on his guitar; and another class celebrated Christmas in July. The adult students, on the other hand, had great conversations and developed deep friendships while sharing about their families,



CWEF volunteers, Suzy Allen (back left), Sandra Wehrbein (front center), and Caroline Saine (front right), pose with students during the recent Summer English Program

what motivates them, and their hopes for the future.

The American teachers developed friendships not only with their students, but with the various people they met each day. It was incredible to watch the relationships they formed during their time teaching. Whether meeting new people on the street or sitting and talking with people at a favorite local café, the teachers integrated into

everyday life and lived amongst the local people.

The impact the teachers made both in and out of the classroom was significant. They set a great example by serving their students and serving each other, all the while showing the love of Christ through their interactions.

Hong Kong Ablaze! cont.

(Continued from page 2)

schools are now in danger of closing.

One proven way to increase school enrollment is to have a strong English program. LCMS and the LCHKS have been working together to improve the English program in many of the LCHKS schools by bringing native English speaking LCMS volunteer missionaries to work with students.

In Hong Kong, there are over 30 Lutheran schools run by the LCHKS, serving over 18,000 students. At least 90% of the population in Hong Kong is

non-Christian. The Lutheran schools provide a way for the LCHKS to share the Gospel with thousands of students and their families.

Continuing this academic year, there is an exciting opportunity for the LCMS to help share the Gospel with thousands of students and their families. Please pray for those LCMS volunteers and the others who are considering serving in Hong Kong.

Hong Kong Student Teams Visit USA

Two teams of students and teachers from Lutheran High Schools in Hong Kong traveled to the USA this summer on

cultural and mission exchange programs. Four students from Liu Ming Choi Lutheran College (LMCLC), led by LMCLC teacher Christine Lai, traveled to Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church in Omaha to learn about its mission outreach and youth ministry. Eighteen Students and two teachers from Ma Chan Duen Hey (MCDH) Memorial College traveled to South Dakota and visited several locations and congregations.

These student exchange trips are one of the new activities in the International Interface Program of the Lutheran

Church-Hong Kong Synod (LCHKS) and LCMS short-term mission teams. Over the past several years, these LCMS short-term teams have been connecting and supporting schools in the LCHKS. LMCLC and MCDH are two of six schools in Hong Kong that have hosted teams. Not only have these school's been blessed by these mission teams coming to Hong Kong, but now the schools are excited to send teams to the US for service learning and mission.

Taiwan Ablaze!

CMS Welcomes New School Year & New Teachers

Concordia Middle School (CMS) in Min Hsiung, Taiwan, is pleased to announce the official start of the school year. On August 31, CMS began the first semester of regular classes. The CMS campus is home to a Junior High and High School, a kindergarten, and an after-school English Language Academy for elementary students. There are close to 3,000 students who come to the campus for some form of education.

The school is also blessed with 12 American missionaries who serve as English and Bible teachers. These teachers help to share the love of Jesus Christ not only through teaching class, but also witnessing in their every day lives as they interact with both students and teachers. Given that less than 15% of the students are Christian, and only half of the faculty, God has presented the American missionaries with an incredible opportunity to spread the Gospel here in Taiwan. The school is especially excited to welcome two new LCMS missionaries: Graham Guenther and Rachel

Sekki. Graham and Rachel are both teaching Junior High English and Bible classes at CMS. They arrived in the middle of August and have been doing a wonderful job of getting adjusted to the new culture and service opportunities.

In addition, CMS is still looking for four teachers to teach Bible and English to elementary students. If you or someone you know is interested, please contact LCMS World Mission today.

Taiwan Sends Participants to LCMS National Youth Gathering

Two Taiwanese teenage girls, accompanied by LCMS World Mission volunteer missionary Beka House, attended the LCMS National Youth Gathering in New Orleans, Louisiana. The girls were able to meet thousands of other Christians who were on fire with the Gospel. They sang, worshipped, participated in Bible studies and lectures, danced, and spent a lot of time with kids from all walks of life. After returning to Taiwan, one of the girls wrote a letter to say thank you. In it, she wrote "Being a Christian is hard because no one else is a Christian [in Tai-

wan]. In America, we met so many people who are Christians and love Jesus. It makes me know I can be strong in my faith too!"

CELA Holds Annual Summer Camp

Concordia English Language Academy (CELA) in Min Hsiung, Taiwan held its annual month-long summer camp. Though the event is held on the campus of a Christian school, the majority of the students who attend are not Christian. During the first Bible lesson, it was evident which students had attended the academy's classes before. This was not because of their English ability, but rather because they were actually witnessing to the other students by explaining more clearly the Bible story in their native language. May God use the seeds that were planted to grow faith in these students.

Mark Wolfram Takes on New Responsibilities at CMS

As LCMS World Mission's ministry grows in East Asia, volunteer missionary Mark Wolfram is taking over new responsibilities at Concordia Middle School to serve as a

liaison between the school, World Mission, and the team of 12 volunteers who serve there. Mark arrived in Taiwan in 2005 and has participated in a number of intra-Asian service and evangelism trips, as well as taught English and Bible on the campus of over 2,500 students.

Salvation Lutheran Welcomes Members Through Baptism

A special event was celebrated at Salvation Lutheran Church, in Chiayi, Taiwan. A woman named Roro, along with her two sons, Jeff and Jay, were baptized into the family of Christ. After the baptism, Roro shared a testimony of her faith, explaining how she had grown up in an abusive home but was able to find comfort in the words of the Bible. Later, when a member of the congregation invited her to church, she began taking classes to learn more about the Bible and baptism, despite violent threats to her life from her husband's family. What a joy to experience the pleasure of a multiple baptism in Taiwan.

Sri Lanka Ablaze!

Sri Lanka English Workshop

A team of eight volunteers from Ohio, Kentucky and California traveled to the mountains of central Sri Lanka to be a blessing for the people of the Lanka Lutheran Church. God blessed the team with 57 students who were eager to learn English and eager to grow in their faith. Team members, in turn, were blessed beyond measure by the richness of the students' faith, their zeal for reaching out to their Hindu and Buddhist neighbors, and their over-

whelming kindness.

The primary purpose for the visit was to lead a Spoken English Workshop for some of the youth, young adults, teachers and evangelists. Each morning volunteers led sessions emphasizing conversation and grammar, and a related Bible study was the afternoon focus, using the 60 English Bibles volunteers brought with them. Additionally, a pastor on the team led a course on Ephesians for the five local pastors in the morning and the eight evangelists in the afternoon.

In Sri Lanka, English is the

language of commerce and the "bridge language" between the Sinhala and Tamil languages. It is important for the youth to know English in order to advance in school and to acquire a good job. Team members were delighted to learn that some of the students who had attended the workshop last year did not return, because they now have good jobs in one of the cities. Most jobs on the tea plantations, where most Lanka Lutherans live, pay only two to three dollars a day.

The pastors and members of the Lanka Lutheran Church face some daunting challenges. But they are truly *Ablaze!* with the light and love of Christ, as they expand their Gospel outreach into a growing number of remote villages in the beautiful highlands of this island nation.

Vietnam Ablaze!

Australian High School Team Visits Vietnam

A team of fourteen from Kormilda College (the equivalent of an American high school) located in Australia's Northern Territory and led by Head of Senior School Shane Sheddon, were able to visit LCMS World Mission project sites in Vietnam on July 6-7.

The trip began early in the morning with a three and a half hour drive to Phuong Vy commune in Phu Tho province. The team visited with families who had received cows as a part of LCMS's microcredit project. The students were able to see first-hand how the families lived and hear how the cows have been a blessing. One family also raised bees, and the students enjoyed seeing the bees and tasting some of the fresh honey. It was also a chance to reinforce that families cannot make a sufficient living working the rice fields, and thus must find other sources of income. Each bottle of honey sold yields about US\$8, and this particular family is able to sell about four bottles per month for an extra income of US\$32. This does not sound like a lot, but in the villages of Vietnam it is a significant boost to monthly income.

On day two, the team helped to level off the ground at a primary school in the com-

mune. This will allow the school to use the land for more outdoor activities with the students. Trucks had brought a large pile of dirt, and the team needed to move the dirt from one place to another. Using shovels and hand-pulled carts, the team was able to make a good dent in the large pile. While they were working, some local residents came to help while other simply watched the process.

Despite only serving for two short days, the team was able to make an impact and will be remembered by the local residents they were able to serve.

Celebrating a New School Building in Phuong Vien Commune

Last week marked the official celebration of the opening of the new school building at the Early Childhood Center (ECC) in Phuong Vien commune, Phu Tho province. LCMS World Mission and National Institute of Nutrition (NIN) representatives were invited to see the completed school building and meet with teachers and commune officials.

These new classrooms were made possible by the gener-



Kormilda students work hard to help level the ground at a primary school on a recent service trip

osity of Nancy Larson, a member of Bella Vista Lutheran Church (Bella Vista, AR, USA), and Bethel Lutheran Church (Westmont, IL, USA). Praise God for these generous partners who have helped not only the people of Phuong Vien, but also the relationship between LCMS and Vietnam.

Quality facilities are a very serious need in communes like Phuong Vien. With many children wanting to come to school, ECCs lack enough classrooms to accommodate students. Class sizes get larger and larger, and the school day is divided in two: a morning class and an afternoon class. An expansion

like the one supported by LCMS World Mission will put less strain on class sizes by providing two brand new classrooms.

Moreover, LCMS World Mission and the NIN often implement nutrition projects in schools across Phu Tho province. Building adequate school facilities also helps in teaching children and teachers proper nutrition and food preparation techniques so that children are not just able to develop intellectually but physically as well. Having a safe environment for children is important for parents, too, so that they can focus on their farming and other income-generating work.

Cambodia Ablaze!

Helping Hands Project

Baby Philip was born to a Khmer family. His parents are Christians and members of Trinity Lutheran Church in Battambang, Cambodia. Both parents are also HIV positive and live in the remote countryside about 30 miles northeast of Battambang, Cambodia. By the grace of God, baby Philip was born healthy. His doctor recommended that he only

drink formula and not drink his mother's breastmilk. This put Philip's parents in a very difficult position as they were unable to pay for the formula which costs \$12 per week. They did the only thing they could which was to feed him porridge mixed with sugar. This did not go well with Philip.

When 12 year old missionary-kid Gaozong Faith Lo heard

about baby Philip's situation, she asked her father and LCMS missionary, Fungchattou Lo, to ask people during his furlough in the US to help feed baby Philip. Gaozong's "Helping Hands Project" was created to help other children know the love of Christ and has been a success! Baby Philip now has enough formula for one year, and is growing in love and in Christ.



Gaozong Lo with baby Philip

Japan Ablaze!

Japan-US Exchange Program

Twenty seven students from Urawa Lutheran School in Urawa (Saitama), Japan participated in an annual exchange program with Concordia University Irvine in Southern California and Christ Church Lutheran in Phoenix, Arizona. The 23 day summer study program was an opportunity for students to experience Christianity through homestays and other special events. The trip was a great encouragement for the Christian participants, while other students were also able to experience God's love.

One of the chaperones, Cassie Frankie, says, "In addition to the excitement of an international trip, another benefit for the students was the opportunity to meet and have fellowship with other Christians in the U.S."

Kids Day Event a Success

"God the Creator" was the theme for a special kids' day event at Nozomi (Hope) Lutheran Church in Niigata, Japan. LCMS volunteer missionaries Jenae Siebarth and Peter Pfaff partnered with church members to lead the summer activities. After a discussion led by one of the members about church and

the worship service, the pastor of the church, Rev. Miyazawa, talked about the Creator God. Much love was shown throughout the day and encouraging relationships between the church and participants were formed.

Summer Church Camp

One of the foundations of the early church was often having meals together. The theme of "Breaking Bread Together" was chosen for the summer church camp of Seishin (Holy Truth) Lutheran in Sugunami, Japan. About twenty participants carpooled to a church member's

cabin in the nearby mountains. Using recipes collected from several people, participants learned how to make many kinds of bread. The bread-making itself was a team effort, with up to five or six people measuring and mixing each batch, culminating in the highlight of every meal – sampling fresh, warm bread. The camp schedule included praise and worship time, a guest speaker, a trip to a local hot spring, a campfire, and a time to wash one another's feet, strengthening the bonds of fellowship in Christ, the Bread of Life.

Macau Ablaze!

July 4th Beach BBQ

The Macau Concordia English Center (CEC) team held an outreach event at Hac Sa beach on July 4th to welcome the Myers family (Matt is the new CEC director) and share the love of Christ with participants. A seminarian studying in Hong Kong who assists the Macau ministry by building friendships and by sharing the Gospel in Cantonese and Mandarin attended as well. There were dozens in attendance.

A New Way to Follow-Up

One way the Macau Concordia English Center team has been able to follow-up with former teachers is to invite them to visit via the internet telephone. It is great to announce "James Rush will be here on Tuesday," and know it is true. The visitor's image is projected on the wall and everyone has the chance to talk to an old friend. The internet visitor can also join a small group study and even help to lead the discussion.

New Slogan, New Website

"Learn English, Make Friends, Get Connected!" is the new slogan for the Concordia English Center (CEC) in Macau. The idea is for people to see CEC as more than just an English school, which is apparent the moment a new visitor walks in the door. With the new website and slogan, CEC hopes to get more people in the door to experience what it is

to have Christian friends and to connect with their Heavenly Father. The new website has sample video lessons and provides an overview of CEC programs and services. For more information, you can visit

www.concordiaenglish.org

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