

# CONCORDIA *mission* ADVOCATE



a publication of Concordia Lutheran Mission Society (CLMS)

Fall 2009

## Thailand and Cambodia teaching experience

I arrived in Bangkok, Thailand early in the morning Friday, May 1. This gave me a few days to rest up before I would begin teaching in Phnom Penh, Cambodia on May 4. Originally I was scheduled to teach first in Thailand then in Cambodia, but shortly before I left home I was told plans had changed and the schedules would be reversed, but my flights didn't change!

I attended worship in Bangkok on my first Sunday there and then re-packed enough clothes and belongings for the week in Phnom Penh. Early Monday morning, May 4, Dr. Leonard Harms and I flew to Phnom Penh, a 50-minute flight. A smiling young man in uniform met us at the airport and I was told he would be one of my students. It seemed that he was a man with authority in the airport and in a matter of minutes I had my visa and we made our way out of the airport. We were met by another young pastor and his wife and were put on the Cambodian version of a "rickshaw," this one pulled by a motorbike rather than a person. We were taken to the guesthouse (practically across the street from the airport) which was to be my home for the week. In this guesthouse I would stay, eat my meals, and, on the upper level, have my classes.

I began my first class that afternoon with 25 pastoral students and nine deaconesses. The pastoral students are already serving congregations and some



Rev. Al Schmidt with students in Thailand.

are serving two. The course I taught was "The Life of Christ in the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke)." I knew it would be a struggle to cover in one week all the material I had prepared. Two young pastors, Vannarith and Peter, served as my translators and both did a fine job. I was amazed at their ability to use computer technology. When I needed a map of Palestine or Jerusalem they provided it in short order.

I found the students attentive and eager to learn, asking more questions than I expected. A few of the older students were also bold enough to debate with me a few times. In Cambodia only the translators and perhaps two other students could speak some English so if I wanted to talk to any of the other students it had to be via a translator.

My days were long. To cover all the material I lectured almost six hours a day and then had to do some preparing in the evening to be ready for the following day. I found out quickly that I had to be in bed early since I was awakened every morning at 5:30

by a rooster, or by loud music. I did not need an alarm clock or a wake-up call.

After my teaching in Phnom Penh was completed I took Saturday to do some sightseeing. My guide, Vannarith, took me to The Museum in Phnom Penh. This was originally a high school but served as a prison and place of cruel torture by the Khmer Rouge. We also drove out to the killing fields. Here indeed one sees a sad example of man's inhumanity to man.

Vannarith also took me to the church that he and another pastor are serving and to the city garbage dump where they carry on another ministry. Families live near to the dump where the children work, collecting bags, bottles, cans and other items for recycling to help

their families eke out a living. The pastors carry on a ministry to these children and some of their parents, inviting them to Sunday school and church services.

In the late evening of May 9 I returned to Bangkok. Sunday (May 10) I preached in the service with Pastor Sumpung serving as my translator.

Classes in Bangkok were taught May 11-15 with nine to eleven students in attendance. The pastors in Thailand had attended a seminar in Bangkok the previous week so the pastors from northern Thailand did not return for my course. The class was made up of pastors, a lay evangelist, a few deaconesses and one or two lay people. My translator was one of the pastors, Pastor Sumpung. One of the students in this class was Thomas, a young man from Myanmar (Burma). He did not know the Thai language so he received my lectures in English, which he speaks and understands fairly well. I took the time to have a lengthy conversation with him after class one day. He informed me that he intends to go back to Myanmar after graduation even though Christianity is outlawed

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(front, l-r) Rev. Dr. Leonard Harms, Rev. Al Schmidt in Cambodia.

in his country. His father, who is a pastor in Myanmar, has been arrested three times for having worship services in his home.

On behalf of the students of Concordia Lutheran Seminary, Edmonton I presented collar tabs to the ministerial students in both Thailand and Cambodia. Collar tabs are unavailable in these countries. Clergy shirts will be sewn for the students by a seamstress in Thailand. In Cambodia, a deaconess will be sewing them. The students were very appreciative of this gesture by CLS.

After my teaching assignment was complete I went with Pastor Suchat and his wife to southern Thailand. I visited with Pastor Suchat in Takuapa for two days, attending worship services there on Sunday, May 17 and the same day visiting two worship centres at Tungma Prow and Tai Mueng. I also attended a worship service in Khok Kloi where another Pastor Suchat is the pastor. Following this service I was shown a piece of property which Concordia

Lutheran Mission Society helped buy in 2008. This property will provide easier access to the church from a busy freeway.

The following day Pastor Suchat took me to the area that was devastated by the tsunami December 26, 2002. We visited a memorial in one village and a cemetery in which there were 900 unmarked graves, the graves of people who have never been identified. He then took me to a seaside lodge where I spent a few days of rest and relaxation at my own expense, returning to Canada on May 23.

God is truly blessing these small churches in Thailand and Cambodia in numbers and in spiritual growth. We encourage our members to support the 2009 projects of Concordia Lutheran Mission Society in southeast Asia. I thank my Church for giving me this opportunity to serve in another mission field of our church. For me this was truly a rewarding experience. To God be the Glory!

*Pastor Al Schmidt*

## CIRCUIT SUPPORTS UKRAINE SEMINARY

Some 280 worshipers gathered at Peace Lutheran Church, Winnipeg, on Sunday evening, May 3, for a “Red River Circuit Mission Festival” to support the Ukraine seminary building project. This event demonstrates how congregations working together on the local level can help the efforts of CLMS to expand the Lord’s work abroad.

A steering committee made up of lay leaders from Winnipeg parishes and LCC President Robert Bugbee met during the later winter and early spring to plan an evening festival, which began with a Ukrainian dinner hosted by Peace congregation. A service followed dinner and finally pictures from President Bugbee’s recent January visit to Ukraine. A circuit choir of about 35 voices provided anthems under the direction of Richard Appler (Redeemer, Winnipeg), as did a contemporary singing group from Peace. Allison Wonnick (Holy Cross, Winnipeg) served as organist, and also hosted a children’s activity time after the service. The committee provided for the printing of special envelopes addressed to CLMS, so that worshipers could either lay their gifts on the altar at the mission festival, or forward them by mail if they were unable to attend.

Bulletin inserts were prepared in advance for circulation in Winnipeg’s LCC churches in the weeks leading up to the festival. President Bugbee

personally appeared in some of the churches after Sunday services in March and April to invite members to attend. Darcy Wershler (St. James), Randy Popp (Beautiful Savior) and Helga Downey (Redeemer) were involved in delivering inserts, as well as arranging for the gathering and recording of offerings. Carl Bittner (Peace) served as liaison to his home church which worked hard to host this event. Imagine the cabbage rolls it took to feed the crowd, since nearly everyone who came to the service – 250 of them! – arrived for dinner, too!

President Bugbee preached on the theme, *God Opens Even Doors Long Closed*, to describe the progress of the Gospel in the former USSR. In showing pictures of his trip, he described in detail the need for the Ukraine seminary building to be completed at long last, and praised the efforts of CLMS to coordinate the ingathering of gifts from across the country for this purpose. The picture-sharing time opened with a surprise videotaped greeting from LCC’s foreign mission student, Oleg Schewtschenko, currently enrolled at the St. Catharines seminary, and from LCC’s Ukraine missionary, Pastor Alexey Navrotskiy, who was visiting Oleg in Ontario at the time.

Preliminary reports indicated that nearly \$15,000 was gathered at the service itself, while another \$5,000 came to CLMS about the same time from Winnipeg-area people who were unable to attend. Later information indicates that these envelopes provided the very first contact that many LCC members ever had with Concordia Lutheran Mission Society.

Sincere thanks go to the pastors of the Red River Circuit, who were deeply supportive of this project, to the hard-working steering committee, and to the wonderful members of Peace

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## CLMS brings greetings to LWML–Canada



*Anne Taylor*

The Lutheran Women’s Missionary League–Canada held their national convention in Ottawa, Ontario July 9-12, 2009. Anne Taylor brought greetings on behalf of CLMS to the convention where approximately 200 were gathered.

Anne recalled how in the past, CLMS has had the opportunity

to partner with LWMLC on a number of projects and that we look forward to doing so again in the future. CLMS cherishes the partnership we have with LWMLC in Christ; our passion for living, for proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ; our commitment to “going” therefore and making disciples of all nations.”

God continues to bless the proclamation of the Gospel in Central America as two new mission starts were given birth this summer.

The first is related to the ordination and installation of a new missionary, Rev. Edmundo Retana, in San Jose, Costa Rica. Since June, he has been working in an area called Manuel de Jesús Jiménez, near Birstio in the province of Cartago. God has blessed his labour with the formation of a small community of believers who are now being catechized. But being touched with the Gospel, they are not satisfied to just be gathering together for study. They have joined with the missionary in organizing an outreach ministry to children and adolescents and their families in their community. At their first activity, 27 children attended. They now have over 60 children attending, many of these children accompanied by their mothers and fathers.

The missionary writes, "Our goal is to proclaim the Gospel. ... In the weeks that we have been here, we have seen light and joy in the faces of the people as they talk about the salvation that Jesus has brought them and as we answer

questions about this new Lutheran church that is emerging in the middle of their community."

The missionary then continues with an apology. "I know the idea of renting a room was not in the plan for these first eight months. I apologize for that. It is a decision that involves some sacrifice on our part, but it satisfies the needs of the pastoral work that is being developed. None of our homes provide the necessary conditions for meetings with these numbers."

Blessings overflowing! Stand back and watch God at work! What can we do but "Give Jesus Glory!"?

The second new mission start is in the community of Sebaco, Nicaragua and involves Missionary Hector Morales. Now freed from his missionary responsibilities in Matagalpa and Jinotega because of the ordination and installation of their resident pastor, Pastor Immer Montoya, Missionary Hector is able to begin new work in other communities. In July, Missionary Hector and volunteers from the congregations of Matagalpa and Jinotega conducted their first major outreach undertaking visiting in the homes of 500 individuals,



Missionary Retana (center) with Missionary Pedro on left and President Luis on his right at his ordination.

listening to the concerns of the people and sharing their story of God's grace in Jesus Christ. In describing the goal for this major undertaking, Missionary Hector wrote: "We want to know the religious attitudes of the inhabitants of the city of Sebaco so that subsequently we can contact those struggling to live without Jesus and share with them the consolation of our powerful Saviour Jesus."

Remember Missionary Hector in your prayers as the proclamation of the Gospel continues to expand here and in



Pastor Hector Morales

other places in Central America.  
Dr. Ralph Mayan

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Lutheran Church, who were such gracious, joyful hosts. In addition to providing needed mission support, this gathering also encouraged the fellowship and cooperation of the entire circuit in Winnipeg. In other words, we Winnipeggers were the first to benefit from an act of love carried out for others far away.

Now here's an idea: Try something like this in your area, whether to aid Ukraine...or some other worthy CLMS project! Write or e-mail me. I can tell you how!

Robert Bugbee, president,  
Lutheran Church—Canada

**CLMS a member of CLAIM**

CLMS is a member of CLAIM (Canadian Lutheran Agencies in Mission). We encourage you to check out the website at [www.lutheranmissions.ca](http://www.lutheranmissions.ca) or [www.lutheranmissionagencies.ca](http://www.lutheranmissionagencies.ca).



Available on the website is a devotional booklet, "Proclaim

His Name." Each devotion focuses on a name of God. Download this booklet for your personal use and be a "Partner in Mission," share it with a friend. The devotional can also be downloaded from [www.lutheranmissions.ca/](http://www.lutheranmissions.ca/)

*Concordia Lutheran Mission Society (CLMS), an auxiliary of Lutheran Church Canada, serves the church by promoting and supporting our church's missions and keeping the members of our synod informed of mission work carried out both on a corporate and individual basis.*

**In Memoriam**

Gifts have been given in 2009 in memory of the following people:

- Stephan D. Mueller
- Rev. Roy Pudrycki
- Rev. Rudy Pudrycki
- Rev. Reinhold Hohnsbein
- James G. Ladосki
- Rev. Mark A. Sallach
- Verona Andrew
- Ed Bloos

**“To the ends of the earth ... till the end of the age”**

*Matthew 28: 19 & 20: “Go and make disciples...I’m with you always, even to the end of the age.”*

*Acts 1: 8: “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses ... to the ends of the earth.”*

Many of us don’t have the opportunity to plan our last words, because we’re not sure when they’ll be. But we *do* know these famous last words; they’re the heritage of Him who was about to ascend to the very portals of heaven: “To the ends of the earth...till the end of the age.” The work He’d come to do was finished. The Great Commission had been given. The future of the church was provided for; the Comforter was

coming and there was no need to be afraid. And that command and promise are given to us, too: “Go! and I’ll be with you.”

And there are at least three ways we can “go.” We can go *personally*; and each of us should be ready to do that if God calls, and we leave the responsibility of choosing to Him. He’s the all-wise One. Secondly, we can “go” through *prayer*. That’s the greatest need in the work of Jesus Christ today. And we can *all* go this way. Any hour...day or night...we can reach the VBS in Nicaragua, or the summer camp in Ukraine or the children of Thailand, or to any corner of the earth ... by our prayers.

And, of course, ...we can

“go” through our *gifts*. Through our financial support, we “go”...by making a donation, in the case of this appeal, to the “Concordia Lutheran Mission Society.” Through our gifts, we send a “substitute,” a teacher or pastor or worker, who “goes” for us, where we cannot go ourselves; or we provide for a project in which we cannot participate personally. And what a privilege it is, what a real joy, to preach the Gospel, in word and by deed, in lands which we may never see with our own eyes! Lands which are, for us, at the ends of the earth! Our teachers and workers couldn’t “go” in our place...and the projects couldn’t be completed...without our gifts. Maybe we can only give a little...but every little bit counts.

Many streams together, make a mighty river!

Beloved, won’t you join with my wife, Carole, and me in giving a gift through the Concordia Mission Society to one of the projects listed in the response form. Then, according to Jesus’ command, we’ll “go,” even to the ends of the earth ...and we’ll receive the promise that goes with it, “I’m with you always, to the end of the age.”

*Frank Johnson,  
First Lutheran, Windsor.*

**TOLL FREE NUMBER**

If you do not have Internet access and wish to contact CLMS you may use our new toll free number:  
**1-866-799-2567**

**Response Form**

**We invite you to become a partner in mission. Kindly indicate how we may direct your donation by checking off your selected mission project and returning this form along with your cheque made out to “Concordia Lutheran Mission Society” and forwarded to William Andrew, 180 South Alder Street, Campbell River, BC V9W 5H8.**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Completed 0901 Seminary/Mission Centre, Ukraine | <input type="checkbox"/> 0909 Worship Centre Renovations, Ukraine         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 0902 Outreach to Women and Children, Cambodia   | <input type="checkbox"/> 0910 Mission Start, Kapong, Thailand             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Completed 0903 Children’s Outreach, Thailand    | <input type="checkbox"/> 0911 Orphanage Ministry, Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraine |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 0904 Vacation Bible School, Nicaragua           | <input type="checkbox"/> 0912 Mission Facilities Rental, Costa Rica       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 0905 Children’s Christian Education, Nicaragua  | <input type="checkbox"/> 0913 Granada Mission Property                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 0906 Deaconess Support, Nicaragua               | <input type="checkbox"/> 0914 Summer Camp, Ukraine                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 0907 Theological Education, Southeast Asia      | <input type="checkbox"/> Where Needed                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Completed 0908 Seminary/Mission Centre, Ukraine | <input type="checkbox"/> Operating Expenses                               |

*Each gift designated toward a board approved project will be used as specified, with the understanding that when any given project has been fully funded, designated gifts will be used where needed most.*

Please provide the following information so that a charitable receipt might be forwarded to you and to keep you informed on current mission projects via our semi annual mailings. If you fill in the form as “Mr. & Mrs.” you will receive two ballots for mail-in elections. In this case both your first names are helpful.

Mr., Mrs., Ms., Rev. \_\_\_\_\_ First name(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Last name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Prov. \_\_\_\_\_ Country \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

The following information is optional. The e-mail address can be very helpful to us in sharing mission news with you.

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Home Congregation \_\_\_\_\_

Recent legislation requires your authorization to collect this information. CLMS has a privacy policy in place to protect your personal information. Please sign below authorizing us to use this information in accordance with our privacy policy. Our privacy policy can be found on our website: [www.concordiamissions.org](http://www.concordiamissions.org).

Signature \_\_\_\_\_