



WECF FAMILY

Several requests and prayer needs have been forwarded to the Editor during the 12 months since the WECF Meeting at Hothorpe Hall. Please be in prayer for each of these needs and if you are challenged to support any of them financially, please forward your designated contribution to the WECF Treasurer Rev. Dr. Stephen Gammon at CCCC USA, 8941 Highway 5, Lake Elmo, MN 55042, USA.

PHILIPPINES

Our churches in Zambales had been badly affected by the typhoons which really hit the province. The need to provide rice and groceries is quite imposing. Many of our church members are going through very difficult times. The prices of staple food and other commodities has gone up by an alarming proportion. We need help to be able to provide for their day-to-day needs.

One emergency we need to respond to is the case of Jimmy Rafanan. He is our outreach worker in Asinan, a village in Palauig, Zambales. He was rushed to the National Kidney Institute here in Quezon City. He has renal failure; his kidneys are blocked by a big tumor and he has kidney stones. We were with him the other day and he needs surgery right away.

Jimmy's wife Gemma and their 3 boys, Emmanuel (14), Christian (12) and Hezron (8), help Jimmy in the mission outreach.

They left the three boys in Bulawen. Relatives and the church family look after them so they can continue to attend the public school. These boys need to be provided for too.

Jimmy used to make bean curds which he sold by walking long distances, going house to house. He has not been able to work since April 2008, due to his illness and Gemma is also jobless.

When we went to the hospital, it was 4pm and both Jimmy and Gemma had not yet had lunch. The LORD just led us to bring them food. The situation is really heart-rending and we are in much prayer for them.

Love to you all,

Awit Castillo, NACC Philippines

August, 2008



JIMMY, HIS FAMILY AND MINISTRY

Jimmy and Gemma with Nannie and Awit Castillo at the National Kidney Institute



Jimmy leading the young people in a devotional during a Youth Leadership Training program in Asinan.



Two of Jimmy's 3 children, Christian & Hezron, singing during the anniversary of Bulawen Congregational Church



Jimmy leading the praise and worship at Bulawen Congregational Church, his wife Gemma (right) singing with him.

A GREAT NEED: RAIN BRINGS DISASTER

The months of May and July, 2007 were drought months. Many rice crops were destroyed. August saw several typhoons lash our country and these further devastated the crops. Several of our church people in Zambales Province have been badly affected. They plant rice each year for landlords and borrow money for capital. They now face a bleak prospect in the harvest month of October. Many of our very poor people who have been affected by floods need help.

The roof of our church in Bagong Silang has begun to cave in. The church members braced these with 4' x 4' coconut lumber. This is where we have the **Agape Kiddie Learning Center** on Mondays to Fridays and the church holds services and seminars on Saturdays and Sundays. The situation is dangerous for all who use the building. The Payatas (Metro-Manila) 'Promise Land' Church also has ceiling damage due to termites and rain (see photograph below). If you can help, please contact Symphony John Castillo at caringchurch@yahoo.com



A GREAT NEED: LOCAL BIBLE SCHOOL FOR NACC

"Luis Abdon is a fisherman. He and his wife Openg and their relatives live in a fishing village. When Nannie & Awit Castillo started an outreach work there, 19 adults & several children responded to the Gospel. Openg who used to be the leader of the Roman Catholic block rosary group was enlightened and her hunger for God became insatiable. She conducted home Bible Studies in the area. She reached several families, but Luis remained hostile to the Gospel, because he was shackled by alcohol and gambling.

Openg prayed tirelessly for Luis and she lived the reality of her faith in Christ. Luis began to yield to the Gospel truth that Openg lived each day. Nannie and Awit drove six hours each time, to follow up on Luis. They would stay in Iba, Zambales for a week or two. In 2001, Luis finally opened his heart to Jesus Christ and he started to study his Bible.



Luis was baptized by Nannie in the South China Sea near his family's fishing village

Nannie, Awit and Symphony John conducted many Bible courses and leadership seminars. Luis was very keen and enthusiastic. He faithfully immersed himself in the Lord's work. The nucleus of believers at the fishing village grew. As an offshoot, the **Amungan Blessor Congregational Church** (ABCC) was established and NACC called a fulltime pastor. Luis assisted the pastor in Bible Studies. At night, he went fishing to support his family.

On April 16, 2006, Luis was installed as pastor of ABCC. To this day, he zealously serves the Lord. He desperately needs further training in a Bible School."

Cris Padegdeg

"Cris grew up as a Roman Catholic. His older sister Vangie brought him to the **Agape Bible Christian Church** on Sundays. Cris came to a saving faith in Jesus Christ, and the pastor, Symphony John Castillo earnestly disciplined him. During the **NACC Youth Camp** in 2006, Cris committed his life for fulltime Christian service. In June 2006, NACC enrolled him at the **Philippine Missionary Institute**.

In 2007, Cris was accepted into his second year of training. The cost to put Cris through Bible School is roughly \$US3,000 per year. This eats up a big slice of the financial pie of NACC. It would be more cost efficient if we had our own Bible School. This is an urgent need we face."

Lay Leaders Need To Be Trained In Bible School

"Through our dynamic program of discipleship, missions, and leadership training, many young people and lay leaders in our churches are responding to the 'call for reapers' in the Lord's harvest. There has emerged an imposing need to have our own Bible School to produce homegrown pastors, church-planters, and Christian educators.

Most Bible Schools are a distance away from our churches. It would be more cost efficient to have our own in Zambales province.

We plan to offer hands-on missionary service to Congregational leaders from other countries where they will be welcomed to come and teach in our Bible School.

There is an imposing need to buy a piece of land in Zambales where we can build."



This is the piece of land we dream to buy so we can build the Bible School

A GREAT NEED: PASTORS' SUPPORT IN CRISIS

"NACC churches are not able to provide sufficient financial support for our pastors.

Many churches give the pastor an average of P1,500 (\$US30) each month. (P=Pesos) Congregational Churches average a monthly gross income of only P4,500 (\$US90). The United Nations study on the Philippines, reports that P18,000 per month (\$US360) is the minimum salary needed to support a family. The financial gap is so big. Our pastors do not have enough to provide support for the barest of needs for their families, moreover, the education of their children. NACC needs to augment and subsidise the monthly salary of its pastors.

NACC has initiated a new program. It involves one Congregational Church sponsoring a needy Filipino Congregational Church.

The articles on pages 3-5 first appeared in the September and October, 2007 Issues of OCW.

MACEDONIA

Readers of OUR CONGREGATIONAL WORLD will have read of the purchase of land for the Nevi Gili church on the outskirts of Skopje, which was made possible through the financial support and encouragement of the 4Cs in America. The vision for this land and its proposed dedication in September 2008, following the mid-term Meeting in Velingrad, Bulgaria, is an inspiration for WECF. The next step is to place a building on the site and this is where we have an opportunity to play a part.

Our brothers and sisters at Nevi Gili are a committed group of followers who look for practical ways to impact their needy community. They actively seek out ways to make the love of Christ known in the largest Romany settlement in Europe. Remember them in your prayers.



INDIA

“Where there is no vision, the people perish” (Proverbs 29:18a)

PREPARING LEADERSHIP FOR THE CHURCH IN THE 21ST CENTURY AMONG THE TRIBAL PEOPLE OF NORTH-EAST INDIA

The Gospel light was brought to the southern part of Manipur, in the extreme North-East of India, on the Burmese border, in 1910 by a humble man of God from Great Britain. By the power of the Holy Spirit, he led the indigenous, tribal people of the area to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. The Evangelical Churches Association (ECA) is the fruit of this missionary endeavour. In 2010, the church (ECA) will be observing a hundred years of the advent of the Gospel, celebrating God's unfailing presence and grace. ECA has about 30,000 members, 80 missionaries, 50 ordained pastors and 3 mission fields.

While the church will soon celebrate a century of God's faithfulness, it is also facing increasingly complex situations as a result of changes, both at the local and global levels. Due to its geo-political environment, North-East India is vulnerable to the problems of drug trafficking and HIV and AIDS, which are increasingly affecting the Church. Besides socio-economic volatility, religious intolerance towards minority faith groups, assimilative ideologies by supporters of major religions and the rise of insurgency problems, there is extreme poverty and

hardship in the region. Change to economic systems at the global level is also having an impact on the tribal people of the region, making the situation even more despairing and complex.

At this time, there is an urgent need to develop effective leadership for the church. In conjunction with the centenary celebrations in 2010, we have a vision to raise committed young people, preparing them for leadership as we enter a new century with increasingly complex challenges. We are aiming to send three students to Bible College in June 2008 for either Graduate (4 years) or Master (2 years) levels depending on their present educational qualifications. The cost of these courses for one year will be approximately Rs. 56,000.00 (£700.00) and Rs.59,000.00 (£750.00) respectively.

We are not in a position to do this by ourselves. Therefore, we would like to make this humble appeal to you to join hands with us in fulfilling this vision of developing effective leadership in the church among the tribal peoples of Manipur in North-East India.

Sincerely in Christ,

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STOP PRESS

Rev. J. Lamboi Haokip writes:
The church is facing a severe crisis with the possibility of losing many church members to other groups. They have become victims to poor leadership. My vision is to re-emphasise that good quality, biblically-grounded education is one of the keys for effective ministry in the present day Manipur context. I pray with deep pain in my heart for the churches in Manipur.

*Article kindly submitted by Rev. J. Lamboi Haokip
This article first appeared in the December,2007 Issue of OCW*

SUPPORTING EACH OTHER

Micah 6:8

*“He has showed you, O man, what is good.
And what does the Lord require of you?*

To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”

Belonging to a family brings responsibility and through this, great joy. Because we are family, let's look for ways we can encourage each other by exercising love and compassion.

Let's be faithful and support each other in prayer.

Why don't you share your country's needs and blessings with the rest of the WECF family? You can do this either by emailing or writing to the Editor at the addresses shown below so that your brothers and sisters worldwide will know more about you and will encourage and support you by praying for the work in your country.

Our Congregational World is a publication of the **World Evangelical Congregational Fellowship**: www.wecf-cong.org
Its purpose is to provide articles to challenge and encourage both our corporate and individual Christian witness, share news and keep member countries informed of WECF happenings.

The views expressed in *Our Congregational World* are those of the contributors and are not necessarily those of the Editor or the Executive Committee of the WECF.

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Please forward articles, news items or prayer requests for the next issue of *Our Congregational World* to the Editor, Kerrian Cartledge, by Friday 26 September, 2008.

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**BRAZIL 2010 –
COMING SOON!**



**BRAZIL 2010 –
PLAN TO ATTEND!**