

Where *He* Leads...

FOREIGN MISSION NEWSLETTER

of the APOSTOLIC LUTHERAN CHURCH OF AMERICA

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July-September 2011

A Filipino Encore

I really feel blessed! God allowed me to visit the Philippines twice this year and both times it was a wonderful experience. The main difference this time was that I did not go with the Foreign Mission team that I went with in January, but with my brother, Pastor Raymond. This was the first mission trip we have gone on together. We were able to go to new areas that the Foreign Mission has not been able to go into before, which proved to be very rewarding. And together we were able to go down memory lane and explore many of the areas of our lives, our precious family heritage and our spiritual background that we have in common. See why I call it a real blessing?

My brother Raymond and I were welcomed first by Pastor Benjamin Alud in General Santos City, which is in the southern part of the big island of Mindanao. We were asked to begin the first seminars immediately upon arrival the first day. Originally, two-day pastors and church workers seminars had been planned in both General Santos City and Sarangani Province on consecutive days, but both seminars had been mistakenly scheduled for the SAME TWO DAYS. So Raymond and I split up

and took different days at different places.

The first day I went out to Sarangani Province and Raymond took the seminar in General Santos City. The next day we switched. The seminars turned out to be well attended. Several tribal pastors from the hill country in Sarangani Province attended the seminar here in Alabel.

On the second evening a very spirited and youthful crusade was held in an open sports hall in the city. Many people came forward

in penitence for prayer and blessing at the close of the service. It was a thrill to see all the young people who came forward

Brother Raymond and I then flew to Cagayan de Oro in the north of Mindanao and held a one day seminar there – this time together. At the close of that seminar the pastors all gathered round and thanked God for our service in the Philippines and asked Him for continued blessings upon our lives, mission, and ministries.



Lake Mainit and the lush countryside.



Raymond and I receiving a blessing on our ministries.

From the Foreign Mission Administrator Desk

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Upcoming Foreign Mission Trips

- **South Africa** (2nd half of October into November 2011)
- **Guatemala** (October 2011)
- **India** (January 2012)
- **Philippines** (May 2012)
- **Guatemala** (Spring or Summer 2012)

Other trips are in the discussion stage; some may include groups. However, the final decisions on these will not be made until the Foreign Mission (FM) annual planning meeting in late September.

Fast Facts

- The Apostolic Lutheran Church of America (ALCA) has about 55 churches in the USA and Canada and works in over 1000 churches in foreign countries. Attendance in these foreign churches is more than 140,000.
- Each year the FM visits 12 to 16 countries to preach the Gospel and train pastors.
- People in at least 40 countries are regularly communicating with the FM; more people are reaching out to the FM for spiritual food – communication begins immediately with each new contact.
- Supporters of the FM are beginning to take advantage of and understand the work in such a way that they are including FM support in their wills.
- Endowment funds are also available. For more information, contact the FM at foreignmission@comcast.com.

PRAYER REQUESTS:

Pray that the doors continue to be opened in the world where the hearts are ready to receive and HEAR His Holy Word and that the true Word of God will be preached.

Pray for the safety and boldness of all missionaries as many countries can be dangerous and the living conditions can be poor.

Pray for willing and inspired writers to come forward! Much teaching material and articles are needed so that the FM can distribute these via email. This is a “no cost” way of sharing the Gospel. The people using this material use it in so many places and ways.

Pray that the special FM Bible Fund would receive more financial help. In the last nine months, people in many countries have received Bibles through this fund. Our desire is that everyone would have God’s Word readily available to them!

The following Sunday I preached at a village church on a low-lying peninsula by the sea near Cagayan de Oro. While the service got underway the tide came in and was lapping at the door of the church not long after we sang the last hymn. There was nothing we could do but wait an hour or so in the now isolated flooded village until the tide went down and I could depart – not on a motorbike as I had come, but on



The colorful craft which took me across the flooded road.

a colorful boat which took me across a river so we could get back to our car.

After brother Raymond returned to America I was invited up to the Kitcharao area...about a seven hour drive still farther up the northern tip of Mindanao. The landscape in this mountainous lake country was lush and breathtaking. Up in the hills we were taken to the Tribal Church in Maraiging where we had a short service. A lot of children came to church. Their fathers and some of their mothers were at work in the fields and forests since it was midday. A special arrangement for the tiny tots which I thought was novel - an enlarged bench so that they could sleep during the service and their parents could follow along. At the end of the service the mothers crowded forward with their little ones for prayer and blessing.

Rounding the curves on the picturesque highway back from Kitcharao you get a great view of Lake



An enlarged bench for the little ones to sleep on during the service while their parents followed along.

Mainit, one of the largest lakes in the Philippines. How could I help but love such a country and its people who have given a whole new meaning to the word “gracious!”

In God’s love and peace,
– Dennis Hilman

PRAYER REQUEST FROM MYANMAR

We are troubled and wondering what will happen to us because of the fighting between the government army and the rebellious Kachin Independence Army (KIA) in the state of Kachin. The fighting has been going on since November 2010 and is spreading and getting worse.

Bombings are taking place and people are forced to be “porters” that carry heavy loads. The porters are often sent into minefields to clear the area of land mines. Raping, killing, and stealing are routinely taking place as well as the destruction of people’s homes. People are being forced to hide or flee into the forest areas without water and without food.

Children and the elderly are becoming sickly and suffering from the lack of food.

Food prices and the cost of domestic cooking oil are skyrocketing. Many fighters from both armies have died in the battles along with innocent civilians. Many young people and young girls are fleeing into the nearby countries of Thailand and Malaysia to find work and earn money.

Please pray for Myanmar and our safety. The Gospel is badly needed as well as peace and people are expectantly waiting for this to happen. We cannot imagine how we are going to survive next year since farmers cannot work their fields. **We need your prayers!**

In Christ,
– Pastor Van Cung Tum



Kachin State is shown in black.

CHAFISI



WATAMU, KENYA



The Chafisi Orphanage in Watamu, Kenya has come a long way in the last few years. It has gone from an empty building with only walls and a roof to a fully functioning orphanage with beds, bathrooms, a kitchen, and lots of kids! Some recently completed projects include a gated fence surrounding the orphanage, the installation of electricity, and water on site with a reserve tank. Currently the orphanage helps a total of 48 children (26 boys and 22 girls). Only 16 of the boys are currently living in the building; the rest are staying with guardians. All of the girls are also staying with guardians because there is not yet a girls' dorm. Establishing a place for the girls to stay is one of the next priorities.

Proper shelter isn't the only major need of the children. A sufficient and sustainable food supply is a crucial component of the orphanage. Ensuring that the children do not go hungry is especially difficult

during the current food shortage in Kenya. They are experiencing the worst drought in 60 years, making the price of food very high.

Besides helping the children with their physical needs, we are also helping them to grow spiritually and to support their education. For this reason, one of the current projects at the orphanage is to establish a library. To date, the library consists of a few educational books, some Bibles, and the *Follow Jesus, Prevent AIDS* booklet published in the Swahili language by the ALCA Foreign Mission. We would like to add to that with some of the following types of books: learning about sounds, early reading, handwriting, first phonics, creative writing, picture books, books about life skills development, and early speaking. Access to books is very limited for children, so a library with a variety of books would be a wonderful addition.

The Laurium Apostolic Lutheran Church has been collecting pop cans as an ongoing fund raiser for the orphanage since April

2009. In May of this year, the Women's Missionary Outreach of Zion Lutheran Church in Hancock, MI agreed to partner with us in this effort. We are so thankful for this exciting development. It is encouraging to see God's people share His love through their compassionate involvement.

If you are interested in helping meet the needs of the orphanage, you can contact Tara Packard by phone at 906-231-1640 or by email at tarams12@hotmail.com. To donate, checks can be made out to Laurium Apostolic Lutheran Church with Kenya Orphanage written in the memo space. Please send donations to Laurium Apostolic Lutheran Church, 246 Tamarack St., Laurium, MI 49913. We are so thankful for all those willing to help the abandoned children of Watamu, Kenya in any way! All contributions make a real difference in their lives. Thank you for your prayers and support.

For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.
 (Matt. 25:35,36,40)

– Tara Packard, Administrator

Note: Since the Foreign Mission's focus remains the preaching of the Word of God, you will notice that this orphanage is not an official part of the Foreign Mission. Tara Packard learned about this need in a past issue of this newsletter and took it upon herself to help in whatever way she can. Obviously, she has done a wonderful job. The Foreign Mission plans on visiting here on its next mission trip to Kenya.



Children holding their own chicken. (top). New orphanage building (above). Orphans on their bunk beds (right).

PERSECUTION OF CHRISTIANS

The following countries have the largest rate of persecution of Christians:

- North Korea
- Maldives
- Iran
- Yemen
- Afghanistan
- Iraq
- Saudi Arabia
- Uzbekistan
- Somalia
- Laos

Source: Open Doors World Watch List – 2011.

About 75% of religious persecution in the world is against Christians.

Confessions of a First-Time Missionary...or Five

Greetings from Russia!

As of this date, August 18, there is currently a youth trip traveling through Russia and we ask for your prayers. Five of the current eight members are first-time missionaries. Here are some of their first impressions after a few days of a month long trip.

So, tell me about this first mission trip. What are some of the highlights?

Debbie Rokala: I guess the gathering at the home. I thought it was cool how the people actually participated in it! They asked questions and made comments.

Jaclyn Somero: Meeting the people and being able to talk to them in small groups and learning about each other. I really like singing with everyone, to be honest!

Thomas Questad: Probably the people. Hanging out at their houses is really fun. It's been interesting. They are all friendly people!

Svetlana Fedorova: Meeting so many people. I see what God is like for these people. I'm being taught to love my neighbors. I'm being taught not to pay attention to things that aren't very important in our lives.

Note: Anna and Svetlana are our Russian translators.

What has been the most surprising, the most different from what you expected?

Anna: I guess I've been on mission trips before, but not so far or so long. Usually just on the weekend. For me everything is new! It's a new way of searching for new people we can bring to God. When I was helping other missionaries with translating

we always had a plan. Today we go to the orphan house, tomorrow we go to the hospital...but for me I like it more to just talk to people. Of course you talk to people at the hospital too, but it's just different and I like it.

How about impressions of Russia in general?

Debbie: Planes, trains, and the subway! I've never been on them before.

Thomas: It's interesting. It's definitely different than America. I guess pretty much everything is different!

Anything been hard?

Jaclyn: I wish I wasn't so afraid to talk. I guess it'll get easier, but it's really hard right now.

Thomas: Trying to sleep on the bunk in the train! It was about a foot too short and it got really hot. At first I fell asleep and felt pretty good. Then I looked at the clock and thought, "It's only 1:30 am?!"

Svetlana: I really feel homesick. I miss my kids. I think I need them more than they need me.

Debbie: The food. It isn't really that different, but I'll be glad to have McDonald's when I get home!



What are you looking forward to?

Anna: I'm excited about new meetings and new friends that we can encourage during our normal lives. We will not see one another, maybe, but through emails or somehow. I really want to meet new friends and new people and to help them anyway I can, just be their friend. I am really excited about this!

Debbie: More new experiences. Making new friends...or more new friends! I feel like I've already made more new friends in Russia than I did when I started high school.

Svetlana: I'm looking forward to sharing the gospel with at least one person who doesn't believe in God.

Please pray as we continue on our trip that God will use each one of us and continue to help each one of us grow!

God's Peace!

*Debbie Rokala
Jaclyn Somero
Thomas Questad
Anna Kuzmakova
Svetlana Fedorova*

Traveling with Gregory Greve, Dennis Hilman and Brian Niemitalo

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WAYS TO HELP THE FOREIGN MISSION

- 12-month pledge program (min. \$10 per month)
- Foreign Mission general fund support
- Pastor support program (\$30 per month)
- Supply a Bible (\$3 each, min. ten Bibles)
- Support an orphan (\$30 per month)
- Buy a bicycle for a pastor (\$80)
- Memorial donations
- Endowment funds
- Full time Missionary support (\$200 per quarter – Dennis Hilman)
- Wells in India (\$500 per well)
- Mission Hospital in India

DONATIONS

Donations in support of the foreign mission efforts should be sent to:

Apostolic Lutheran Church of America
1601 NW 4th Avenue
Battle Ground, WA 98604

On check, write: Apostolic Lutheran Church Foreign Mission. Donations can be earmarked to support any of the areas identified.

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CORRECTION: In the Faithful Devotion article in the last issue, it was stated that the young girls are attending a Hindu Theological College. While it is true that the girls were at this school and they were studying, it is also true that no girls or women can attend Hindu theological schools or colleges in India. Therefore, the girls were technically enrolled in some specific enrollment or endeavor at this college. The translation did not allow for a totally clear distinction in terms. We apologize for this oversight that was a result of translation difficulties with the Telugu language of India.

