

The Journey to Winnipeg is a Challenge



The LWF Tenth Assembly will bring together representatives of the LWF member churches from all over the world. In Asia, about 110 delegates are expected to represent the 46 LWF member churches from the region. The journey to Winnipeg is not merely a sort of enjoyable event, but will gather around the theme, "For the Healing of the World," which will really challenge us and our churches in our calling to be the full expression of Christ as the ultimate healer of the world.

The Assembly theme will bring to our mind many frightening images of the pain and suffering caused by SARS, HIV/AIDS, terrorism, all forms of violence, environmental degradation, wars, the growing environment of religious intolerance, the spread of religious extremism, and corruption among a host of other problems in the world. The Assembly is going to take place exactly during this very difficult global context in which we are all called for the strengthening of openness and trust that should become very vital within our united communion. For us the theme of the Assembly, "For the Healing of the World" implies that the churches must never be discouraged and become weak in the midst of those painful realities because we believe that God has empowered us to embark on the mission of healing.

From the Christian perspectives, in our attempt to bring healing to others we must be encouraged by our own experience of being saved, redeemed, forgiven and given new life through God's amazing grace in Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. From our Asian perspectives our reflection can be focused on how our Asian churches understand the task of healing in our own context. On the one hand, as the Asian Lutheran communion we are called for a commitment to a deeper understanding of the theme 'For the Healing of the World' and on the other hand, we are called to a commitment toward the enrichment of the global communion through the mutual sharing of our cries for healing.

We believe that after the Winnipeg Assembly we will be furnished with enriched experiences from the Assembly and also with our renewed commitments that will enable us to continue the struggle with our Asian communities who need healing. The next Asia Church Leadership Conference (ACLC) is planned to take place in 2004. The core of the ACLC will be designated for the sharing of experiences and visions together in line with the resolutions and recommendations of the LWF Tenth Assembly. Through this forum, the Asian Lutheran churches will ensure the reception of the Assembly's resolutions and recommendations in order to work out a plan of action and strategy for mission and ministry of the LWF member churches in Asia.

May God's richest blessings be upon us all as we and our churches prepare the journey to Winnipeg.

Ginda P. Harahap
LWF/DMD Asia Secretary

C O N T E N T S

editorial

The Journey to Winnipeg is a Challenge 1

LWF 10th Assembly

Proceed as Scheduled 2
For The Healing Of The World 2
Assembly Logo 3
Sharing of Gifts 3

news and media

LWF Fund : Time For Action 4

news from the region

Demise of Dr. Andrew Hsiao 5
Tribute To A Great Leader 6
Indian Lutheran Churches Install New Leader 6
VELKD's New Officer 7
LCP - CTC 2003 Graduation 7
Induction of Rev. Wolfgang Grieninger 7

reports

Concordia Theological College (CTC) 8

cultural highlights

Life of the Batak [Part 2] 10

youth platform

YICAS Vision Beyond 2000 11

misc

WHO Update on SARS 12

mailbox

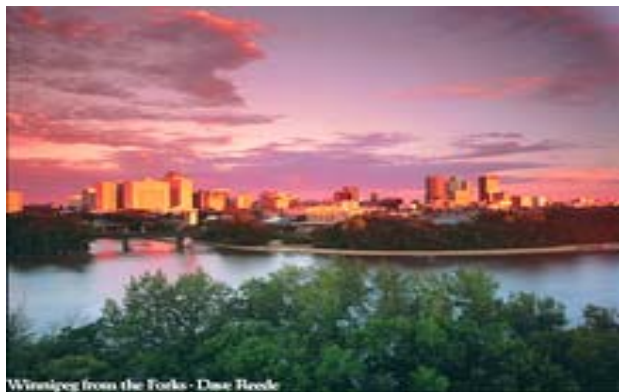
Dear Sally 12



Rev. Ginda P. Harahap - LWF/DMD Asia Secretary, ALN Editorial Member ©GPH

LWF Tenth Assembly to Proceed as Scheduled

Necessary Precautions will be in Place in Winnipeg



Addressing a press conference during a visit to Winnipeg, Lutheran World Federation (LWF) General Secretary, Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko said the Assembly will proceed as scheduled at the Winnipeg Convention Centre, July 21-31. The LWF is satisfied that the SARS outbreak in Canada has been curbed and will not adversely affect the forthcoming LWF Tenth Assembly.

Noko said the LWF has made some “very strong inquiries” about the situation in Canada. But there was never any consideration given to delaying or relocating the Assembly because of SARS, he noted. “It never came to a question of postponing the event ... or to call the [LWF] Executive Committee to come and discuss that,” Noko told reporters at the Winnipeg news conference.

“We are satisfied with the health arrangements on this matter,” he stressed.

Even so, the LWF will take precautions at the Assembly against any risk of contracting SARS. He cited the distribution of the Eucharist during worship services, of which the practice is the use of a common cup during Holy Communion. He noted that individual cups will be available as an option. Also, medical staff will be on hand to offer the necessary advice.

“Whatever we do with the choices and options we are giving, the integrity of the [Lutheran] communion is not undermined,” Noko emphasized.

The Assembly with over 1,000 participants expected, including more than 430 delegates from the 136 LWF member churches in 76 countries worldwide.

(Abridged from LWI, 29 May 2003)



The Assembly Theme

“FOR THE HEALING OF THE WORLD”

The Assembly theme was chosen by the LWF Executive Committee from suggestions made by LWF member churches in 2000. The inspiration came from Revelation 22:2 about the river and tree of life: “...and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.”

This theme, as compared to previous Assembly themes, points more explicitly to the **world** and the various contexts in which we live. The truth that faith confesses must come alive, be

understood, confessed and lived out in ways that genuinely speak and respond to the world's needs.

We cannot ignore a world that is festering with poverty, divisions, despair, sickness, violence, injustice—and situations of many kinds desperately in need of healing ... Sin and its effects continue to be manifest in ever-new ways.

We assemble together as a communion because of our conviction and

proclamation that the God we know in Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit **is** ‘for the healing of the world.’ This is the distinct witness we as Christians bring to this widely shared concern for healing. At the Assembly, we will be exploring the implications of this for our lives, our congregations, our societies, **and** especially for us as a communion of Lutheran churches.

(Abridged from LWF Assembly Update/No. 1)

Assembly Logo

The Assembly logo shows a broken landscape—white cracks in earth or mountains—set against a cross on the left and an olive branch with three large leaves on the right. The Assembly theme, “For the Healing of the World,” cradles it. The cross implies movement. One of the leaves is leaning over the earth while the others are reaching toward the sky as a sign of creation and healing. The logo was designed by Erik Norbraten and Richard Nostbakken (members of ELCIC).

(LWF Assembly Update/No. 1)



Sharing of Gifts

Introducing the gifts that will be shared at the Assembly ...



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©LWF/H. Putsman



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©LWF/K. Richter

+ Olive oil

From the Mount of Olives, East Jerusalem – Olive oil will be used at two healing services during the Assembly – anointing as a gesture of healing.

+ Silk scarves

From Bangladesh – Silk scarves in seven rainbow colors arrayed with the LWF Tenth Assembly logo.

+ Inuit Structure

From Canada - Inukshuk or “image of the human spirit” is an Inuit – an Aboriginal cultural group inhabiting enclaves in coastal areas of Canada – structure built to guide travelers, marking where others have been and where it is safe to go. The ELCIC offers this inukshuk as a symbol of your presence at the LWF Tenth Assembly.

+ Ballpoint pens

From Italy – Specially designed ballpoint pens with the Assembly theme in four languages, event, venue and date together with the Assembly logo.

+ Traditional Burundian baskets

From Tanzania – Beautifully woven baskets by refugee women from the camps run by the LWF Tanganyika Christian Refugee Service (TCRS) in western Tanzania.

+ Giant Light Up

From Northeastern Slovenia – Large decorated ceremonial candles with the LWF Tenth Assembly logo by the Slovenian Women. During the Assembly, these candles will be “en-lightening” the services celebrated by a world-wide communion in Winnipeg.

+ Bottle Caps

– LWF Assembly Logo Pin made from bottle caps by the Zimbabwean Women. These ornamental pins are a symbol of partnerships in the Lutheran Communion that are aimed at breaking the cycle of poverty through sustainable development.

A special contribution to the Assembly will be the cries for healing that have been collected from all the regions around the world related to the following themes:

- * O God, the healer, liberator, savior of the world
- * Forgive and heal
- * Recorderpower
- * Heal our divisions
- * Liberate from bondage
- * Rectify injustices
- * Empower us to act
- * Fulfill your promises, O God

The sharing of all these gifts is an invitation to all participants to set out for Winnipeg with open eyes and to discover the gifts that we will be sharing with one another at the Assembly. Yet it is not just a matter of material gifts. Every participant makes his or her own special contribution to the Assembly – in the plenary discussions, talks in the village groups, by offering a smile, extending a hand or lending a sympathetic ear. Contributions are made in varied ways to every gift, every small contribution is a part of the whole picture, helping to give the Assembly its very special features.

(Abridged from the LWF Assembly Update/No. 3)

TIME FOR ACTION

Your Commitment to the LWF Endowment Fund



A Pledge of Commitment to the LWF Endowment Fund © ROAS

For many years, the Lutheran World Federation has extended great assistance to countless people and countries through ongoing relief work, along with its support towards church growth efforts, theological education, development projects and ecumenical contacts. Yet very often each of these efforts is threatened by worldwide economic problems such as economic recession, exchange rate fluctuation, currency devaluation and variations in the gifts from member churches all of which are beyond the Federation's control.

The recent attack of the "SARS" virus in the Asian region has further deteriorated the social & economic situation particularly at the grassroots level, where those around us have suffered greatly. I think the LWF's theme for its Tenth Assembly in July "For the Healing of the World" is most timely and appropriate. Sufferings are happening everyday and often right at our own doorsteps. The untold millions who are suffering around the world may be too far away from our view, but should not be too far from our fellowship, prayers and support. We thank God that in and through Him we can overcome all adverse situations.

In anticipation of all these, the Lutheran World Federation Foundation-Endowment Fund was established in response to a recommendation by the LWF Council in September 1996. The amount of USD 4.3 million in receipts and pledges had so far been received. The fund will be prudently invested and help provide the LWF with a stable financial base to continue being a source of help and blessing to the needy people and churches around the world.

The Objectives:

1. To strengthen the financial stability of the LWF
2. To secure the continuity of the indispensable work of the LWF
3. To help the 60 million Lutherans in 73 countries to work together
4. To support 650 relief and self-help projects in the five continents
5. Uplifting worship & strengthening church growth, energizing theological education, advancing ecumenical cooperation and outreach.

The Goals:

USD 10 million by the year 2004
USD 50 million by the year 2010

The allocated target amount to be contributed by the 46 member churches in Asia with a membership of almost 7 million is USD 500,000. The date set for the fulfillment of this goal is by the year 2010.

Thus, we would like to suggest the following strategies for your church to consider:

1. One U.S. dollar per member
2. Designate one Sunday offering collection for the LWF Endowment Fund

I am also appealing to you to approach those who have been blessed by God and doing well in their career through the LWF scholarships to reciprocate by giving generously to the endowment fund, as I believe they would share the same vision on this good cause.

The positive response at the LWF Pre-Assembly in Medan has greatly encouraged me and I am looking forward to the great action on the commitment made by all of you who are church leaders or representatives. No matter how great or small our gifts are, the important thing is the heart of the giver.

I believe that our Lord has abundantly blessed the Asian churches through the Lutheran World Federation and as good stewards of God, we ought to be channel of blessings for the future generations. This is only possible when we put our resources together so that the "Lifeline of Hope" could be carried on from generation to generation.

May the peace of the Lord that surpassed all understanding be with you always and God's bounteous grace and blessings be upon you as you lead the church to a greater height for His Glory.

Thank you for putting your commitment into immediate ACTION through:

The LWF Foundation - Endowment Fund

The Lutheran World Federation
Office for Finance and Administration
P.O. Box 2100
CH - 1211 Geneva 2
SWITZERLAND

E-mail: lwf-foundation@lutheranworld.org

Tel.: +41/22-791 61 11
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Lai Yoke Kiew
LWF Endowment
Fund Committee
Asian Region



NEWS FROM THE REGION

HONG KONG



Announcing the Passing On of Dr. Andrew Hsiao
Lutheran Theological Seminary (LTS) and Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hong Kong

It is with heavy heart that we announce the passing away of our brother in Christ and good friend, Dr. Andrew Hsiao, President Emeritus of LTS, on the evening of May 25, apparently from a heart attack. Dr. Hsiao was a faithful servant of the Lord right to the very end. On that day, he had invited four LTS students from Mainland China to his house for dinner. After he prayed and they started the meal, Dr. Hsiao simply stopped talking and slumped over in his chair. Efforts to revive him were unsuccessful and he died in the ambulance on the way to the emergency room.

All of Dr. Hsiao's life was dedicated to the Lutheran Theological Seminary. He was born on May 3rd 1926 at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in China, Shekou, Hubei, China. He came to Hong Kong in 1948 and became the President of LTS for almost 22 years from 1971 to 1994. Dr. Hsiao was also a leader of the Church world-wide, having served as the Vice-President of the Lutheran World Federation from 1977-1984. He was also the chairperson of the Association for Theological Education in South East Asia (ATESEA) from 1977-1981. Being a well-known writer and Christian Educator, his wit and wisdom has been a gift to the whole Church around the world. We give thanks for his life and his witness in faith even as we mourn his passing.

Condolence from the LWF Asia Secretary

Rev. Ginda P. Harahap

It is with a sense of sadness and deep sorrow that we received the sad news on the death of Dr. Andrew Hsiao, President Emeritus of LTS. As one of the great and faithful Asian Lutheran Church leaders we will miss him in this life although we will certainly cherish good memories of his fine personality and especially his dedication and leadership. He had worked for the interest of not only LTS and ELCHK, but also as a committed leader of the Churches in Asia and worldwide, and as Vice-President of the Lutheran World Federation.

On behalf of Asia Desk LWF and the Regional Office for Asia, please convey our condolences to the bereaved family as we join hands with them in prayer at this time of sorrow.

From LWF Member Churches in Asia

From Dr. Wesley Kigasung, Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Papua New Guinea:

It is with deep sorrow that I learn of the passing of Dr. Andrew Hsiao. Dr. Andrew Hsiao was one of the leading figures of the Asian leaders and we deeply mourn his loss. We give praise and thank God for Dr. Andrew Hsiao's life and ministry. Our heart felt sympathy to the family of the late brother in Christ and the servant of the Lord. May his soul rest in eternal peace.

From Rev. Benjamin Lasegan, President, Lutheran Church in the Philippines:

The Lutheran Churches in the Philippines join the thousands of friends and colleagues in God's Kingdom in expressing our condolence to all of you for the loss of a great Asian theologian and a devout man of God, the late Rev. Dr. Andrew Hsiao. He may have gone but the legacy that he has left for us in the field of theology will forever be cherished, particularly by the Asian churches. Thank God for his gift of great teachers.



Dr. Andrews Hsiao with participants of the LWF/DMD WICAS' (Women in Church & Society) Regional Meeting on the Gender Training Manual in November 2000, Hong Kong ©ROAS

INDIA



TRIBUTE TO A GREAT LEADER AND VISIONARY

United Evangelical Lutheran Church in India (UELCI)

'Old Man In A Hurry A Faith Project' was started by one man but resulted with many faith experiences in individuals, institutions and also in the member churches of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in India (UELCI).

Dr. Kunchala Rajaratnam, the great leader of the Church of Christ, played a vital role in the work and ministries of Gurukul Lutheran Theological College, UELCI, NCCI, LWF and other institutions and churches in India and globally. His great vision was to develop the Lutheran Church in India with great emphasis on ecumenism. This vision resulted in this 'old man in a hurry a faith project' where he worked and labored towards the fulfillment of this vision.

When he took over the secretariat for UELCI about 30 years ago there was not even a single rupee except a small file. Today he has a good team of leaders and has prepared Gurukul and UELCI by developing its human, structural, financial resources as well as its spiritual dimension.

Today, Dr. Rajaratnam's hard labor has resulted in a newly completed 3-storey UELCI office building "Martin Luther Bhavan", a newly appointed UELCI team of Secretariat, a financial reserve of two million rupees and a wonderful team of leaders to continue this spirit of commitment to serve the Church and Society as displayed by Dr. Rajaratnam himself through all these years. Work in the area of Mission, Development, Christian Education, Youth & Women's work, Leadership Development, AIDS, Dalit and Tribal Concerns, etc. were also developed and established during his time.

The office building was built completely with local resources with the furnishing supported by the LWF Department for Mission and Development (DMD). The dedication ceremony on June 4, 2003 was conducted by the newly elected President of the UELCI, the Rt. Rev. Lawrence G. Rao, with distinguished guests from the LWF, NCCI, Constituent Church of UELCI, Gurukul, church members and staff. The function was followed by an UELCI Executive Council Meeting and a special installation service where Dr. Rajaratnam officially 'hand the baton over' to the new UELCI Executive Secretary, Rev. Paul Chandran Martin.

Rev. Augustine Jeyakumar, Executive Secretary, LWF National Committee, India

Our tribute to Dr. Rajaratnam whose perseverance and whole-hearted commitment to the work of God is a living example and model to all of us - Ed.

INDIAN LUTHERAN CHURCHES INSTALL NEW LEADER

The United Evangelical Lutheran Church in India (UELCI) installed its new Executive Secretary, Rev. Chandran Paul Martin at a special worship on June 4, 2003, Chennai. The UELCI's new office premises 'Martin Luther Bhavan' was also dedicated during the service. UELCI was formed in the year 1926 and is a communion of eleven member churches, ten of whom are member churches of the Lutheran World Federation. UELCI has a total of 1.5 to 2 million members spread throughout the country. The Martin Luther Bhavan will now be the headquarters of the UELCI.

Rev. Chandran Paul Martin, 44, was elected as Executive Secretary of the UELCI at the Triennial Conference held in November 2002. Before he took up this position, Rev. Martin was a minister in the Tamil Evangelical Lutheran Church, a staff of UELCI for over fourteen years and the Executive Secretary of the Department of Communications of the National Council of Churches in India for five years. Rev. Martin, known for his theological acumen, creative communication

skills and passionate commitment for the issues of life and people, comes with rich international and ecumenical experience and an in-depth knowledge and sensitivity to the realities of the Indian society and the Lutheran churches in India.

Rev. A.G. Augustine Jeyakumar, a minister in the Arcot Lutheran Church was also appointed as the Executive Secretary of the LWF National Committee of India at the special meeting of the Executive Committee that met immediately after the installation service.

While handing charge over to Rev. Martin, Dr. K. Rajaratnam who had served the UELCI for the last three decades, reaffirmed the recurring theme of the UELCI Platinum Jubilee celebrations (2001) "Great is thy faithfulness" and expressed hope that the faith of the Lutheran churches in India will always find God's grace and guidance in their life and witness under the new leadership. The Rt. Rev. L.G. Rao, President of the UELCI led the service. Officers of the UELCI, leaders of the member churches, members of the Executive Committee, Rev. Dr. Prasanna Kumari, Vice President of the LWF, Rev. Dr. Ipe Joseph, General Secretary of the NCCI and several other colleagues of the theological community of Gurukul were among those who participated.

An ISPCK/NCCI publication edited by Rev. Chandran Paul Martin "The Prophetic Engagement of the Church" was released by Dr. K. Rajaratnam and Rev. Dr. Ipe Joseph, General Secretary, NCCI and Rt. Rev. L.G. Rao, President of UELCI, received the first copies.

The new address of the Secretariat is: UELCI, 'Martin Luther Bhavan', 95, Purasawalkam High Road, Kilpauk, Chennai 600 010, Tel: +91 44 26421575, Fax +91 44 26431144, E-mail: uelci@uelcindia.org

Dr. G. Raja Gerald, Youth Secretary, UELCI

Heartiest congratulation to Rev. Martin, the new office bearers of the UELCI and to Rev. Augustine Jeyakumar who was elected as Executive Secretary of the LWF National Committee, India. LWF Asia Desk (Geneva) and the Regional Office (Bangkok) look forward to continuing this good relationship and cooperation enjoyed through the years - Ed.

MALAYSIA

On Sunday, 25 May, 2003 Rev. Wolfgang Grieninger was inducted as "Consultant in Lutheran Theology" by the Bishop of LCMS Rt. Rev. Gideon Chang. This special service took place at Luther House Chapel, the headquarter of the Lutheran Church in Malaysia and Singapore (LCMS) in Petaling Jaya, Malaysia. Rev. Grieninger was seconded by the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Bavaria (Germany) to the LCMS as part of the partnership and co-operation of both of the churches. His main task is to conduct courses for pastors-in-service and church-workers in Lutheran distinctive issues, practical training, current issues, and spiritual formation. Rev. Wolfgang Grieninger, 45 years of age, lives with his wife Judith and the four children in Kuala Lumpur. Apart from serving in various congregations in Bavaria, Rev. Grieninger was Lutheran Chaplain of the University of Papua New Guinea from 1993 to 1996.

GERMANY



VELKD's New Officer for Mission and Church World Service for Africa and Asia

The United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany (VELKD) has a new officer for Mission and Church World Service, Rev. Inken Woehlbrand, from the North Elbian Evangelical Lutheran Church. Woehlbrand, 39, takes over in mid April from Hannes Gaenssbauer who retired in March, 2003. She will be responsible for the Africa, Asia and Pacific regions.

(info by Ms. Gerlinde Hopp-VELKD & German National Committee LWF)

PHILIPPINES

LCP – CTC 2003 Graduation

On April 4, 2003, eleven graduates of CTC (Concordia Theological College) received their certificates from Dr. Wesley Kigasung, Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Papua New Guinea (ECLPNG) and Rev. Benjamin Lasegan, President of the Lutheran Church in the Philippines (LCP). Five young women completed three years of deaconess training and six men four years of pastoral training. This was the 13th Graduation since the college was established 16 years ago.



Rt. Rev. Bishop Gideon Chang and wife, H.E. the Ambassador of Germany to Malaysia Juergen Stacks, Rev. Wolfgang Grieninger and wife.

Introducing the Concordia Theological College (CTC) of the Lutheran Church, Philippines

by Alois Schwarz

The History

In 1987 **Concordia Bible School** began the training of deaconesses, on a property in San Juan, 277 km north of Manila. Classes were held in the midst of old and inadequate facilities. Soon the school was also entrusted with the task of training future pastors for the church. Over the years its programs expanded with Theological Education by Extension (TEE) being offered to young professionals who desire to serve the church with their skills. The school also supervises the Vacation Bible School work of the Lutheran Church and its facilities being used for in-service training, conferences and retreats. The Board changed the former name and status in 2001 to **Concordia Theological College and Lay Training Foundation Inc.** Since 1987 seventy women and men had undergone their training in Concordia. They serve the Lutheran congregations as deaconesses, pastors, youth leaders, elders and evangelists.

The Program

Besides some of the basic courses, Practical Theology such as field education, music, worship and public speaking are also offered. CTC sees



its role in evangelistic outreach and students serve small mission congregations during weekends. In that sense CTC serves the needs of the contemporary church to maintain its ministry in rural communities and to plant new churches. At present, there is no Lutheran congregation in San Juan or in the neighboring city of San Fernando. Hopes are high to have a church started in the next few years with its home base in Concordia.

Currently CTC is not accredited with other colleges and seminaries. No degrees are offered. The board and staff want to change that. A church needs well-trained servants - ordained and non-ordained. CTC is fulfilling this task. At the same time a church needs scholars to teach, lead, engage in ecumenical dialogue with other churches and institutions, nationally and internationally. CTC hopes to raise its academic standard so that it can fulfill the task to educate future academics for the church as well.

The Staff

Currently there are three full time lecturers: Mrs Elisabeth Lasegan, Principal of the college (Music and Christian Education), Rev. Benjamin

Lasegan, President of the Lutheran Church in the Philippines (Practical Theology and Missions), Pastor Alois Schwarz, from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria (Old Testament and Church History). The contribution of seven voluntary teachers who offer classes on a part time basis had also helped to sustain the work of the CTC up to today.

The Students

The college is attracting students with different educational backgrounds. Last year twenty students were enrolled in the residence program of the college, and eighteen students attended TEE classes. Some of them possess college degrees, while others completed High School. English is the medium of instruction. But discussions, Bible studies and class presentations can also be held in the Filipino languages in Ilocano or Tagalog. Engaging a part time English teacher was also deemed necessary to help students improving their English language skills. Tuition fee is 3000 Pesos per annum and room and board at the college is 15.000 Pesos a year. Some friends in Germany and North America are supporting students at the college. However, most students are being sponsored by family and friends.

The Support

To move the college forwards, work is underway to improve and expand the existing facilities, to build up the library, to build up the faculty, to revise the curriculum and to revise the admission policy. These important steps are taken in partnership with other churches and institutions. The college has received funds from Partners in America, Germany and the LWF for its four phases of building program. Funds and book donations come from LWF and LILAP (Lutheran International Library Assistance Program).



CTC Faculty (left to right) – Bishop Marvin Paas, Rev. Alois Schwarz, Pastor Lua Boglau (guest lecturer), Rev. Ben Lasegan & Mrs. Elisabeth Lasegan ©AS



CTC Students ©AS

Scholarships from LWF and the Department of World Mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria, help to prepare prospective candidates for teaching and other ministries. The North Elbian Mission Centre Hamburg, Germany, is financially supporting the TEE program and teachers salaries.

The Growing Ecumenical Connections

In the past, the college has always enjoyed guests from home and abroad. Ecumenical visitors are welcomed. In 2001, CTC has called Pastor Alois Schwarz from Bavaria to join the faculty. His main responsibility is in the area of Old Testament and Church History. In the last academic year (2002/03), three visitors from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Papua New Guinea came to conduct workshops and visit congregations. November 2002, Pastor Figet Sombac was guest lecturer in the cross cultural workshop for pastors and deaconesses and in March 03, Pastor Lua Boglau came to share his musical and pastoral experiences with students and congregations. On April 4, Dr. Wesley Kigasung, Bishop of ELC PNG was guest speaker at the graduation. CTC has by now good ties with the Martin Luther Seminary in Lae, Papua New Guinea. Three students from the LCP are enrolled at MLS to prepare for future service in the LCP. Both institutions hope to be able to exchange students and faculty on a regular basis. CTC needs those international contacts with sister institutions here and abroad, so that it can grow, improve, and contribute to the ecumenical fellowship.

The Challenges

The continuity and future of CTC depends on the support of the Lutheran Church in the Philippines. Here lies a struggle and an opportunity. The college was not started by the church but by individual members of the church who saw a need and had a vision. As CTC expands and grows, financial support also needs to grow. Most members of the church seem to be reluctant to support an institution, like CTC. On the other hand it is encouraging to see Lutherans coming forward, donating gifts in cash and kind. The budget deficit for the past school year and the struggle to raise funds create a climate of uncertainty in which it becomes increasingly difficult to plan for new teaching positions and to attract more students to come here for their training.

Conclusion

In the past, God has blessed students, staff and all the people who faithfully supported the ministry of CTC. It is the prayer of many, that God will bless the efforts of CTC in the future as it continues to serve the church with its educational programs and services.

(Rev. Alois Schwarz (M.Div) is a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Bavaria (ELCB) and is currently one of the theological instructors at CTC. He graduated from the Lutheran Theological Seminary (Canada) and was serving with the ELC PNG before coming to the Philippines in May 2002.)

We thanked God for CTC which has weathered through a very rough journey to become what it is today. However, the hard work and labor by all involved had not been in vain. The LWF Asia Desk encourages the exchange of faculty and students among the Lutheran Seminaries in Asia and the different regions. We hope more of such exchanges that have been taking place will continue in CTC and in other seminaries in Asia as we share our resources and expertise with one another!

The Asia Lutheran News would like to offer you space to share about the blessings of God through your work and ministries, the joy and heartache experienced in your journey of serving the Lord. Please write to us (not more than one A4 page including pictures). We look forward to hearing from you –Ed.



CTC Graduation – Bishop Wesley Kigasung & President Lasegan ©AS

CULTURAL HIGHLIGHTS

The Influence of Adat in the Life of the Batak [Part 2]

by Rev. Willem Simarmata

Since life is not simple but complex, it is not easy to judge the positive and negative impact of the adat in the life of the people. Nevertheless, it is not groundless to say that for good and/or for bad it has an enormous influence in the life of Batak people.

Adat has greatly influenced the way Batak people understand about the meaning of this life and the practical goals of our lives. Although, the trend of materialism and individualism has penetrated into the lives of many Bataks, in their sub-consciousness, most of Batak people still inherit some values that are derived from the adat, where the interest of the community still has first place above their personal interest.

Some positive influence of the Adat:

- a Generally speaking, adat help the Batak people to be united and to get connected. Batak people realize that life in this world is very fragile and vulnerable, and therefore they cannot live alone, but have a great dependency on others and the community. Because of the adat, all Batak people, wherever they are, in their joy and sorrow, they can turn to the adat, and there they can have their needs fulfilled.
- b Originally, the social relations in the Batak adat society were based on the neighborly and familial solidarity like they were in early Christianity (cf. Acts 2: 44-47, Cf. Ekkehard W. and Wolfgang Stegemann, 1989, p.279). Therefore, it is supposed to be motivated by a loving and caring attitude towards each other. With this motivation, the society can build each other up.
- c Because of the adat, Batak people have a strong sense of identity and relatively high sense of self-esteem. They do not easily lose heart even in difficult times, but have a strong personality.

Some negative influence of adat:

- a **Economy** - To follow all the demands of adat will cost the Batak people an enormous amount of money and resources in every family. It is not an exaggeration if HKBP pastors say that 'adat obligations can cost a lot of money, leaving little to contribute to the church (cf. LWF publication, 1977, p.167). This of course, raises a question of whether or not Batak people see adat as more important than the Gospel (Church). It is true that Batak people are financially abused by the adat, especially the poor families. And in theological term it is often very poor stewardship of our meager resources. Stewardship of time, talent, and treasure has not been deeply taught in the Church. The practice of fitting which is an integral part of Christian life and

done by many Churches world-wide is almost unknown among the average Batak Christian.

- b. **The wasting of time** - Related to the economy aspect, adat festivities and activities takes up a lot of time. In many cases, someone's presence is not necessary, but because the adat demands it, he or she has to be there (perhaps this is only because of the lack of mentality and the management or leadership). We need to find ways and learn how to make the adat simpler, and not to make things too complex. It is also true that adat should be for the people, not the people for adat. But very often it seemed to be the other way round.
- c. **Social** - Due to the fact that the Batak adat society is strongly patriarchal to a large extent, it is often oppressive to women and children (young people). So far, women do not have equal rights and authority to speak their thoughts in the adat. Children and young people (those who are not married) absolutely have no saying in the adat. Their role is only to serve and do kitchen work.
- d. **Related to points "a" and "c"**, we can see that the practices of adat are full of jargon and complexities which often confuse people. One of the reasons is because of the obscure practical goals and objectives in performing festivities. Many proverbs (umpama-umpama) are uttered again and again, and it is not clear what are the purposes for repeating them.
- e. **The lack of educational aspects in the adat festivities** - While Batak people have spent lots of time and resources for the adat, it seems there are not so much educational teachings that can be learned through and in those activities. In fact, often the festivities are quite boring and exhausting, particularly for the young people. It is probably one of the reasons why the young people do not enjoy the adat activities very much.
- f. **Leadership** - Batak people often misunderstand their application of adat, especially in organization. It often resulted in poor leadership. Sometimes they elect their leader based on their relationship according to adat, not because of one's ability and quality.

The need for transformation

Batak people can be proud of their adat because it has many good values that may enrich our people as a whole. But, it can be realized only if the adat is transformed and enlightened by God's word. Batak people must try their best to get rid of all the unnecessary demands and practices of the adat, and transform it into loving and caring practices which are sensitive to the needs of women, children, young people and those who are oppressed and alienated by the existing social, political and economical structures in the society and the country.

The calling to the Batak people to be salt, light, and blessing to the world and to Indonesia in particular, can be actualized only if they let their adat be transformed, salted and enlightened by the Word of God.

YOUTH PLATFORM

YICAS Vision Beyond 2000

Pilgrimage to the Holy Land

(Vision Beyond 2000 - a YICAS series of national and regional celebrations to welcome the new millennium and to gather the hopes and visions of young people)

In 1999, responding to the "Vision Beyond 2000" program of the LWF/DMD Youth in Church & Society (YICAS), Jerusalem Lutheran Bishop, Dr Munib A. Younan, issued an invitation to young people of the global Lutheran communion to visit the Holy Land and share in the daily life of the people there. However, the ongoing violence that started in November 2000 led to the postponement of this initiative several times.

Finally, in April 13-20, 2003 a group of fifteen brave young pilgrims make their way to the Holy Land under the theme "Living in Faith, Walking with Hope". The group included eight young adults from LWF member churches in Argentina, Canada, Chile, Hong Kong, the Philippines, Suriname and the USA, and for the first time in such a visit, seven Palestinian youth from the ELCJ.

During the pilgrimage, the youth visited holy sites such as the Mount of Beatitudes and Sea of Galilee. They took part in the ecumenical Holy Week celebrations including the Palm Sunday Procession from Bethany to Jerusalem, Good Friday Procession along the Via Dolorosa and an Easter sunrise service on the Mount of Olives. They also attended lectures presenting Christian, Muslim and Jewish

perspectives in the region.

Our young pilgrims also experienced the firsthand effects of the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory as they weathered checkpoints and the restriction of movements throughout the occupied areas, and faced with the conflicting reality of armed military presence during Holy Week celebrations.

As one participant stated, "We did not simply encounter Christ in history or along the pilgrim path. Rather, Jesus embraced us in community and was present as we celebrated and worshipped and even more so when we cried in this land of injustice and oppression."

Inspired by the abounding hope and resilience of the Palestinian people, the YICAS pilgrims made a mutual commitment to peace and justice in Israel/Palestine through: daily prayer, spreading the message and stories of their experience there, dedicating Palm Sunday worship 2004 to focus on this issue, staying informed about the situation in Palestine from sources beyond the mass media, and undertaking efforts to influence political and church leaders. They extend this call to all young people throughout the Lutheran communion.

For YICAS, the journey to the Holy Land goes beyond a one-time experience, it is an effective way of bringing together members of the Lutheran communion. The LWF/DMD youth program hopes to include similar pilgrimages in the future, visiting living stones, the witnesses of the Risen Christ.

(Abridged from the report by Daranne Mills, member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, currently a youth intern with the LWF Office for Communication Services)

Our Young People

When you cannot afford to hire the best, hire the **young** who are going to be the best.

Then . . .

- Believe in them** – that will encourage risk
- Show them** – that will build respect
- Love them** – that will strengthen relationships
- Know them** – that will personalize development
- Teach them** – that will enhance growth
- Trust them** – that will develop loyalty
- Expand them** – that will provide the challenges
- Lift them** – that will insure results

(Developing the Leader Within You – by John C. Maxwell)

I have received and heard from several young people and youth leaders who felt that they are not given enough room and space to live and serve to their full capacity in their churches. They also hesitate to air their 'grievances' through the ALN because they are quite sure it will not receive the endorsement from their bishops for publication. Would church leaders or anyone care to write or give some constructive comments or share an experience on this issue that is confronting our young people in some of our member churches today? –Ed.

World Health Organization (WHO)

Update on SARS [Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome]

During June, the number of new cases (on SARS) has gradually dwindled to the present daily handful. WHO is confident that all countries that have experienced outbreaks are disclosing cases fully and promptly – SARS is too big a disease to hide for long. The global outbreak, at least in this initial phase, is clearly coming under control. (WHO Update 83 – 100 days into the outbreak, June 18)

OFF THE LIST – of SARS Infected Areas

WHO is satisfied that the following countries in Asia have broken the chain of transmission after 20 days without a new case which is twice the maximum incubation period. These countries have been removed from the list of areas with local transmission of SARS from the date indicated:

Hong Kong as of **23 June** (WHO Update 86, June 23)

Singapore as of **31 May** (Update 70, May 30)

The Philippines as of **20 May** (Update 60, May 20)

Vietnam as of **28 April** (WHO Update 41, April 18)

OFF THE LIST - New Travel Recommendations for Taiwan, China (except Beijing) and Toronto

According to the June 23 SARS Travel Recommendation Summary Table by WHO, only China-Beijing is still on the list where travelers are advised to postpone all but essential travel. This same report also lifted Taiwan and Toronto (Canada) from this "travel recommendation".

Reported in the WHO's June 13 update, the category pattern of SARS' transmission for the city of Toronto has been changed from "B" to "C". "Pattern B" transmission is defined as an area having more than one generation of local probable SARS cases, but only among persons who have been previously identified and followed-up as known contacts of probable SARS cases. "Pattern C" transmission is defined as an area having local probable cases occurring among persons who have not been previously identified as known contacts of probable SARS cases.

For Taiwan, ROC (also from Update 82, June 17) the move (off the list) follows vast improvements in case detection, infection control, and the tracing and follow-up of contacts that led to a steep drop in the daily number of new cases.

Mailbox

Dear Sally

I just want to say that I really appreciate the ALN since I started receiving it after the RCENET (Regional Christian Education Network) meeting in Bangkok. I have enjoyed every issue and when you changed the print format, WOW! It certainly is very well done! I certainly appreciate the amount of effort and work put into every issue.

Anyway, just a quick note to say how much I appreciate the efforts of the editorial team on the ALN.

Ngui Au Sze
BCCMSandakan

You are absolutely right Au Sze, the credit should go to the whole Editorial Team who are actively involved in every issue of the ALN – Ed.

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Any **written contributions** are welcome. The closing date for each issue is the 10th of every **even** month. News that came in after the deadline may be published in the next issue if it is not outdated. The *Asia Lutheran News* reserves the right to edit all works for publication and cannot guarantee that all work submitted will be published. Any related **accompanying photographs** would be greatly appreciated. Please send all articles and information for the ALN to lwfasia@hotmail.com or P O Box 239, Phra Khanong, Bangkok 10110, Thailand

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