



ASIA LUTHERAN COMMUNION

The Lutheran Churches in Asia can easily understand and accept the specification of the Lutheran World Federation as a communion of churches. The existence of communion is traditionally well understood in Asian cultures. In fact, the life of communion which corresponds to friendship and fellowship, is the cornerstone of the Asian churches. There is so much in common that the Lutheran Communion can be best experienced and shared in the region. The opportunity through the Lutheran communion can deepen relationship and the exchange of ideas, knowledge and experiences.

regional youth and women representatives, LWF Council's members from Asia, ACCREA and ACTEAS members and mission partners.

The ACLC is an opportunity to share similar experiences, struggles and challenges with brothers and sisters in the Asian Lutheran Churches, which can encourage the churches to grow together into a closer unit in the Lutheran Communion. This ACLC will lead the churches to grow together into new heights and new strength and live as a communion as all participants will discuss the recommendations and resolutions of the LWF Tenth Assembly and ensure the reception of the resolutions and recommendations among LWF member churches in Asia.



"Communion ... the cornerstone of the Asian churches" © NS

During the ACLC, the community life through worship services and fellowship will be the experience of a journey toward spirituality, which strengthens the life of communion. The sub-regions, NEALUC (North East Asia Lutheran Communion), WeSALUC (West South Asia Lutheran Communion) and SEALUC (South East Asia Lutheran Communion) will learn from each other in terms of their encounters with various cultures and religions.

The Asia Church Leadership Conference (ACLC) has been one of the tools to strengthen the life of communion among Asian churches. Normally the ACLC takes place every two or three year. The next Asia Church Leadership Conference will be held from 4 to 7 June 2004 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The Lutheran Church in Malaysia and Singapore (LCMS) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malaysia will be the host for the conference. The ACLC will bring together all Bishops from the 46 Lutheran Churches, sub-

The Asian Lutheran churches has established the Advisory Committee for Coordination of Regional Expression in Asia (ACCREA) as part of the plans to support the regional expression of communion. As an expression of communion the committee will help to find ways of making the recommendations of the Asia Church Leadership Conference the real program for the region. The LWF National Committees in several countries were also established with a view to concretizing the common life and decisions of the Lutheran churches nationally.

Ginda P. Harahap
LWF/DMD Asia Secretary

C O N T E N T S

asia lutheran communion	1
regional news	2
information sharing	4
readers' feedback on ALN	7

a christian island in indonesia	8
LWF publications	10
coming events	10
desperate cries from ambon	11

REGIONAL NEWS

New Leadership In Bangladesh

New leaders were elected in December 2003 during the Synod Assembly of the Bangladesh Lutheran Church (BLC). The newly elected Synod Moderator is the Rev. Arobindu Bormon, Vice-moderator, Mr. Mohesh Roy, Secretary, Mr. Purno C. Bormon and treasurer, Rev. Bishnu Roy. With the change in the church's constitution, the Synod Chairperson is now known as the Synod Moderator and Circle Chairperson as Convener.

Currently BLC has a membership of about 3,000 with 750 families in 92 congregations organized into five circles (region/districts). BLC is affiliated with the Danmission and a member of the Lutheran Word Federation since 1986.

Lutheran Identity, Indonesia

The National Committee of the LWF in Indonesia (NC LWF) organized a seminar on "Lutheran Identity" for the twelve LWF member churches in Indonesia from March 22 - 25, 2004 at Samosir - North Sumatra. There were 35 participants including two guests from the Methodist and Batak Karo Church (Calvinist).

The Lutheran Churches in Indonesia are from different ethnic groups - Nias, Mentawai, Batak Tobak, Batak Simalungun, Batak Angkola, Batak Pakpak/Dairi - and are seeking for a common identity. The seminar on Lutheran Identity seeks to strengthen and unite the Indonesian churches in this common identity as they serve and witness for the Lord in word and deeds, both locally and internationally, with other ecumenical churches.

Indonesian Churches Advocating for Aceh

A Church Leaders Meeting between the NC LWF and the Communion of Churches - North Sumatra met on March 30-31, 2004 in Medan to discuss ways of ministering and advocating for the needs of the people in Aceh. Aceh is one of the regions in Indonesia that is in constant conflicts between its people and the government. Martial law is being enforced in an attempt to control the situation. Hundred were killed in the clashes and many schools and houses were burnt. At the meeting concrete ways of assisting the people of Aceh were proposed, focusing in the areas of advocacy, humanitarian assistance and the appealing of financial aids from different national and international churches and groups. Special training to equip the local people to handle and mediate in conflict situations is also being planned for.

Rev. Harlen Simangungong
Executive Secretary, NC LWF

There are a number of congregations in Aceh belonging to LWF member churches - Ed

The Hidden HERSTORY in the Bible

*'ANOTHER HERMENEUTICS IS POSSIBLE!
'ANOTHER CHURCH IS POSSIBLE!
'A MOTHER CHURCH IS POSSIBLE!*

These are the commitments and aspirations of the 42 women and men from the member churches of UELCI who participated in the National Consultation on Bible Hermeneutics - Women's Perspectives. The event was organized by the Women's Desk of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in India (UELCI) from 29th - 31st January 2004 at Chennai, India.

Participants had found the devotion, in-depth Bible study and all the sessions to be very inspiring and thought provoking. Young Lutheran women and men theologians spoke on the need to re-read the Bible. The other presentations include Biblical hermeneutics; Critique of Culture and Tradition in the Bible; Biblical Hermeneutics - Dalit Women's Perspective; Biblical Hermeneutics - Tribal Women's Perspective; Feminist Biblical Hermeneutics - Emerging Theological Issues; Reflection on Women Ordination; Role and Identity of Women in the Church etc.

The participants also gathered in small groups to discuss in depth the need for interpreting the Bible. It was a collective voice that the hidden 'Herstory' in the Bible needs to be narrated. The varied challenging messages helped the participants to reflect on inclusiveness and women's leadership in the church. It was felt that the negative connotation of 'Feminism' needs to be erased. The "Word" of God has to be liberated from the Bible in order that it becomes the liberating word of God. Violence against women in the Bible is cited but not condemned," said the keynote speaker. Towards the end, the group was convinced that it is time to highlight the neglected text in the Bible and thereby highlight the 'hidden women' in the Bible.

The sessions on the need to re-read the Bible convinced the group who expressed their desire to organize similar program in their respective local congregations.

It was a clear message that women need to assert their rights and women's positions need to be reclaimed and hence it is worthwhile undertaking the painful journey of re-reading the Bible.

Ms. Vidhya Rani
Secretary, UELCI Women's Desk

INDIA GOES TO POLLS

The Fourteenth Parliamentary elections for 543 constituencies in India will take place during the months of April and May 2004 in a phased manner. 670 million voters will decide who will rule India. The first phase of elections will take place on the 20th of April and the fifth and the last phase on the 10th of May. The results will be announced on the 13th of the same month. For the first time in the democratic history of India the voting process will be totally through the use of the electronic voting machines. The Election Commission, an independent and neutral organization, is in charge of the electoral process. Assembly polls are to take place simultaneously for the four states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Sikkim and Orissa.

Mrs. Sonia Gandhi, wife of the assassinated Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and their son Raghul Gandhi are contesting from their traditional family constituencies of Amethi and Rae Bareilly. Around twenty political Parties

under the banner of National Democratic Alliance are polarized behind the Bharatiya Janata Party under the leadership of the Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, and the opposition parties behind the congress party under the leadership of Sonia Gandhi. In a multi-lingual, multi-cultural and multi-religious country like India minorities like Muslims and Christians have been provided with ample safety through the constitution. But religious chauvinism is eroding these safety mechanisms. Indian voters have always been quite discerning and unbiased.

Opinion polls are being conducted by several agencies all over the country. The outcome is hazy and unclear. The yathras (long journeys) of the political leaders are confusing the voters. The ruling parties claim that 'India is shining' and there is a 'feel good' mood in the nation. The opposition denies it vehemently stating that eradication of poverty and illiteracy are not given priority. Developmental issues are being side lined over trivial issues like the 'foreign origin issue' of Sonia Gandhi and

the building of the Ram temple at Ayothya.

Election Commission has set strict codes of conduct for the political parties and the contesting candidates but in the Prime Minister Vajpayee's constituency of Lucknow itself, free-saris have been distributed and in the melee and stampede, twenty-five women and children were dead. India is strong in democracy with weak implementers. The safety of the minority Christians and Muslims are in the fingertips of the Indian voters as they press the buttons of the electronic voting machines and the efficacy of democracy will be proven to the world by the 13th of May when all the results would have been known. Though the Indian Christians are a little less than 3 percent in the total population of India and the Lutheran population is only a part of it, in some states and specially in some constituencies they have a say in the poll outcome.

R. DANIEL JAYAKUMAR
Chairperson Committee on
Department of
Communication
UELICI



"Young visitors from Japan, Rev. Oshiba (1st left), Mr. Kazuhiro Sekino - LWF Council Member (2nd left)"



From left: Bishop Upama (ELCT), Prof. Ramse, Rev. Suk (director of LITE), Rev. Lennart

Visitors to the ELCT and LWF Regional Office (ROAS)

A group of young and enthusiastic seminary students from Japan Lutheran Theological Seminary visited the ROAS and the work and ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thailand (ELCT) for a week in March. It was part of the seminary's program for the students on mission exposure. The students met with the leaders of ELCT, the Lutheran Institute of Theological Education (LITE), student hostels and rural congregations in Northeast Thailand. The group also took the opportunity to visit the railway over the River Kwai in Kanchanabury where many Japanese's prisoners of war in WWII died while building the bridge. The group was led by the Rev. George Oshiba, a pastor of JELC, Japan.

Also in March, Professor David A. Ramse of Wartburg Theological

Seminary, USA, was also here in Thailand to share about the seminary and a new course - Theology, Development and Evangelism Program - that was

newly launched by the seminary. The Rev. Lennart Persson, Professor at Mc Gilvary Faculty of Theology Payap University, Chai Mai, Thailand

was here with Professor Ramse to meet and exchange information with the leaders of ELCT and with the LWF Regional Coordinator for Asia.

INFORMATION SHARING

ACLC

Welcome to the Asia Church Leadership Conference

The Asia Church Leadership Conference (ACLC) is scheduled to take place from 4 to 7 June, 2004 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. This Conference will be the first for LWF member Churches in Asia to hold the Special Asia Church Leadership Conference after the Assembly with a view mainly to discuss the recommendations and resolutions of the Assembly. It will be a special opportunity for us to share our experiences and our vision together in line with the recommendations and resolutions of the LWF Tenth Assembly. During this Conference it is expected that our churches in Asia will ensure the reception of the recommendations and resolutions for strategy of mission and ministry of our Lutheran churches in Asia.

ACCREA

The Advisory Committee for Coordination of Regional Expression in Asia

This Committee of five members, including church leaders, women and youth is attached to the regional expression coordination services. The members are to accompany the Regional Coordinator closely and advise on programmatic activities in the region. The Committee will meet in Kuala Lumpur prior to the Asia Church Leadership Conference (ACLC) to discuss some important regional programs that may be brought to the ACLC. They will try to find ways of transforming the recommendations of the Church Leadership Conference into programs for the region or making the recommendations into real programs for the region.

ACTEAS

Advisory Committee on Theological Education in Asia

This Committee deals with its advisory tasks for theological education and training programs in the region. The first meeting of the newly elected committee members was held from 30 September to 1 October, 2003 to discuss common strategy for theological education, and make proposals in relation to the objectives of the program. The ACTEAS will also meet (June 1-2) before the ACLC in Kuala Lumpur to discuss the needs of theological education among the Lutheran Churches in Asia and the coordination of joint regional efforts to meet the educational needs of member churches. The Committee will also deal with theological education programs in relation to the resolutions and the recommendations of the LWF's Tenth Assembly.

Training in Mission for Asia



Sabah Theological Seminary (STS)

Since the seminar on Mission Training in the Asian Context held in Sabah Theological Seminary (STS) in October 2000, two training had been conducted for member churches in Asia and the third is scheduled to be from August to September this year in STS. Both Gurukul Lutheran Theological Seminary (GLTC) and STS had been identified as regional centers for the training and had each conducted a one-month intensive course in year 2001 and 2002 respectively. The Advisory Committee for

Theological Education in Asia (ACTEAS) had proposed during its meeting in September 2003 that the Lutheran Theological Seminary (LTS), Hong Kong, also to be included as one of the regional centres for the training of mission in the urban context.

This training in the Asian context was deemed important because mission training is a high priority among member churches in Asia. Many churches had encountered challenges in the midst of very complex multi-religion, socio-cultural and economic contexts.

Asia is the cradle of major world religions and faces the challenges of growing poverty even in the midst of growing economy, fundamentalism in the midst of religiosity, and the challenges faced by women, youth and children due to

traditional cultures that are often unfavorable to them. The ever-changing demography, economy, technology, military and socio-political realities pose many challenges but also offer opportunities for mission.

The training uses a participatory methodology, which is a combination of lectures, seminars, workshops, case studies and field visits. The training covers several relevant subjects such as:

- An overview of the Asian Context – Political, Economic, Social and Religious context; The goals of Mission, Meaning of Mission (holistic); Mission Priorities in Asia
- Scriptural and Theological Foundations of Mission
- Mission in the History of the Church

- The Church in Mission Today
- Mission in the Asian Context and the response of the churches
- The Meaning of Mission, The Goals of Mission in Asia, The Theology of Mission. Implications for being a Church in Mission

We had received an overwhelming response from member churches for this upcoming third mission training to be conducted in STS but regrettably the number has to be limited to twenty because of space and budget. Participants from the earlier courses had found the training very useful and relevant. Many had been challenged into mission and service by the Scripture and see the need to be a witness for Christ to their neighbors and the rest of the world.

The Journey of Jeypore Evangelical Lutheran Church (JELC)

In 1982, the Jeypore Evangelical Lutheran Church (JELC) celebrated 100th anniversary of its existence. The pioneer missionaries Rev. Ernst Pohl and Rev. Hermann Bothmann from NMZ (then SHELMI in Breklum, North Germany) came in to Koraput in the late 1880's - one of the still socio-economically backward districts in India. The first Christian baptized in JELC was Ms. Ashumati Behera on 6th December 1886. The congregations started by the missionaries were organized into churches at the first synod of JELC in 1928. In 1954, the management of the church was transferred to the local Indian leaders. Currently, JELC has a membership of 143,000 in 900 congregations with 235 workers including 82 pastors, catechists and preachers. The church has 33 primary schools, 5 high schools, 3 hospitals, 3 widow Ashrams and a Human Resource Development Center (Subartha Talim Kendro.)

At the regional level, JELC is affiliated with the Utkal Christian Council and at the National level with NCCI, UELCI, LWF, WCC, Bible Society of India (Orissa Auxiliary), CMC Vellore, and CMC Ludhina.

THE CHALLENGES

With the changing time of over a century, there have been changes in the scenario and context for mission work in Koraput. The present generation of JELC is currently struggling for existence in the climate of globalization.

The growth-led-economy has induced several social and economic hurdles. It has also affected the cultural fabric of the members of the congregations. A relatively large number of people in Koraput district have fell victims to the mega projects (big dams) and mining

companies that have come up. The process of rapid mechanization has left behind the common man of the society and those of the JELC congregations.

The area has been identified as an endemic malaria prone zone. Most of the people live in the interior belts with inadequate medical services. Therefore casualties due to malaria are often reported. Malnutrition is another major issue among the tribal children. Out of 1,000 births, 125 infants die before their first birthday. Immunization coverage is 55.1% with scabies, diarrhea

and sickle cell anemia cases also being reported.

The district is also identified as a vulnerable district by the National AIDS Control Organizations (NACO) due to influx populous, poverty, high migration, lower literacy level among high-risk groups, low health seeking behaviour, high malnutrition and tuberculosis.

In response to such changing situations, efforts are being made at all levels to equip the church to take on these contemporary challenges. One such important effort was the training in "Mission".

Religious intolerance is growing every passing day under the guise of nationalism, and the Freedom of Religion Act is interpreted accordingly.

WITH HOPE - FOCUS ON MISSION

Mr. Amar Thomas of Jeypore Evangelical Lutheran Church (JELC) was one of the trainees of the Training in Mission for Asia at Sabah Theological Seminary (STS) in 2002. He was so challenged by the course that he conducted mission seminars for the different groups in his church. Together with the church leaders, a mission department was set up and mission strategies carefully thought out and laid down for the church's mission endeavor.

As a follow up on this training, JELC has initiated several activities within its congregations. Perspective building on "Mission" is being attempted right from the grass root level to the policymaking levels. Continuous orientations, trainings, workshops were also conducted for the pastors, laypersons and women groups for self introspection which is providing JELC the needed direction to participate in God's Mission.

The following preparatory initiatives are currently underway to produce the **Vision Document** of JELC:

Research and Development

A database is being generated to help the church prepare/monitor/evaluate socio-economic development programmes of the congregations with the help of the experts and consultants

(Computer software like Statistical Package for Social Science [SPSS] is used).

Mapping of Resource

With the help of experts and consultants, all available immovable properties are being assessed to facilitate the proper utilization of these resources for the self-support of the church.

Identification of Training Needs

Employees' data is generated and relevant and applicable trainings are identified and imparted for effectively participating in the mission work.

Identification of the Model Parishes

In the first phase of the Long Term Action Plan (2001-2010) of JELC, twenty out of 86 parishes in JELC are being identified to be equipped as models working toward achieving the Goal of JELC

Infrastructure Development

To provide basic facilities like church building, pastorate centres etc. for all the parishes of JELC. This program also invites local contributions from the congregations in order to establish a sense of ownership through the process.

Constitution Amendment

To create enough room in the constitution of JELC to accommodate the demanding situation of the present time so as to help and guide the church in its day to day smooth and systematic function.

The following 7-POINT MISSION PROGRAMMES are being carried out in order to achieve JELC's

long-term **goal** of "*Equipping the Congregations in Mission*"

1. Nurturing / Spiritual Renewal of the baptized Christians are a continuous process
2. Socio Economic Empowerment Process
3. Capacity Building
4. Health Care - HIV/AIDS concerns
5. Human Rights / Justice - Dalits and Adivasi concerns
6. Environmental Concerns
7. Dialogue with people of other faiths

For the first time in the history of JELC, a provisional budget exclusively for mission on Service, Advocacy for Social Justice and Care for God's creation is incorporated in the usual regular budget of 2003 and 2004 of the 900 congregations of JELC. The resources shall be mobilized locally which has been earmarked for utilization on HIV/AIDS and Dalit and Tribal concerns at the local context.

In order to be continuously enriched from one another's experience, deliberation on *Partnership in God's Mission and Self-Reliance of the Church* is being initiated together with NMZ, UELC-I and GELC.

**By Rt. Rev. Anam Chandra Khosla (Bishop, JELC)
Mr. Amar Thomas (JELC Programme Secretary,
Department for Mission and Development)**

In a separate article, Dr. I. Arul Aram of the Indian Evangelical Lutheran Church also pay tribute to the invaluable contributions of a 79-year old missionary, Rev. Ian Kleinig (LC Australia) to Jeypore Evangelical Lutheran Church's outreach work to the Kuvi-speaking tribe in Koraput during the 60's. Rev. Kleinig and his wife were instrumental in helping this

tribal group create their language into written form. A literacy campaign was also initiated which triggered the opening up of schools in the native language. Translation of the New Testament in the Kuvi language was completed in 1989. Now the translation of the Old Testament, a hymn and liturgy book is in progress with funds supported by the North

Elbian Lutheran Church, Hamburg, Germany. Rev. Kleinig had retired but revisited the area recently and conducted workshops for pastors and village leaders. He says: While proclaiming the Gospels, we train the tribal people to take care of land and vegetation and make them realize that all these are part of the God's creation.

READERS' FEEDBACK ON ALN

We have received eight survey forms on the Asia Lutheran News (ALN) providing us with many valuable feedback and suggestions to make the newsletter a more effective tool for the expression of communion among member churches and related institutions in Asia. The forms were returned by three church leaders/elders/lay, three principals of seminary, one communicator and one former missionary from USA to Asia, age ranging from below 30 to above 50. Though the forms returned are few but we are glad they cover the different categories of people and age groups. Some of you may be interested to know about the comments and suggestions offered through the survey.

Format

Those who had responded to our survey had given very gracious grading and comments to the overall format of the newsletter. On a scale of five, ALN received the highest grading of 4.8 for its *Web Pages* and the lowest at 3.9 on *Color of Printing* (b/w). Many had proposed for either full or partial color versions of the newsletter in order to make the journal more attractive. Other aspects of the format like layout, quality of printing and size of newsletter had also received favourable comments with proposals to improve on the style of news reporting and to increase the size of text in some columns. Readers also hope to see better quality pictures, with captions, published.

Contents

Under contents, *Periodic Photo Galleries* received the highest grading of 4.6 while the not-so-regular *Special Features* and *Poems/Devotions* each get a satisfactory 4.0. Most appreciate the *Periodic Photo Galleries* which provides them with glimpses of the several re-

gional and global events where many are not able to take part. Other columns that readers had find very helpful, interesting and informative are *Annual Information Updates* (4.5) and *Information Sharing* (4.5). There is, however, a common feeling that there has not been sufficient news under the *Regional Headlines* and urged churches and news liaisons to take greater initiatives in sending news and information from their church and re-

news, addresses of member churches and pen-pal columns. Several had also proposed that ALN be a monthly newsletter.

Conclusions

On behalf of the ALN Editorial Board, we would like to express our appreciation for all the feedbacks and suggestions to improve the Asia Lutheran News. All proposals are being noted for possible implementation at a suitable



"A token of appreciation to Rev. John Nelson (ELCA) for his feedback on ALN"

© ROAS

gion. Several had also expressed their appreciations for the columns on *LWF Publications* and *Coming Events* where they are kept well informed on programs in Asia and globally.

Other suggestions include introducing new and small churches of the Asian communion, information on Bible Seminaries/educational institutions, interviews on regional veteran church leaders, country wise

time in the future. Though there are current constraint in both budget and personnel, we are still trying to work towards the goal of making the ALN a monthly journal and in full colour in the near future. In the meantime, you may want to link up to the past and current issues of the ALN at our web site: www.asia-lutheran.org/aln - which we are bringing to you in FULL COLOUR!

A CHRISTIAN ISLAND IN INDONESIA

VISIT TO THE NIAS ISLAND

On the island of Nias, a beautiful, un-spoilt island off the west coast of Sumatra, Indonesia, there are two churches that had newly joined the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) – The Protestant Christian Church (BNKP) and the Christian Communion of Indonesia Church in Nias (AMIN).

Nia Island has a land area of about 150 km x 50 km and a population of almost 685,000. It is one of the few Indonesian islands that has a Christian majority with about 74% Protestants, 17% Catholics and 7% Muslims. Out of its total population, about 50% are members of BNKP with 337,721 members. AMIN church, which had branched out from BNKP, also has a membership of 18,561. Due to the majority of Christians in Nias, it was mentioned that during the government of Mr. Suhato, a high-ranking government official had openly declared that in order to control Nias,



the government must first control the church! The people on the island, however, feel that being a Christianized island, Nias is being left behind by the government in the area of growth and development.

Among the many needs on the island, education, development and sanitary facilities seem to be most

critical. Education fee is high and many are deprived of a higher education due to financial constraint and a lack of government subsidy. Drinking water on the island is taken mainly from wells that is not properly treated and is especially lacking during the dry season for both consumption and irrigation. About 85% of the families on the island are living below the poverty line and many families do not have proper sanitary facilities in their homes. The entire island has only one hospital with 2 medical specialists which is far from adequate! The island enjoys religious harmony with minimal governmental interference on religion but the churches also face many great challenges in trying to develop the church and the island mainly on their own with little aid from the government and overseas.

Despite the tough challenges, BNKP, with the Gospel brought to them by missionaries from Rhenish Mission, Germany as early as 1865, had managed to brave



"Students from Sundermann Theological Seminary"

© ROAS

through the many storms and church splits over the century. Besides the current 902 congregations with their regular ministries, BNKP is also actively involved in diakonia work, in the pursuing of ecumenism, justice and the caring for God's creation. The church has an orphanage – Tomorrow's Hope - that provides shelter and education to about 100 homeless children. Due to the local needs for education



Leaders of BNKP

© ROAS



Sister's Group (AMIN)

© ROAS

areas but the church is unable to provide adequate transport (motorcycles) for their pastors where many have to travel several kilometers on foot to minister to their members.

The island of Nias has fertile soils that are good for cultivation and the churches are looking forward to some financial assistance from abroad to assist them on a government recommended agricultural project on cocoa planting that would alleviate its members from poverty and help in the development of the church and island.

Sally

and more pastors in the ministry, the church has also established several schools from kindergarten to senior high school and a seminary – Sundermann Theological Seminary.

AMIN church branched out from BNKP in year 1946 and is organized into 76 congregations with a current team of 24 pastors. Most of its members are farmers and fishermen with low and unstable income due to the weather changes in recent years and the lack of agricultural skill and knowledge. AMIN has many congregations in the rural



Members of a rural congregation of AMIN church

© ROAS

LWF PUBLICATIONS

- **Rethinking Luther's Theology in the Contexts of the Third World** – Nelson Kirst (ed.), 1988 ISBN 3-906706-02-8, no charge
- **Communion, Community, Society**, Wolfgang Greive (ed.), Studies 1, 1998, ISBN 3-906706706-62-1, CHF15, USD10 – plus postage
- **Christian Worship: Unity in Cultural Diversity**, S. Anita Stauffer (ed.), LWF Studies, Geneva, 1996, CHF18, USD15 – plus postage
- **Islam in Asia, Perspectives for Christian-Muslim Encounter**, J. Paul Rajashekar and H.S. Wilson (ed.), 1992, ISBN 3-906707-09-5, no charge
- **An Overview of Contemporary Chinese Churches**, Lee Chee-Kong, China Study Series, Vol. 1, 1997, ISBN 3-906706-35-4, no charge. Exists also in Chinese

The above books may be ordered through Inge Klaas at Ik@lutheranworld.org or at fax +41-22-791 6630, PO Box 2100, Route de Ferney 150, 1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland

Ooops!

The cost of the book "Charismatic Folk Christianity – Reflections on Post Charismatic Trends" by Dr. Wilfred J Samuel is at Malaysian Ringgit 18.00 instead of M\$39.90 as published.

COMING EVENTS

Event	: LWF Project Committee Meeting
Date	: May 24-28
Venue	: Geneva, Switzerland
Participants	: Project Committee Members, Representatives for Mission & Funding Agencies
Event	: ACTEAS Meeting (Advisory Committee for Theological Education in Asia)
Date	: June 1-3
Venue	: Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Participants	: ACTEAS Committee Members
Event	: ACCREA Meeting (Advisory Committee for Coordination of Regional Expression in Asia)
Date	: June 1-3
Venue	: Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Participants	: ACCREA Committee Members
Event	: ACLC (Asian Church Leadership Conference)
Date	: June 4-7
Venue	: Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Participants	: Church Leaders, Sub-region Youth & Women Representatives, LWF Council Members & Advisors, ACCREA, ACTEAS, Mission Partners
Event	: Training for Mission in Asia
Date	: August 9 – September 10
Venue	: Sabah Theological Seminary (STS), Kota Kinabalu, East Malaysia
Participants	: Selected Participants from LWF Member Churches in Asia
Event	: Mekong Mission Forum (MMF)
Date	: October 6-7
Venue	: Bangkok, Thailand
Participants	: MMF Members + Invited Guests

LETTERS FROM READERS

A DESPERATE CRY FOR HELP FROM AMBON

Violence breaks up again in the Moluccas (Indonesia). Since the 25th of April the houses and the public facilities in Ambon (the capital of the province), including schools and University campuses are being burnt down. Bombs and other explosives are being directed to the living quarters of the civilians. Death toll is increasing and so is the number of the injured. People live in terror because the armed radicals are left to use violence freely and subject it to any one especially to the innocent civilians. Snipers are acting again and the common people, the military and police personnels, are fired and shot dead. Even the children and pregnant women are being violated against, some of them are stabbed and others are slashed and left to bleed. All these are being done under the pretext of fighting the RMS separatist. The condition will get worse surely if these acts of violence are not put to stop immediately because it is harming the innocent civilians.

It is in this connection that we plead for the attention of the international communities, to the causes of the innocent people in Ambon.

1. Please help the Indonesian government, that violence in the Molucca province and in other provinces in Indonesia be terminated immediately.
2. That law be enforced on the suspected separatists in the province and also to the radicals who violates against the rights of people in Ambon.
3. That law be enforced by the government and not to let civilians to take up law in their hands.
4. That the peace building efforts done by people in the province and in the country at large be supported by eliminating forces which work against it.

Ambon, April 30th .2004
Synod Board Of The Protestant Church In Moluccas
Rev. DR. I. W. J. Hendriks
Moderator

ANOTHER PLEA FOR HELP FROM AMBON

Since our first plea for help, the security condition in Ambon island is somewhat calmer. But early this morning we were very startled by the news that people in Wamkana village (Buru Island, central Moluccas) were attacked by unidentified gunmen. They came on a speedboat and started opening fire on the villagers. Two women are injured, one child and a man were shot dead.

Wamkana is a remote village far away from Ambon. The villagers have no relation whatsoever with the FKM/RMS. For what reason then these innocent people are attacked? What sin have they committed to receive such treatment?

This incident just shows that the conflict is being transferred to other places and it might get worse just like what happened four years ago. That means that human lives in the Moluccas are again at stake. It is therefore, we plead once again for your concern and action.

Could you please help the Indonesian government to do these things:

1. To protect the life of the innocent civilians
2. To stop violence against and destruction of humanity in Moluccas
3. To disarm the civilians and let the government to enforce law effectively
4. To discover the perpetrators of this spreading attack towards innocent people in Moluccas and especially to uncover and bring to trial the master mind of this whole chaotic condition
5. To stop immediately the tendency to stigmatize and generalize all Moluccan Christians as FKM/RMS, because such stigmatization and generalization will justify violence against humanity in the Moluccas.
6. To support and affirm the peace building efforts done by people in the province and in the country at large by eliminating forces which work against it.

Ambon, May 5, 2004
Synod Board of The Protestant Church In The Moluccas
Rev. Dr. I. W. J. Hendriks, Moderator
Rev. S. J. Mailoa, MTh, General Secretary

NUGGETS OF LIFE

Sign Board

Spotted in a safari park:
ELEPHANTS PLEASE STAY IN YOUR CAR

Notice in a field:
THE FARMER ALLOWS WALKERS TO CROSS THE FIELD FOR FREE,
BUT THE BULL CHARGES

Spotted in a toilet in a London office block:
TOILET OUT OF ORDER. PLEASE USE FLOOR BELOW

On a child's superman costume:
WEARING OF THIS GARMENT DOES NOT ENABLE YOU TO FLY.

Slogans

At a car dealership: "The best way to get back on your feet - miss a car payment."

In a restaurant window: "Don't stand there and be hungry, come on in and get fed up."

In the front yard of a funeral home: "Drive carefully, we'll wait."

Bumper Stickers

Where there's a will, I want to be in it.

Always remember you're unique, just like everyone else

Editor/News Coordinator

Ms. Sally Lim (Kee) – Regional Expression Coordinator for Asia - LWF Bangkok

Graphic Artist

Mr. Justin Wong, Malaysia

Editorial board

Mr. Erik Lai, Malaysia (SEALUC); Rev. Chandran Paul Martin, India (WeSALUC); Mr. Takashi Yuguchi, Japan (NEALUC); Rev. Timo Reuhkala, LWF Geneva; Rev. Ginda P. Harahap, LWF Geneva

ALN Liaisons (Contact Persons)

Mr. Gopal C Ray (BLC), Bangladesh; Rev. Richard Lui (ELCHK), Hong Kong; Ms. Sharon Yip (HKMLC), Hong Kong; Rev. A. Peter Joshua (ALC), India; Mr. Prakash Mahanandia (JELC), India; Rev. L. Pasaribu (GKPA), Indonesia; Rev. Maurids Simamora (GKPI), Indonesia; Rev. Aladin Sitio (GKLI), Indonesia; Rev. Elson Lingga (GKPPD), Indonesia; Rev. James Hutabarat (GPP), Indonesia; Bishop F S Gea (AMIN), Indonesia; Rev. Harianja Bintahan (HKBP), Indonesia; Ms. Debora Dumaris F. Simatupang (GPKB), Indonesia; Rev. Hirotaka Tokuhira (JELC), Japan; Rev. Kimio Takano (JLC), Japan; Mr. George Awad (ELCJ), Jordan; Mr. Glen Longaki (LCP), Philippines; Rev. Martin Yee (LCS), Singapore; Ms. Grace Chu (CLS), Taiwan

Regular Sources of Information:

The Lutheran World Information (LWI); The Lutheran (LCA)

Printing Press

Prachoomthong Printing Group Co. Ltd, Bangkok, Thailand

The *Asia Lutheran News (ALN)* is a bi-monthly newsletter published by the Lutheran World Federation Regional Office for Asia (ROAS), Bangkok. It is supported by the Asia Lutheran Church Leaders for the enhancement of communication and communion among the 46 LWF member churches in Asia as well as seminaries and Christian institutions in the region. News focus on information and events or materials that would benefit, inform or encourage them. ALN is sent free upon request. Materials in the ALN may be freely translated, reprinted or reproduced in any form, but credit to it is requested. The opinions expressed in the articles are the views of the authors and not necessarily those of the Lutheran World Federation. All written contributions are welcome. The closing date for each issue is the **1st of every even month**. News that came in after the deadline may be published in the following issue if they are not outdated. The *Asia Lutheran News* reserves the right to edit all works for publication and cannot guarantee that all works submitted will be published. Any related accompanying photographs would be deeply appreciated. Please send all articles and information for the ALN to slk@lutheranworld.org or at fax number: +662-3323873 or P O Box 239, Phra Khanong, Bangkok 10110, Thailand.

ALN Website: www.asia-lutheran.org/aln