

Combating generic spirituality *Sharing the Gospel in Nova Scotia*

by Rev. David Maffett



Rev. David Maffett, with his wife, Carla, is pictured at the convention of East District of Lutheran Church Canada following his installation.

You may already be aware that Lutheran Church—Canada East District has a year-old mission effort in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. The Concordia Lutheran Mission Society has adopted a project to support this outreach, so let me tell you a bit about those to whom we're reaching out with the Gospel and how.

Few people in Nova Scotia know of Lutheran Church—Canada. Although there is a group of Lutheran (ELCIC) churches southwest of Halifax, the province is dominated by the Roman Catholic, Anglican and United churches.

Nevertheless, there are a few Lutherans from here and elsewhere who sort of drift around because they've never joined another church. This year we have tried to find and reclaim some of these people. We started here with one LCC

family plus my own. Now we are a group of people from ten families, all with some sort of Lutheran background, but half of whom were no longer connected with any church at all. It is worth noting that I met one couple by door-to-door canvassing and all the others because of a referral by a pastor, relative or friend from

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as far away as Alberta. You see that we need the efforts and prayers of the whole Body of Christ!

Another group to whom we are reaching out are those who have dropped out of other denominations. Most of these

people have simply found the Church to be irrelevant. Liberal theology is quite prevalent and often has nothing to say that the non-Christian world doesn't already believe, so why bother with another association? To such people we are reaching out with the

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message that the true Church, founded on the Word of God, does indeed have something to offer the world. Our latest effort was a brochure we developed with the message, "Look What the Church Can Do for You!" We sent it to 10,000 addresses in the neighbourhood where we meet. This generated some phone calls and the chance to share the Gospel in person with a couple of families. In addition, as I continue to canvas in the same area, people recognize that I'm from the church that sent the brochure. Recently I spent two hours with a man who had kept the brochure on his table pondering the idea of talking to us. We have been advised that this type of direct "ad-mail" is one of the most

effective means of getting a message out to people. With the help of CLMS we'll be using it again.

The third and largest group of people to whom we are reaching out is the unchurched. We're just beginning to focus on this. As I talk to people and go door-to-door, two perspectives prevail. The first is what is sometimes called naturalism—a world-view that denies the existence of the supernatural and affirms that everything that exists can be explained by the laws of nature. Science is the source and norm of all doctrine; technology is the proof that what science says is true. This world-view leads both to the theory of evolution and

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disbelief in the Bible and Christianity. The authority of science has directly attacked the authority of the Word of God such that much of the Church no longer has a firm foundation for its beliefs and practices. Obviously, we can't appeal immediately to the

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 **Half-way mark surpassed**

visit our web site at <http://personal.nbnet.nb.ca/gsheplc/clms>

CLMS adopts mission projects for 2001

Combating, continued
Bible when we try to reach out to those who think this way because it's not an accepted source of truth. We must begin our evangelism by exposing the fallacies of naturalism and by showing that the data of science do not

support evolution but do accord with what the Bible says about God and creation. We

would like to send out a couple pieces of direct mail and invite the public to view and discuss a series of video presentations on the subject. I hope that we'll be able to get some of this into the schools too, since that's where we're force-fed naturalism.

The second perspective that seems to prevail here we might call the New Age view, something for which Nova Scotia has a bit of a reputation. No doubt as a result of Canada's current cultural norm of pluralism, there is a generic and very subjective spirituality

that is a synthesis of ideas from many religions. Christianity is just one among many competing claims to spiritual truth or enlightenment. People adopt whatever beliefs they find personally useful. As with naturalism, we must address the

beliefs that block out the Word of God. We need to present the superiority of Christ and the Gospel—I think

particularly of Paul's letter to the Colossians here—and the fact that Christianity is not just another personal set of values by which to live. Perhaps we can do this through a dialogue, an invitation to examine the claims of Christianity and other religions.

Obviously there is much to do in this so called post-Christian age. You no doubt have much the same challenge wherever you are. So please join us in prayer as we reach out with the Gospel in Nova Scotia.

Christianity is just one among many competing claims to spiritual truth.



The picture above shows the Maffett's house in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia where the LCC mission congregation previously met. They now use a Seventh Day Adventist church for worship. Below are members of the congregation.



These projects remain viable until paid in full or there is no longer a need for funding.

THAILAND, motorcycles

Two motorcycles to be purchased for the use of the two men who are being prepared to serve as pastors in the Sahatay Lutheran Church of Southern Thailand. The costs include safety equipment and initial insurance costs.

Total cost: \$4,000

UKRAINE, pastoral adviser

An LCC pastor has been requested to provide overall leadership and supervision to the new Lutheran Church in Ukraine. This pastor would serve without remuneration but costs are needed for travel (pastor and his wife) and for some local expenses.

Total cost: \$6,500

THAILAND, Sea People's children outreach

The tidal flats of Southern Thailand are home to many migrants, sometimes referred to as "Sea Gypsies." They are often shunned by other Thai people. The evangelists working with these people have requested help to provide for educational materials for outreach to the children and to cover travel to that part of Thailand.

Total cost: \$500

NICARAGUA, Theological Education

Four times a year, two instructors travel from Canada to conduct two-week training courses for the 55-60 people who are training as pastors, teachers or evangelists. Air fare costs about \$1,000. CLMS

will provide air fare for three instructors.

Total cost: \$3,000

THAILAND & NICARAGUA, certification of workers

In these cultures, visible evidence of their certification, e.g. a cross or other religious symbol, a "patch" on a uniform, etc. as an ordained or certified worker, is most important.

Total cost: \$500

UKRAINE, children's outreach

Each Christmas Missionary Roland Syens in Dnepropetrovsk arranges a Christmas outreach event which includes gifts, songs and a presentation of the Christmas story to hundreds of children and their grandmothers.

Total cost: \$2,500

INDIA, theological books for Nagercoil Seminary

Concordia Seminary is the major educational institution for preparing pastors in the India Evangelical Lutheran Church. Most of the students work in English. This project would be to acquire and ship theological books to meet the needs of these students.

Total cost: \$2,000

CANADA, Nova Scotia missions (see article page 35)

Total cost: \$4,500

UKRAINE, communion sets — PAID \$1,500

NICARAGUA, school children — PAID \$1,250

GHANA, roofs for village churches — PAID

Thy Kingdom Come

What do you think about when you hear the word, “missions”? What is your response when you receive a request for financial assistance for mission projects both within and without our church body? How do you see yourself as a necessary part of “missions”?

As baptized children of God living in His Light, missions is personal. We cannot pray “Thy Kingdom come” and close our eyes and our minds to the spiritual needs of those around us. We have no choice but to become involved. In essence we are praying, “Thy kingdom come to others, **through me.**” or as the prophet Isaiah would say, “Here am I. Send me!”

...I am constantly amazed at how God has blessed this organization...

The majority of us are unable to travel throughout the world proclaiming the Good News of God’s love for all people in and through His Son, Jesus. Through our involvement with Concordia Lutheran Mission Society, we are afforded the wonderful opportunity to be “Partners in Mission” as we

support projects in Thailand, Nicaragua, Ghana, Ukraine, India, and Halifax, Nova Scotia. Through our prayers and financial support we are there furthering God’s Kingdom.

As a member of the Board of Directors for CLMS, I am constantly amazed at how richly God has blessed this organization as He uses our prayers, our dollars and cents to further His kingdom! I give thanks and praise God for the generous, continuing response of His people to meet the needs of CLMS prayerfully, personally and financially. To God be all glory!

—Anne Taylor



A view of the Dartmouth/Halifax harbour where we are supporting mission work in Canada.

“I am so grateful to the Lord for the love and concern you have for the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ghana. ...Your support will go a long way to help the poorest of the poor, especially people in the rural areas.”

Dr. Paul Kofi Fynn, president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ghana in response to a gift of \$4000 from one of our donors.

Society surpasses half-way mark

More than half the receipts anticipated for the current year have already been received by the Concordia Lutheran Mission Society, according to treasurer, Doreen Haberstock. Receipts by mid-July stood at more than \$25,000, although some of it had been designated for operating costs, and some for Donor Initiated Projects. The Board-approved projects for the current year total just over \$30,000. The better-than-average income for the first part of the year was aided significantly by one very large donation. This resulted in the completion of three regular projects: roofs for village churches (Ghana), communion sets for new churches (Ukraine), and tuition costs for school children (Nicaragua), as

well as a donor-initiated project covering a truckload of humanitarian aid sent from Germany to Ukraine.

Currently, the two major projects which are high on the board’s priority list and still in need of funding are: motorcycles for new pastors in Thailand (\$4,000) and support for the new mission being planted in the Halifax area (\$4,500).

Motorcycles (actually glorified “mopeds”) are an excellent way to get around Thailand’s narrow roads. Currently the two men rely on public transit or walk as they go about their evangelistic work. The Halifax project is being undertaken by LCC’s East District, but CLMS has agreed to provide funding for a community outreach and public relations program.

For your information

Students at Concordia Lutheran Seminary, Edmonton, allocated their weekly chapel offering for the past academic year toward the purchase of a communion set for one of the churches in Ukraine.

Three CLMS board members are involved in hands-on participation in overseas mission projects this year. **Rev. David Somers** taught for two weeks in Nicaragua this past spring, and **Rev. Dr. Edwin Lehman** is scheduled to teach there this September. **Dr. Norman Threinen** spent six weeks in Ukraine, teaching two courses and preparing students for their graduation and ordination, which took place the weekend of July 14,15. Both of these projects are supported through the Concordia Lutheran Mission Society.

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Concordia Lutheran Mission Society (CLMS)

A Listed Service Organization of Lutheran Church-Canada

EXCITING MISSION WORK IN NICARAGUA

God has richly blessed the work of LCC missionary Rev. Sandor Arguello in Nicaragua. In just a few years that work has grown and expanded in ways we could never have imagined. Today, under missionary Arguello's leadership, 14 congregations have been established with a combined membership of 7,000-9,000 people. One man cannot accomplish all the work that needs to be done. Missionary Arguello has been actively training approximately 60 individuals who serve as missionaries and spiritual advisors to their own people. These individuals leave their home villages and towns to come and learn God's word and then return to teach the faith to their friends and neighbours.

Ministry to Children

One of the very exciting things that has happened in Nicaragua is that through the efforts of Rev. Arguello and the

village missionaries more than 10,000 school children can now recite the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed and the Lord's Prayer! Teachers in the

local communities have been coming to the missionaries, asking them to teach the Christian faith to the children in the schools. Concordia



The LCC mission in Nicaragua hopes to build several Rancho Escuelas to serve as both schools and community centres. CLMS will be assisting with children's education through one of this year's projects.

Lutheran Mission Society has a keen interest in the work of promoting the Christian faith to children. As you can see in this month's *Mission Advocate*, one of the mission projects adopted for 2001 is \$1,250. to assist in the education of these children. God has provided us a wonderful opportunity to promote the Christian faith for future generations through the instruction of children.

Your Help is Needed

Children's education in Nicaragua is but one of several projects adopted by CLMS for the current year. In addition to Nicaragua, God has opened up opportunities for spreading the Gospel in Thailand, Ukraine, India, Ghana, and here in Canada. As you consider this year's mission projects and select those dear to your heart, give thanks to God for such exciting opportunities for us to spread His word!

Response Form

Please make cheques payable to "Concordia Lutheran Mission Society" and mail to: Doreen Haberstock, Treasurer – 33 Victor Place, Yorkton, SK. S3N 2H3

Please indicate your preference:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Thailand – motorcycles | <input type="checkbox"/> Ukraine – pastoral adviser |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Thailand – Sea People outreach | <input type="checkbox"/> Canada – Nova Scotia mission |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nicaragua – theological education | <input type="checkbox"/> India – theological books |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Thailand/Nicaragua – certification of workers | <input type="checkbox"/> Ukraine, children's outreach |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wherever is needed most | <input type="checkbox"/> I would like to be a member of CLMS (first \$25 of your donation) |

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