Farewell Message
Leaving with Good Feelings and a Sense of Satisfaction

Rev Dr Ginda P Harahap
LWF/DMD Area Secretary for Asia and the Middle East

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ

As most of you know, I have come to my retirement age and am completing my service as Area Secretary for Asia and the Middle East of the Lutheran World Federation – Department for Mission and Development. My wife and I will return to my home country Indonesia at the end of December 2010, joining our children and grandchildren in Jakarta city. Our daughter, Evelina, and her husband, Cédric Buchel, as well as our youngest daughter Endina will remain in Geneva, Switzerland.

Working with the LWF and DMD, particularly with member churches in Asia since April 1998, has been challenging yet a rewarding and fulfilling experience. In these more than 12 years I have learned tremendously.

Professionally, I have gained a lot of knowledge and shall always cherish this as one of the most satisfying phases in my life and career. If not for your constant support and encouragement I would not have been able to perform my duties. I appreciate all the support, insights, and help you have provided me.

I must say that I am leaving the LWF with good feelings and a sense of satisfaction. Together we have accomplished quite a bit in the various programmes such as strengthening relationship and communion in Asia, leadership, mission, diakonia, theological education and networking of Lutheran Theological Institutions in Asia (NeLTIA), religious diapraxis, and communication including Asia Lutheran News, and so on. All this has been accomplished together with the active contributions of dedicated church leaders, member churches and my colleagues at the Regional

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office and Asia Desk in Geneva.

Having served as Asia Secretary from April 1998 to December 2010, I would like to share with you some areas which have always been a concern, and requiring continual attention by the Asian Lutheran communion:

1. **Communion** is one of the theme issues that still need to be explored and strengthened in our Asian region. We realize that as we gather, interact, and attempt to communicate with one another in the various regional events, the life of communion becomes apparent: *growing together into a communion of togetherness, solidarity and sharing.* We need to continue to enhance the Lutheran communion in Asia as an expression of the inclusive communion, where a participatory approach to leadership is developed. It is time for Asian Lutheran churches to think about having joint programmes and look into the possibility of supporting one another. Our solidarity, sharing and contributions are part of strengthening and sustaining the communion. Let us also be constantly reminded of our long-stated commitment through the Asia Church Leadership Conferences (ACLCs) -- that is to be responsible for all local expenses and at least 25% of the total expenses or full fare of air tickets for our own representatives to LWF events.***

2. We are aware that our *minority position* within a geographically vast region is one of our challenges which need “unity”. We often have the feeling that we are too small to have the prophetic courage to take action in addressing certain issues such as social and cultural injustices, and so on. The Old Testament gives us an important lesson that to be a minority is characteristic of the prophets, with clear stance for truth and justice. The church has been prophesied to be a ‘small flock’ with a rich heritage of gifts and specific resources, which can be used efficiently. Our minority position should encourage us to discover the strategy of our mission activities in the midst of a very demanding and complex region. Our minority position calls us to seek creative ways of interaction.

3. **Diakonia** is another theme issue. The political, social and economic consequences due to rapid globalization have become the challenges for social welfare in our communities and churches in Asia as well. The many natural disasters, economic crisis, and climate change, and so on had seriously challenged the life of our communion. Diaconal work (or social ministry of the church) is a distinct mark of our Lutheran communion. It is part of the responsibility of the churches and an important dimension of its witness. Reflection especially on the theological understanding of diakonia and development still needs to be deepened to become pro-active in addressing challenges confronting us.

4. We all know that Asia is the least evangelized region in the world. There is a unique opportunity for *mission work* in the Asian context and is a high priority of the Lutheran churches in Asia. The importance of discussion and reflection in striking a balance between mission (evangelism, proclamation, and witness), diaconia and development in the Asian context today is of urgent need. The Lutheran Council in Asia (LUCAS) in its 2009 meeting rightly recommended a round table meeting between mission agencies and the churches in Asia on ‘Finding the synergy between mission, diaconia and development in the Asian context today.’ The main goal will be to find greater balance between these three areas, which is of great significance. We are called to continually reflect on the importance of holistic ministry of proclamation, diaconia, development and advocacy.

5. Another theme issue on
LWF/DMD new director – Dr Musa P Filibus

Dr Musa Panti Filibus is LWF/DMD New Director!

Upon the recommendation of the General Secretary, the new LWF Council, during its meeting on 29 July 2010 in Stuttgart (Germany), appointed Rev. Dr Musa Panti Filibus as the Director of the LWF Department for Mission and Development (DMD) for a period of four years. Dr Filibus assumed his new responsibilities on 1st September 2010.

Of Nigerian nationality, Dr Filibus is a pastor of the Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria. He joined the Lutheran World Federation in September 2002 as DMD Area Secretary for Africa. Before coming to the LWF, Filibus served as Provost of the Bronnum Lutheran Seminary, Yola, in North Eastern Nigeria. He holds a PhD in Pastoral Theology from the Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minneapolis, USA.

Dr Filibus is married with three grown up children.

As director of LWF/DMD, Dr Filibus urges member churches to take more prayerfully their call to witness Christ, to work together in order to transform tragic situations that destroy human dignity and creation. Consequently, churches need to renew their vision for mission as proclamation of the gospel of repentance and forgiveness and prophetic diaconia for healing, reconciliation and peace and justice in the world.

Dr Filibus would like to encourage the LWF Asian member churches—particularly located in a region that is unmatched in terms of its multi religious nature—to search for new ways of engaging their neighbors of different faiths for the care of creation, which is for the common good of human kind. Equally, he would like to encourage member churches to reaffirm the crucial role of prophetic diaconia in their overall ministries and in collaboration with the wider Christian family, give hope to many in our different contexts.

I am leaving Geneva with mixed feelings—happy and looking forward to my retirement but also with a feeling of sadness to leave behind what has been such an important part of my life. I will take with me this special bonding with all of you and the cherished memories of our times together.

I shall miss all of you: member churches, church leaders, LUCAS and LWF Council members in Asia, men, women, and youth in different countries and my colleagues in the regional office in Singapore, and LWF – DMD/Asia Desk in Geneva. I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to all of you for your assistance through the years in a spirit of mutual confidence, cooperation and friendship.

Thank you for being such good people. I shall remain grateful for the many things I have learnt from all of you. I thank God for this special opportunity to serve His church and the people.

I wish each and every one of you the very best in all your future endeavours in your professional and personal lives.

God bless you all!
Opening & Dedication of Sabah Theological Seminary Multi-purpose Education Centre

Sabah Theological Seminary (STS) started the construction of a multi-purpose six-storey Education Centre since May 2008 was finally completed in early 2010! On May 1, 2010, a dedication service for the Centre was conducted and the celebration was well attended by about 1,000 people from far and near. All glory is due to our Lord! It was also a time of wonderful fellowship with friends and we are truly touched by the outpouring of love, care and concern. Thank you for your prayers and kind words.

The Centre covers a built-up area of 64,024 square feet and the complex comprises a 900-capacity auditorium, a recreation hall, a 2-storey library block and a conference room for 100 participants. In additional it comprises a mini chapel, 12 classrooms and 13 lecturers' apartments.

Since its inception 22 years ago to equip indigenous pastoral workers in Sabah and Sarawak, STS has been growing steadily. The Education Centre is therefore necessary to accommodate our fast growing needs. To date STS has about 400 part time and full time students from not only throughout Malaysia but also from various countries including Brunei, China, Indonesia, and the Mekong region. We offer study programmes from undergraduate to postgraduate levels in three languages - Chinese, English and Bahasa Malaysia.

Equipped with modern conferencing facilities, the Centre will also be able to host meetings and forums at national and international levels. It will further complement efforts to eventually upgrade STS into a Christian University College in Malaysia.

Dr Thu En Yu
Principal, STS

Radio Workshop, India

The Northern Evangelical Lutheran Church (NELC) has two radio ministries in the Santali (Jharkhand) and Boro (Assam) languages which started 36 and 23 years ago respectively. Both of these ministries are instruments in proclaiming the Gospel and building awareness in the tribal society according to its respective language and culture. Many have come to know the Lord and are making disciples.

Since inception, both radio ministries have not had any formal training or workshop like the one conducted from September 1-4, 2010 at Dumka, Jharkhand at the head office of NELC. The Production and Contents Training for Radio Professionals Workshop includes interesting topics such as radio formats, listeners' participation, research and feedback, radio contents, HIV/AIDS programming, effective communication, nose for the news, programming field experiences, climate change, and environment communication through radio.

Participants were refreshed and regenerated in their vision to create awareness among the communities about the present development of the society and contextualizing the issues for spiritual reflection.

The resources persons, Dr I Arul Aram and Mr Sudhamsu Dahal, had helped participants see the importance and value of radio communication. Many left the workshop with renewed vision and zeal to continue serving the communities.

Benzjaigra Moshahary
Director, Shalom Communication Ministries
Inauguration of Bishop Jaharianson Saragi (left) and the General Secretary, Rev Elimanson Sumbayak of GKPS

GENEVA, 20 October 2010
(LWI) – As churches around the world commemorate Reformation Day in 2010 on or around 31 October, Acting General Secretary of The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Rev Martin Junge has invited LWF member churches to observe this year’s anniversary with a special sense of gratitude as they reflect on the contemporary significance of the Reformation’s witness to the gospel.

In a letter addressed to LWF member churches, Rev Junge reminds the Lutheran communion of the need to reaffirm God’s gift of grace especially in anticipation of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in 2017. “It is precisely because we live by grace that we have the confidence to look with honest eyes at the traditions we cherish and to seek God’s healing hand to make them live anew. Such a spirit is one for which our contemporary world thirsts,” writes Rev Junge.

On 31 October 1517 Luther nailed his “Ninety-Five Theses” to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, calling for reform in the Catholic Church of his time. Today Lutherans observe the date as Reformation Day.

Rev Junge reminds churches of the July 2010 LWF Eleventh Assembly “Action on the Legacy of Lutheran Persecution of Anabaptists,” in which Lutherans asked Mennonites for forgiveness for the former’s violent persecution of Anabaptists in the 16th century, and for the subsequent harmful depictions of the latter to the present day.

“In coming with repentance even to our own special festival, we are acting from the heart of our faith. We are recognizing that the Spirit of God who called the reformers is still active among us now,” writes Rev Junge.

He notes that Luther’s actions marked “a crucial turning point, a beginning of the Reformation,” and that observing this day has become a practice not only for Lutherans but also for many other churches.

“We recognize that the Reformation is not ours alone; reformation is a continuous need of the Church in every age, including this one. And we continue to work to address painful divisions among Christians, including those which date from the time of the reformers,” he stresses.

Rev Junge invites churches to use the “Service of Repentance” prepared for LWF Sunday 2010. Liturgical materials can be downloaded and adapted as needed for local contexts.

“Consider how this spirit of repentance can speak to your own churches on this Reformation Sunday—for in such prayers and acts of repentance we touch on a profound dimension of the meaning of Reformation in our time,” Rev Junge concludes.
LWF Welcomes Appointment of Michelle Bachelet to Head New UN Women Office

GENEVA, 16 September 2010 (LWI) - The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) welcomed the appointment of former Chilean President Michelle Bachelet as head of the new United Nations agency, UN Women, saying it gives gender equality a high profile.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon named Bachelet to the post on 14 September. She was the first female president of Chile, and she is well known for her commitment to the pursuit of gender justice.

“The Lutheran World Federation welcomes your appointment, both because it shows what a high profile is being given to this newly created office, and because we are convinced of the high quality contribution you will bring toward the office’s success,” said Rev Martin Junge, Acting LWF General Secretary, in a congratulatory letter sent today to Bachelet.

UN Women becomes operational in January, merging four UN offices and agencies: the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM); the Division for the Advancement of Women; the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women; and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women.

Rev Junge, a Chilean pastor, who is LWF General Secretary-elect reiterated the organization’s support for UN Women’s objectives. “Within our own Lutheran theological understanding, enhancing women’s role and contribution in decision-making processes including leadership remains a key priority.”

He pointed out that most of the LWF member churches around the world have ordained women as pastors, and many have women serving as bishops or presidents. “Our churches have been immeasurably blessed by our women pastors and leaders.”

Still, the general secretary-elect acknowledged the significant challenges Lutherans face in their quest for gender equality, a fact highlighted by the organization’s highest decision making body at its last meeting in Stuttgart, Germany. “We believe that in order to be a legitimate and credible voice for gender justice in society, the church must first achieve gender justice within its own structures and practices,” said Rev Junge, citing the Message of the Eleventh Assembly, held in July 2010 under the theme “Give Us Today Our Daily Bread.”

Rev Junge underlined the LWF’s commitment to working in partnership with UN Women, continuing close collaboration on efforts around the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the UN Commission on the Status for Women and the Millennium Development Goals.

“We at the LWF wish you and UN Women rich blessings and great success. Be assured of our prayers and ongoing support in advancing efforts to improve the lives of women and the communities they represent throughout the world,” Rev Junge concluded.

Bishop Younan Online at Washington Post

An OpEd piece written by Bishop Dr. Munib A. Younan is now available online at the Washington Post “On Faith” Blog:
http://onfaith.washingtonpost.com/onfaith/guestvoices/2010/09/can_religion_solve_conflicts_in_the_middle_east.html

The article examines the role of religion in the Middle East. In the article Bishop Younan calls on religion to be “prophetic, a catalyst for reconciliation, and to offer peace education.” We encourage you to follow the links below to read the article.

The OpEd piece is part of a special series about religious leadership and its role in the Israeli-Arab conflict and was written for the Common Ground News Service (CGNews). (ELCJHL)

LWF Departments into Facebook

LWF-World Service has gone live on Facebook! Many have started to share videos and links showing what World Service is doing to “Uphold the rights of the Poor and Oppressed”.

Visit this LWF-World Service page on Facebook through the following link:
http://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/LWF-Department-for-World-Service/103706399696416

You are invited to join and also share a story, image or video on what LWF/DWS is doing worldwide.

In case you are still not aware, the LWF Youth also has a Facebook: http://www.facebook.com/LWFYouth and a very active blog: http://lwfyouth.org/

Log on and get connected! (Ed)
Scholarship Programme Has Made a Difference for Churches and Society

GENEVA, 7 October 2010 (LWI) – A consultation called to review the international scholarship programme of The Lutheran Word Federation (LWF) opened in the Swiss city of Montreux, with a call to effectively use the available resources and synergies in the Lutheran communion to promote ongoing learning.

The LWF is endowed with an “ecology of knowledges,” said Acting General Secretary Rev Martin Junge when he addressed participants to the October 5-8 global consultation, “Education and Training Impact and Strategy.” He argued for a plural form of knowledge, emphasizing the diversity of information and learning in the LWF, as was evident at the organization’s July 2010 Assembly in Stuttgart, Germany, under the theme “Give Us Today Our Daily Bread.”

Junge assumes full responsibility as LWF general secretary in November, succeeding the incumbent Rev Dr Ishmael Noko. The Chilean theologian was elected at the October 2009 LWF Council meeting.

The 40 participants in the Montreux consultation will review the results of an external evaluation of the LWF scholarship programme. The aim is to identify and systematize the most crucial priority areas for the programme, with a view to making it respond to the strategic human capacity development needs of the churches for the period following the Eleventh Assembly.

He emphasized the consultation as a significant part of a broader re- visioning of the organization’s work in view of the LWF Renewal Process and development of the Strategic Plan for the period 2012 to 2017, both of which take into account the Assembly outcomes. The question of synergies in the Lutheran communion remains crucial, said Junge. “How does this instrument of the international scholarship programme become more connected to other programmatic processes? How do we make it an instrument to be shared like the many other resources, capacities and knowledges that we have in the communion?”

The incoming general secretary underlined the polycentric nature of the LWF—having more than one centre—as important in promoting strong participation and different expressions to respond to various needs and participate as equals in God’s mission. “How do we learn together from the different contexts?” he asked participants to the global consultation coordinated by the Human Resources desk of the LWF Department for Mission and Development (DMD).

In his welcoming remarks, DMD Director Rev Dr Musa P Filibus pointed out that while the statistical data in the evaluation report highlighted some of the success stories—932 scholarships between 2000 and 2010 comprising 1,516 scholars—the issue went beyond figures. “It is about the difference the LWF is making in the life of member churches and society. The scholarships contribute to broadening the professional and leadership competence of those trained, which in turn inspire new experiences in their churches,” he emphasized.

Filibus underscored the programme’s contribution to envisioning gender equity through the numerical increase of female scholars and integration of women, their gifts and leadership in their churches. He cited “opportunities for deepening relations and incorporation of deep contextual experiences and insights into theological thinking, mission practice, renewal of worship and liturgy,” as equally important aspects of the scholarship programme.

The DMD director however stressed the need to acknowledge and pay attention to the gaps and limitations identified by the evaluation report. He spoke of inadequacy in terms of institutional learning and understanding how the experiences transform church institutions. There was also limited knowledge and utilization of policies and guidelines in member churches in discerning their priorities for human resources training, he added.
LWF Scholarship Programme: Voices from the Communion

The LWF’s international scholarship programme has made a significant contribution to member church life and witness over the past several decades.

LWF Office for Communications staff sat down with human resource workers and former scholarship recipients at the Global Consultation on Education and Training Impact and Strategy to hear what the scholarship programme has meant for their churches and where they see challenges for the future.

Julia Puspamala Christy Parinbam | Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malaysia:

The membership of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malaysia (ELCM) is predominantly Indian, which is a minority group in Malaysia. When it comes to education, the government scholarships mainly go to Malaysians. I wish more scholarship programmes could be made available for Indians, we are not yet recognized.

In Malaysia, there are many single mothers who abandon their babies. The ELCM has started a women’s mission centre to help out such women. We need scholarships to train counsellors for such a centre.

The crime rate in Malaysia is highest among youth of Indian origin. We need scholarships that could build the church capacity to reach out to such youth.

Ms Parinbam works in the human resource department of the World Health Organization office in Malaysia.

Rev Dr Monica Melanchthon | United Evangelical Lutheran Churches in India

I think I am the first woman in India to hold a PhD in Old Testament, and probably among the first Lutheran women in Asia. This opened the way for others.

I have often seen where women are directed into other channels. But I was conscious of the fact that there weren’t any [female] biblical scholars. And that biblical interpretation is often used to keep women in certain types of jobs or positions. I felt that I needed to acquire the skills to challenge these cultural injunctions against women.

My vocation is to equip both men and women to read the biblical texts responsibly, to arrive at interpretations that will contribute to the liberation of humankind. I’m trying to increase sensitivity to reading the biblical texts from the perspective of women’s experiences and to articulate theology that takes into consideration the voices of women and other marginalized communities.

Have others in your church also received LWF international scholarships?

I was one of the last recipients of an international scholarship. Now most students are asked to study in-country. I think the opportunities and the growth provided by international exposure cannot be compared when you are doing theological studies.

[Former LWF scholarship recipients] are definitely making a contribution to theological education in India, serving in faculties of Lutheran theological institutions.

Rev Dr Melanchthon received an LWF scholarship for her doctoral studies at the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago (USA). She heads the Department of Old Testament at the Gurukul Lutheran Theological College and Research Institute in Chennai, India.
Christian Communication Groups get First Female Head

Geneva (ENI). Soon after a study commissioned by the World Association of Christian Communication found that men continue to hog the global news headlines, despite the presence of women growing, the group installed its first female executive head. Rev Karin Achtelstetter, the former director of communications and editor-in-chief for the Geneva-based Lutheran World Federation, was installed new general secretary of WACC in Toronto on 5 October, during an executive committee meeting.

WACC president, Dennis Smith said, “We are proud that Rev Karin Achtelstetter is not only enormously qualified for the job, she is also the first woman to serve as the general secretary of our association.” Rev Achtelstetter takes up full responsibility at the head of WACC on November 1. She is to succeed the Rev Randy Naylor, a Canadian who has served WACC as general secretary since July 2001. He has been appointed minister for Parkwoods United Church in Toronto.

World Communion of Reformed Churches Launches New Website

The World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) is pleased to announce the launch of its website: www.wcrc.ch. The site is designed to share the news of WCRC’s 230 member churches representing 80 million Christians in 108 countries – most in the Global South.

“WCRC is grateful to the Uniting Church of Australia for its generous support of the development of the site,” says Kristine Greenaway, head of the WCRC Office of Communication. “The expertise and staff time the church donated made this new site possible. It has been an exciting collaboration.”

The website offers news in English, French, Spanish and German about WCRC programme initiatives, reports from the Uniting General Council (Grand Rapids: 2010) and links to the Ecumenical Prayer Cycle, videos, photos and WCRC promotional materials.

Visitors to the site can subscribe to the organization’s two quarterly periodicals: Reformed Communiqué (newsletter) and Reformed World (theological journal). A special feature offers the opportunity to make online donations or pay membership fees.

WCRC was created in June 2010 through a merger of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) and the Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC). Its 230 member churches representing 80 million Christians are active worldwide in initiatives supporting economic and gender justice, responsible use of the earth’s resources, and dialogue among Christians of different traditions as well as interfaith dialogue.

The offices of the WCRC are in Geneva, Switzerland. Setri Nyomi of the Presbyterian Church in Ghana serves as the General Secretary. Jerry Pillay of the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa in South Africa is its first elected president.

WCRC was created in June 2010 through a merger of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) and the Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC). Its 230 member churches representing 80 million Christians are active worldwide in initiatives supporting economic, climate and gender justice, mission, and cooperation among Christians of different traditions.

How Many Christians are there in China?

Since Marco Polo returned from China 700 years ago, the question of how many followers of Jesus Christ are in the world’s most populous nation has fascinated many researchers and believers around the world. In recent years there has been heated debate and widely varying estimates of the size of the Body of Christ in China.

My interest in this subject started over 20 years ago, and I have been collecting data since. We now present the most comprehensive study ever conducted into the number of Christians in all 2,371 cities and counties, within all 33 provinces and regions of China. Estimates are provided for all believers — Protestants belonging to the registered Three-Self churches as well as house churches, and for registered and underground Catholic believers.

So how many Christians are in China today? On our website you will find all the results of our survey, in a series of tables. Before viewing the statistics, please read an article we have written which helps put the numbers in perspective, and explains some of the methodology we employed to arrive at our conclusions. At the conclusion of our article you will find a link to the statistical tables.

Please begin by logging on to: http://asiaharvest.org/pages/Christians%20in%20China/christiansInChina1.html

We hope you will find this research interesting and helpful, and that you will join us in praising the Lord for the mighty work He has done, and continues to do, in the world’s most populated country. For the King of Kings

Paul Hattaway
www.asiaharvest.org
The people who come are from different backgrounds and religious beliefs. All appreciate the food but more so, many are there for the company. They have taken Bedok Lutheran Church as a gathering place of all sorts. They enjoy the company because it fills a void in their day.

How it all began ...
- by Rev Rita Wong of Bedok Lutheran Church - Lutheran Church in Singapore (LCS)

“The idea of a feeding ministry began as a burden several years ago to help the needy because, next to Bedok Lutheran Church are several residence blocks of under privileged elderly residents who are sickly and with no one to cook for them.

I was encouraged by members to go ahead with the plan after sharing over the pulpit and received a contribution where 45 loaves of bread were bought to give away to one of the blocks. Following that, personal invitations were extended to these residents to come for breakfast. On that first morning of September 22, 2008, three elderly women joined us at the Breakfast Club.

With an initial group of three volunteers, we decided to serve more substantial meals to those who come. Since then, the Breakfast Club has had a variety of good tasting and nutritious meals, with the number of breakfasters averaging 40 to 45 and a team of 10 to 12 helpers. After a good breakfast, some of them would linger to chat. As and when they allow us, we pray for them and their specific needs. We have also assisted some to obtain free medical aids from the government's grassroots agencies.

Several have since been baptised and attending the church's Seniors Fellowship as well as the Saturday Dialect Fellowship.

“If there is a poor man among your brothers ... do not be hardhearted or tightfisted” (Deuteronomy 15:7) and in Matthew 25: 35 – 40, the Lord Jesus spoke of those who fed the hungry, gave drink to the thirsty and invited the stranger in, as if they were doing all these things to the Lord Jesus Himself.

Reflections ... by Angelina Chang, a Breakfast Club volunteer

When Pastor Rita mentioned about starting a feeding ministry in one of her sermons, I knew I wanted to be a part of it. I had volunteered at a hospice before and have now been with the Breakfast Club for nearly two years.

Here, not only do we feed others but we are being fed as well, in more than one way! “Give us this day our daily bread” has come to mean so much more to me -- this giving of physical and spiritual nourishment and the opportunity to serve and fellowship with one another in Christ. It gives meaning to our lives and satisfies us in a way that no other food can. All of us who serve here continue to do so because not only is the work important but we have also found a family among us, people who care for us, encourage and lift us up.

The work is not easy as preparation work starts as early as 6.30 in the morning. Coming up with the menu to feed more than 40 people daily is also no easy task. Creativity runs short sometimes but our aim is to provide substantial, nutritious meals that are tasty enough for all who come each morning. Being a crowd of seniors, most have lost their teeth so meals have to be soft and chewable. In addition, a number of them are also diabetics where special attention and care has to be taken in preparing the food and beverages.

No matter what the difficulties, all of us who serve are joyful to be a part of this ministry. It has opened our eyes to the simple needs of others (who live so close), and given us an opportunity to help in other ways besides just providing a meal in the mornings. We’re there to support, to accompany, to help in any way we can… in reading a notice/letter, to fill a form, even giving tuition to their grandchildren! For a time, we had a mini clinic running, cleaning wounds; some with injuries from falls, others from surgeries.

The people who come are from different backgrounds and religious beliefs. All appreciate the food they get but more so, many are there for the company. They have taken Bedok Lutheran Church as a gathering place of all sorts. They enjoy the company because it fills a void in their day.

The helpers too are from various backgrounds. Not all are Christians but we share this common bond and goal -- there
to help meet a need and to enjoy one another, like a family to laugh and cry together, to encourage and to lift each other up! Yes, we have all put on weight due to the extra breakfast meals since we started, but we have found brothers and sisters along the way, an extended family.

Some who come to eat have also found more than having their tummies filled. Some have found the Lord. Over half a dozen have been baptised through this simple ministry of serving breakfast. Even one of our helpers was baptised due to this ministry.

Breakfast at Bedok Lutheran Church is giving water to thirsty spirits and food for our lonely souls. Every day, we are nourished bodily with a great breakfast, and every day, our souls are also nourished with the company of family members in Christ. What a beautiful way to spend the mornings.

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**Farewell My Friends!**

Time flies! I have been serving with the Lutheran World Federation for more than 10 years, and like my supervisor Dr Ginda Harahap, it is also time for me to say GOODBYE. No, no, I have not reached retirement age yet (smile)! Just reaching the maximum term of employment for this position! The LWF Regional Coordinator for Asia is a position that is designed to rotate among member churches in Asia, so that the variety of gifts and ministry could be shared and experienced in the process.

A decade is a long, LONG time … but it does seem like not too long ago when I, this little frog in the well, stepped out to see what the big, wide world is like besides the little red-dot Singapore! To me, this position was given because it came shortly after I told my husband, Terry, that I wish to serve God in a greater capacity! We were serving in the mission field in Thailand then, and God heard and granted the desire of my heart! This position has given me the opportunity not only to serve my own church, the Lutheran Church in Singapore, and the church where we were serving in mission at that time – the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thailand, but also 52 other Lutheran churches in the region as well! It was as if God took me literally to the very last word I have uttered, and much more!

This period has been an exciting phase of my life where I could not have learnt more or travelled farther than I possibly could in other jobs or positions. The exposures and experiences, the many church leaders and friends I have come to know from the LWF global communion and especially Asia, are so precious and dear to me. Now I could actually say I have friends from all over the world! Of course there had also been challenges and frustration but God’s grace has been sufficient!

Your support and encouragement have also been crucial in making my life and ministry with the LWF a wonderful and joyful experience!

After ten long years, a change is certainly long overdue! So I am leaving with no regrets but with a thankful heart to God and all. Thank you, my dear colleagues and friends, for your love and support in so many ways!

So will I just be a ‘woman of leisure’ after leaving the position at the end of the year? -- Many of you have enquired. Guess life is too precious (and young?) to be doing that at the moment! I will just utter another prayer to God … but will be a little more careful with my words this time!

God’s richest blessings to all of you! Hope to see you again sometime, somewhere!

Sally Lim
LWF Regional Expression Coordinator for Asia / ALN Editor

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Sally Lim (Kee)

Breakfasters enjoying the food and people at Bedok Lutheran Church
**Programs for Asia facilitated by DMD Asia Desk in 2011**

1. **Lutheran Council in Asia (LUCAS) meeting**
   The annual meeting of LUCAS will be held from 8 to 9 March 2011 to discuss about the follow up of the LWF Assembly in Stuttgart and prepare for the Asia Church Leadership Conference from 10 to 13 March 2011.

2. **Asia Church Leadership Conference (ACLC)**
   The Asia Church Leadership Conference (ACLC) has been planned to schedule from 10 to 13 March 2011 immediately after LUCAS meeting. The main purpose of ACLC is to follow-up the message and resolution of the LWF Assembly in Stuttgart 2010 from regional approach and provides specific plans and strategies for implementation by member churches.

3. **Faculty Professional Development Training**
   This program will be held from 28 July to 4 August, 2011. The program is one of the agreed actions during the consultation on Establishing Network of Theological Institution in Asia held in Bangkok, Thailand, March 17-21, 2010.

4. **Theological Consultation on Marriage, Family and Human Sexuality**
   The Consultation on Marriage, Family and Human Sexuality will be held from 25-28 October 2011 in Jakarta Indonesia. The purpose is to discuss about theological understanding of the issues and viewed from the context of Asia.

Invitation and more information will be sent to member churches in due time.

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