

Canadian Lutheran World Relief seeks relief funds for Southeast Asia

WINNIPEG - Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR) is appealing to Canadians for financial support for relief operations in the aftermath of multiple natural disasters that have struck Southeast Asia in recent weeks. The agency is working in partnership with other members of the ACT International alliance to address people's basic needs and support rehabilitation efforts.

In the Philippines, the government's national disaster coordinating council says a total of 1.87 million people were affected by Tropical Storm Ketsana. Up to 375,000 people are staying in 600 evacuation centres. ACT partners have initiated plans to address the needs of urban poor families through distribution of relief goods including food, water, clothes, candles, sleeping mats, mosquito nets, pots and pans.

The same storm system also severely damaged areas of Vietnam leading to the evacuation of 52,000 households. To date, 162,000 houses have been damaged and 6000 houses totally destroyed. Response activities are likely to focus on early recovery and rehabilitation, as people appear to be meeting their immediate relief needs, together with response by Government and other organisations. ACT partners will give priority to water and sanitation (rehabilitation and flood-proofing hand pumps, latrines, wells and hygiene promotion), repair and upgrading shelters, and restoring livelihoods (providing seeds and seedlings).

In Indonesia, a 7.6 Richter Scale quake inflicted heavy damage on the Padang region. The death toll has reached over 1000 people, and is expected to rise further. Thousands are still trapped in several buildings in Padang city. A total of 10,062 houses in the district have collapsed. Around 19 public facilities are badly damaged; 50 schools are badly destroyed. ACT partners already in the damaged areas are beginning



Victoria Lio Nansen, right, went immediately to tsunami-hit Satitooa, Samoa to help with the clean-up.

to address shelter, water, food and medical needs.

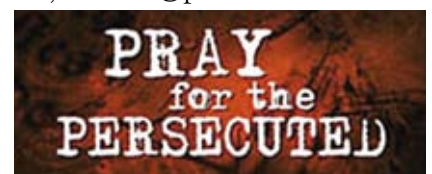
A series of four tsunamis struck Samoa as well as nearby American Samoa and some of the smaller islands of Tonga on Tuesday morning, local time, following a massive undersea quake about half an hour earlier. A State of Disaster was declared by the government and assistance requested from foreign missions and the United Nations. The Samoa Council of Churches has highlighted the need for food, drinking water and clothes.

Contributions for this emergency response can be made at www.clwr.org/donate or by calling toll-free 1-800-661-2597. Updates are available at: www.clwr.org/SouthAsia.

Canadian Lutheran World Relief is the emergency relief and development agency of Lutheran Church-Canada and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada. ACT International is a Christian partner agency of CLWR.

Pray for the persecuted

Churches in Canada and in 130 other countries will observe the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church on Sunday, Nov. 8, 2009. Ten percent of the world's Christians currently suffer some form of persecution. We who enjoy religious freedom can intercede for these brothers and sisters according to the Scriptural urgings of our Lord and the Apostles. Resources to aid pastors and congregations are available free through www.idop.ca, including: prayer points, Bible readings, a devotional, children's material, a prayer map, posters, a bulletin cover, and a video. Further information may be obtained from The Voice of the Martyrs, www.persecution.net, thevoice@persecution.net.



The power of prayer in Afghanistan

VALCARTIER, Que.

- Chaplains for the Canadian Forces provide much of the same ministry as a parish pastor. We apply the same Law and proclaim the same Gospel. However, our preaching happens in more atypical environments, such as “under-fire,” and most of our hearers, especially the younger soldiers today, are not normally church-goers.

Last summer, I served in Afghanistan. For deployed chaplains, providing Christian services, formal counselling sessions, referrals and recommendations to the chain of command represent a very small part of their job. For the most part, “in the field” chaplains hang out with troops, visit them in their work places and accompany them on their tasks, listening to their stories, fears, problems and concerns. Through these encounters and relations, we find innumerable opportunities to encourage and advise the troops and, most importantly, to pray with them.

“There are no atheists in a fox hole,” as the old saying goes, which gives chaplains lots of chances to share the love of God in a high-stress environment of death, chaos and terror. Yet it is the prayers of Christians and churches at home that contribute to opening these doors so that the Holy Spirit can work.

On one occasion a young man approached me and told me he was a new Christian; since deployment, he’d had a lot of time to think about questions of life, death and faith. He had started reading his Bible regularly since the beginning of the tour, because he knew the risks of his job could lead to a premature call to meet his Maker. He wanted



Chaplain Ristau prepares for a memorial service for two deceased Royal 22 Regiment. The make-shift chapel: dining tent; Flower vase: soya sauce container; picture holders: Oreo cookie boxes; altar; benches and duct tape.

to be sure he belonged to Christ, but confessed that his Biblical knowledge was limited.

After hearing the story of Philip and the Ethiopian, he too, like the Ethiopian, wanted to be baptized as soon as possible. However he knew I was leaving the next day due to some unforeseen circumstances at another base, and that there was no certainty of another chaplain arriving any time soon to his location. So I had the privilege of leading this young man through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism the following day, in a storage room full of meal rations and boxes, and using a 500 ml bottle of filtered water.

Afterwards, I promised to send this new member of God’s family devotional material for his spiritual growth upon arrival back to Valcartier, Quebec. I said I would register him at the chapel, and send him a Baptismal certificate as a souvenir of this most important day of his life. I am sure someone somewhere was praying for this new brother in Faith. Certainly Jesus was.

On the Afghanistan bases where the dead and injured (usually Afghans) arrive daily, one message soldiers can appreciate is that the

situation would be a lot worse if there was no loving God watching over us. Or, to paraphrase Luther in his Large Catechism on the Lord’s Prayer: “the prayers of a few faithful Christians, goes a long way!”

Don’t stop praying for our troops and Christ’s ministry even when others seem to have forgotten, given up hope, or belittled the importance of prayer. God loves to act on our behalf, but He also likes to be asked and thanked—not because He needs our praise, but so we don’t forget He is there at our side; that neither death nor life can separate us from the love of God that we have in Christ.

Chaplain Harold Ristau

Haitians grateful for Canadian assistance

ST. CATHARINES, Ont. - Haiti Lutheran Mission Society (HLMS) in Canada has been playing a big part in getting clothes, shoes and bedding items to the Haitian people. Earlier this month another 40-foot container arrived in Gonaives. The church there expects to begin distributing clothes and shoes to about 15,000 people in the Artibonite region. This will take about a week. Before Christmas, another container from the Haiti Lutheran Mission Society will arrive. Many thanks to the HLMS for these shipments that are blessing many Haitian families. Even the empty containers are being recycled for use as storage containers for local businesses. For information on contributing to the Christmas container, contact Howard Bogusat (hobo@cogeco.ca). Howard reports that clothing and wood are the most needed items.

Convention actions in motion aiming for 2011

A task force and an implementation committee mandated by the 2008 LCC Convention held their initial meetings September 11 in St. Catharines, and September 14-15 in Edmonton.

The St. Catharines meeting, held at Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary, launched the task force reviewing LCC's vicarage program for seminary students. Members include: Rev. Mark Dressler, task force chair (St. Paul, Saskatoon); Rev. Prof. Jonathan

Kraemer, (Concordia Lutheran Seminary); Rev. Dr. William Mundt, (Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary); Deacon Siegrid Robak, (Prince of Peace School, Chestermere, Alta.); Rev. Andre Schroth, (First St. Paul's, Wellesley, Ont.); Rev. Daryl

Solie, (LCC first vice-president); and Cindy Taylor, task force secretary (First, Windsor, Ont.).



Task force studying LCC's vicarage program: (l-r) Rev. Dr. William Mundt; Siegrid Robak; Cindy Taylor; President Robert Bugbee (advisory); Rev. Andre Schroth; LCC First Vice-president Rev. Daryl Solie; Professor Jonathan Kraemer; Rev. Mark Dressler.

At the ABC District office in Edmonton, the committee to "establish a chaplaincy service for the care of church workers and their families" met to begin its work. Serving on the task force are Rev. Dr. Stephen Chambers, (Concordia Lutheran Seminary);

Deacon Michael Gillingham, (Bethel, Sherwood Park, Alta.); Rev. Harry Haberstock, (Creston, B.C.); Rev. Mark Hartburg, task force chair (Historic St. Paul's, Kitchener, Ont.); Rev. David Hilderman, consultant (Trinity, Abbotsford, B.C.); Rev. Sye Van Maanen, task force secretary (mission executive, Central District office).

There are now four groups involved in various actions mandated by the June 2008 convention. The Task Force on Cost Efficient Seminary Education continues its deliberations this fall, and the task force studying LCC's cultural properties and archives program met by telephone conference September 23.

Women's organization plans for the future

WINNIPEG - Beginning each day with Bible study, the new LWML-Canada General Council spent August 27-29, 2009 working through a strategic plan and determining ways to effectively fulfill that plan.

The group began by talking about and confirming a belief statement: LWML-Canada, as an auxiliary of Lutheran Church-Canada, believes the Old and New Testaments are the inspired Word of God and acknowledges and accepts the confessional writings contained in the Book of Concord.

The next step was determining what the League values: *God's Word, growth in God's grace, women, relationships, communication, integrity, unity and service.*

And then they set out to re-write the League's mission statement. The past statement defined their purpose

well but was long and difficult to remember. The General Council wanted a short, clear statement that members could remember and use. The statement now says: *The mission of Lutheran Women's Missionary League-Canada is to equip, motivate and encourage women to grow in God's Word, serve God's people and share God's Son.*



Looking to the future a vision statement was also developed: *Ignited by the grace of God, members of Lutheran Women's Missionary League-Canada are actively encouraging women in the study of God's Word so they are passionate in sharing the Gospel through word and deed.*

Three broad goals were established to carry out the mission and reach the vision.

- 1) To significantly increase women's participation in God's Word.

- 2) To develop relationships among women.
- 3) To assist women in developing skills to confidently carry out the mission of the Church.

Over the next two or three months the committees of LWML-Canada (Christian Growth, Christian Mission, Member Development and Communication) will meet to set their goals to help achieve the overall goals, mission and vision as well as the specific activities to reach the goals.

League president, Judy Grande, says: "Grow in God's Word...Serve God's People...Share God's Son - this is our mission. We know and believe that God will walk with us, equip us and bless us. We also know He is compassionate and will forgive us when we fail. May we always be ignited by the grace of God."

Marion Hollinger,
LWML-C VP-Communication

Neitzel begins service as LCC mission executive

VANCOUVER, B.C. – A bright sunny fall afternoon added to the festive atmosphere at Bethlehem Lutheran Church as LCC president, Rev. Robert Bugbee installed Rev. Dr. Leonardo Neitzel as LCC's new executive responsible for missions and social ministry. The Service of Installation was held Sunday, October 4.

With 125 people in the pews and another 25 watching on line from as far away as Brazil, the service included robust singing, and a sermon from President Bugbee entitled "That's the Spirit."

Looking from the pulpit at Pastor Neitzel, the president said, "[God] has given you a good, big dose of that wonderful apostolic spirit. And on this installation day we are asking the Lord in advance: when you look at maps, and read reports, and write up proposals; when you sit through long meetings and draw up spending budgets; when you try to bring peace to people who aren't getting along very well, whether on some faraway mission field or in some Canadian committee; when you do all these mundane-looking things, may God touch you time and again with this apostolic spirit! May He move you to do whatever you do because of this push deep inside to get Christ to people, and people to Christ."

Joining President Bugbee for the Rite of Installation were 11 pastors from B.C.'s Lower Mainland, including Rev. Dr. Karl Keller, chairman of LCC's Committee for Mission and Social Ministry Services who was also liturgist for the service.

Pastor Neitzel is LCC's second mission executive since the founding of the church body in 1988. Lutheran Church-Canada undertakes and/or supports mission activity in Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, Thailand and Ukraine.

Pastor Neitzel and his wife Maria expect to arrive in Winnipeg in time for Thanksgiving.



Participating in the installation service were (back l-r) Revs Lawrence Koeler; James Paulgarrd; Ron Towriss; Edivar Govaski; Kyung-Hyun Kim; Jorma Tuomisto; Norman Miller, Jef Koenig. (front l-r) Revs Sandy Schelp; President Robert Bugbee; Dr. Leonardo Neitzel; Dr. Karl Keller; Mark Chiang.

Pension and benefit plans receive review

TORONTO - At its September meeting the Board of Managers (BOM) of LCC's Worker Benefit Plans received encouraging reports from the three investment firms—Foyston Gordon-Payne, TDQ, and Sky Capital—who each manage a portion of LCC's Pension Plan assets. The investment managers reported significant gains in their portfolios, resulting in a positive return in pension plan assets of 15 percent for the period January 1– August 31, 2009. "While this is good news," said board chair Lois Griffin, "we know we are not yet where we need to be to make up for the overall losses."

The board also reviewed the 2010 employer rates for pensions and benefits. As anticipated, the rates for pensions had to be increased to make

up for the significant market losses in 2008, despite the recent market improvements. On the benefits side, with increases in both plan usage and supplier premiums, the board reluctantly increased some of those rates as well. Full details on the 2010 rates will be mailed out shortly.

Using teleconferencing for the first time, the board provided an opportunity for one of the largest employers in the plan, Concordia University College of Alberta to participate in a portion of the meeting. "This is a very cost effective and productive way for the board to receive input from a major plan member," reported Mrs. Griffin. "We will continue using this to help connect more closely with our members and employers."

Mayan concludes service as mission executive

CHINANDEGA, Nicaragua - With the installation of Dr. Leonardo Neitzel as the new LCC mission executive, former Synod President Dr. Ralph Mayan concluded his work in that post on September 30. Dr. Mayan, who had served as LCC President from 1996-2008, took on the mission portfolio along with presidential duties after Dr. Leonard Harms retired in 2006. When Mayan left the Synod presidency, he was

appointed for a year to serve as interim mission executive until a replacement could be found. Now after retiring—again—Dr. Mayan will serve as a "volunteer missionary" to assist the new Iglesia Luterana Sínodo de Nicaragua to grow stronger as a self-governing church.

Dr. Mayan posts regular updates from Nicaragua at www.lccontheroad.ca