

*April 2007*  
These are the  
**ASIA TIMES**  
Mission Newsletter from John & Susan Mehl  
LCMS World Mission

PAPUA NEW GUINEA - John traveled to Papua New Guinea (PNG) to visit with the leadership of the Gutnius Lutheran Church (GLC) in at the end of March.

The island of New Guinea is the second largest in the world. Papua New Guinea is the country on the eastern half of this island. It has 3200 miles of coast but is very mountainous, with Mt. Wilhelm its highest peak at 14,793 feet. Less than half a percent of the land is arable. Of the 5.6 million people who live in PNG, 22% are Roman Catholic and 16% are Lutheran. While Melanesian Pidgin is the franc a lingua, there are 820 indigenous languages in PNG, representing 10% of the world total.

LCMS mission work began in the Enga Province in the late 1940s with missionaries such as Bill Burce and Otto Hintze. The work was carried out in Pidgin, Enga, Ipili, and English. Today the church has about 150,000 members.

John was accompanied by LCMS missionary Ted Engelbrecht and St. Louis area pastor Ron Rall. Ron had served as a missionary in PNG upon graduating from seminary and was an able translator of language and culture as we met with our sister church to discuss future partnership. Our main contact on the ground was Dr. Steve and Julie Lutz (photo to the right). Steve has served as a surgeon at Immanuel Lutheran Regional Hospital for 20 years. He has done surgeries we wouldn't consider normal in the US, such as removing arrows (even from hearts), re-attaching limbs, and so on.



John was the guest preacher at an Ablaze! service in the Tsak area of Enga. You see a photo (right) taken by Steve Lutz of John preaching and



Bishop Piso translating in the upper left. You see in the photo to the left see some of the hundreds of people who attended. Revs. Rall and Engelbrecht took part in a

confirmation ceremony and John baptized a couple of children, one of whom was named after Otto Hintze.



In the mid-1960s, John's father took his family to Kansas City for a presentation on work being done by LCMS missionaries in Papua New Guinea. John and his siblings collected money for this work in special red piggy banks. The significance of the pig in Papua New Guinea was lost on John until this trip. PNG is a society where wealth is measured in pigs. The LCMS team feasted on pork every day and sometimes twice a day. Greens of all kinds and sweet potatoes of all varieties were served with the pork.

Ted Engelbrecht noted that there had been 100 missionaries in PNG from the LCMS, but today there are 150,000 missionaries made up of the members of the Gutnius Lutheran Church. The church is certainly alive with activity. We pray that God will continue to use the Gutnius Lutheran Church to bring the Good News to those who need to hear of God's love in Jesus.

In the final photo below you see some of the young people who attended the Ablaze! service in Tsak. They were a very lively group of people alive in the Lord. If you are interested in learning more about Papua New Guinea and LCMS work with the GLC, go to this website: <http://www.lcms.org/pages/internal.asp?NavID=5915> It will also show you different mission projects which need prayer and financial support.



KIDSTUFF - At times we reflect on the relative simplicity of family and school life during the years in Moscow when our children got in a car together each morning to go to school and came home together each evening. School years and school days were all so similar. This school year was a little more complex. While it began with apprehension over a move to Asia and new schools for Louisa and Ted, it has (like most school years) passed with breathtaking speed, and the Lord has richly blessed the whole family. Ted had a great 6th grade year in Hong Kong while his sisters thrived at St. Paul Lutheran High in Concordia, MO. Katrina (senior) and Louisa (freshman) are presently winding up the year by playing girls' soccer together. This is a first and likely a last, but it is a special time for them both. Katrina will graduate on May 18 (we will be there!). Next year we anticipate a bit of apprehension again, as Katrina enters college. After looking at various schools around the country, Katrina has decided she will attend Concordia University in Seward, NE next year.

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