

WHERE **HE** LEADS..

FOREIGN MISSION OF THE APOSTOLIC LUTHERAN CHURCH OF AMERICA

Christmas in India

BY DR. SYAM KUMAR

God's peace! Greetings to you in Jesus' name. We had wonderful Christmas services reaching thousands of new souls with the message of Jesus coming to this earth to save sinners and the lost.

Services were conducted inside churches and outside churches, in the fields, and in vacant places along the roadside. People gathered during the day and night to listen to the birth of Jesus Christ. Many thousands of souls have been saved with preaching the Good News. Pastors were also gathered in different areas. In the meetings we prayed for the Foreign Mission Board of the Apostolic Lutheran Church of America. May God bless you!



From the Foreign Mission Administrator Desk

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Reaching Out with the Gospel

As the Administrator of your Foreign Mission, I am constantly receiving emails from people all over the world asking us to come and preach. The call to come is constant. In the last few months, I've received messages from people we don't currently work with in Kenya, Malawi, Cameroon, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Sometimes the calls don't come via email but from individuals we meet as we are traveling. For example, when we were in Kenya in 2012, our team met the Archbishop of the Nambii Christian Church of East Africa and he begged us to come and preach at his churches. On our most recent trip to Kenya in November 2013, we fulfilled his request by attending a small conference he arranged.

This church has many strange customs and beliefs. Their practice of repentance, for example, is to sing and chant and try to scare the devil and sin out. After up to two hours of loud chanting, they beat drums and physically chase the devil, sin, and evil spirits out the door of the church. We saw a short version of this at the conference. When it was our turn to speak, God quickly revealed to us to preach repentance and remission of sins in the almighty and powerful Name and Blood of Jesus. All praise be to God that after we preached, these wonderful people heard the voice of the Good Shepherd, causing many to hear for themselves that their sins were forgiven in the Name and Blood of Jesus. After the service, the vice archbishop got up and said,



"We will now begin to pray and have religious reeducation meetings to study the Word, so that we can begin to preach these truths to our people." God is good!

As we enter 2014, I ask you to please pray for the Nambii Christian Church of East Africa as well as the many people who contact us. Please also pray for your Foreign Mission. Pray that God would lead us clearly to the people He wants us to partner with around the world.

Scaring the Children

BY DENNIS HILMAN AND BOB MAKI

" We wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world. "
Ephesians 6:12

When the Lord sends us to preach the gospel of reconciliation to the uttermost parts of the earth, the enemy often shows his resistance. In the industrialized countries of the world Satan puts on a different face than he does in the African countries. But he has the same purpose. He is a deceiver, a liar, a thief and a murderer and wants that none would be saved. When he places souls in the shackles of sin and fear and darkness, he will resist when the Prince of Peace sends His servants into the domain of the prince of darkness. He uses his diabolical powers to retain his grip. For instance he uses alcohol as a tool to control many, along with witchcraft and ancestor worship. When the power of the Gospel – the forgiveness of sins in the name and blood of Jesus – is brought forth, many are set free.

When the preached Word has touched hearts and God gives the strength to repent and believe, Satan growls like a lion to remind us of his power. He especially wants to frighten children because he desires to possess their souls. In the ministry of the United Lutheran Church many schools are visited and the Word of God is freely spoken to the children. We, Pastor Dennis Hilman and Pastor Bob Maki, have confronted Satanism first hand in a number of schools.



One middle school was traumatized a few months ago during the school day when a large black bird flew overhead dropping things on the children. The children were frightened out of their wits, and many passed out from sheer fright. The bird then flew to the roof of the school, and the roof collapsed killing many children! This week when we went to that same school a thousand children were assembled in front of us. They first sang Christian hymns and prayed. The Christian principal then introduced us and Bishop Mphahlele from the ULCSA, and we began to preach God's Word, naming the name of Christ.

Bishop in opening the two doors into the school corridor, many would have been trampled and hurt. The principal quickly took control and with God's strength and Word calmed the traumatized children. We all comforted the children and assured them that greater is He who is in them than he who is in the world. That He is always with us and His perfect love casts out all fear. Then with the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, we were able to fend off the evil one and continue with the service.



At that moment a black cloud appeared in the midst of the children and frightened them badly. All of them ran towards us on the platform in front of them. If it had not been for the quick thinking of the





Leratong Hospital South Africa: *The Place of Love*

BY LEONA MATSON

I must admit that I wasn't overly excited about our hospital visit. I wasn't too keen to walk into the wards unannounced and offer to pray for random people...especially since there would be no local church members with us so Dennis Hilman and I would be visiting the hospital alone. However, even though we felt a bit awkward, we decided to be obedient and go.

Somewhat reluctantly we entered Ward Twelve, approached the first patient, and explained that we were there to offer prayer. We were graciously invited to stay and chat a bit. A few minutes later, the patient's mother came in and was so excited to see us and to hear that we had come to pray. "I know that God is with me!" she exclaimed, "And today you are Jesus. He is showing me that He is with me and my family! Thank you for coming! Thank you!" Needless to say, her welcome encouraged us to continue!

The next patient we spoke to was a young woman named Shelly. She was lying in a bed near the window. When we approached her bed, she was already sitting up waiting for us. In a soft voice she explained that she had been admitted to the hospital yesterday, had an operation early that morning, and was waiting for a follow-up visit from the doctor. She eagerly listened as Dennis explained how God loved her and nodded in quiet agreement when we asked if we could pray. When the prayer was finished, tears were running down her face and she thanked us for coming to speak and pray with her. It was when I prayed for Shelley that God gently spoke to my heart and showed me that He was using us to bring His love to people that day.

The last room we entered had only a few people in it. One lone woman was in the bed on the far side of the room and even from the doorway she looked forlorn. When we walked over and introduced ourselves, she told us

her name was Claudine. We explained that we were visiting the hospital to see if anyone wanted prayer and we asked her how she was feeling. In a low voice she replied that she was feeling bad... and then she broke down in tears. She had just been diagnosed with cancer. As with Shelly and others before her, we comforted Claudine with words of God's love for her. And we prayed. We prayed for her soul. For her healing. For her two sons. For peace. For comfort. When we left, her face was more peaceful and she smiled her thanks. We left not knowing whether she would be healed, but knowing she was in the care of our God who had sent us to pray for her.

We never truly know how God speaks through us to others, but when we are obedient—even reluctantly obedient—we can trust that He will use us for His purposes. At Leratong Hospital that day, we felt the confirmation from God that we had brought His love to the Place of Love Hospital.



Teaching 800 students out under the trees!

Don't Forget Us!

BY LEONA MATSON

"Everyone we have met here in Kenya has said to us, 'Don't forget us!' and I promise that we never could!" said Anna-li Snellman to the Ijuni congregation on the last Sunday before we left their area. "We have been so changed by Kenya and the people we have met. We will never forget you!"

Anna-li spoke for all of us when she spoke at Ijuni and when she repeated the sentiment in the other areas we visited. The six-week trip to Kenya was full of wonderful people and amazing experiences. During our time in Kenya, we taught in six public schools and two private Christian schools, visited three orphanages, lead several youth Bible studies, and taught many Sunday school children.

Our visits to the different schools were a highlight for me this year. In some ways, though, the visits were frustrating. We went to six different public schools and the condition of some

of them was terrible! In many of the schools the children went to class in buildings made of mud and corrugated tin. Often the mud walls were crumbling and the roofs were falling off. The floors were packed dirt and there were often not enough desks for the students. Other school supplies, that we now take for granted in our schools here such as white boards, colored pencils, or student text books are completely non-existent. And don't even get me started on computers, wall maps, or science materials. I asked the pastors how these could be public schools. Wasn't the government supposed to supply for them? The pastors just shrugged and said it depended on the local government official. Good officials send funds to keep the schools running well. Bad officials siphoned money off for



Anna-li Snellman teaching about the parable of the lost sheep.

themselves. Also, of course, there just isn't enough money to keep all the schools in the country in good repair. That means poor children in poor areas often get neglected. Despite the dilapidated school buildings, however, the students were generally neatly dressed and attentive. They seemed to enjoy their studies and many told me of their dreams of becoming doctors, pilots, or football players.

Unfortunately, the poor buildings and lack of supplies aren't the only obstacles that will keep many of these children from reaching their goals. There is also the issue of school fees. School up until ninth grade is technically free. Except for the cost of uniforms (which are mandatory) and school fees. Fees cover the cost of lunch as well as teacher salaries and other essentials. There is a special fee to take exams at the end of the year. If you can't afford to pay, you don't take your exams. If you don't take your exams, you don't progress in school. After ninth grade, the fees more than double. For many students, though, this doesn't matter as they can't even afford to finish ninth grade much less worry about high school.

Despite the poor infrastructure, we all thoroughly enjoyed being at the schools. The students were generally well-behaved and enthusiastic about having us there. Another big positive about public schools in Kenya is that Christianity is not just tolerated but encouraged! Christian Religious Education (CRE) is part of the core curriculum for all grades and the teachers and principals always encouraged us to share our faith with the students. It's exciting to share stories from the Bible with kids in a public school...and exciting to see the students' response. In one school, after we told the

story of Daniel in the Lion's Den, I asked if anyone had any questions. One boy shot up his hand and asked, "Do they have to be about the story?" I said they could ask whatever they liked. He thanked me and then proceeded to quiz me and the other team members on our Bible knowledge! At one of the Christian schools we visited, students were asked, "What does it mean to be blessed?" An eleven-year-old girl answered, "To be blessed is to be delivered from sin and be shown how to find the right path to follow God." Another class was asked what could be learned from a series of short moral stories they had just heard. One girl responded, "Follow God in all situations." It was always great to visit schools and meet kids who knew and were excited about the Word of God.

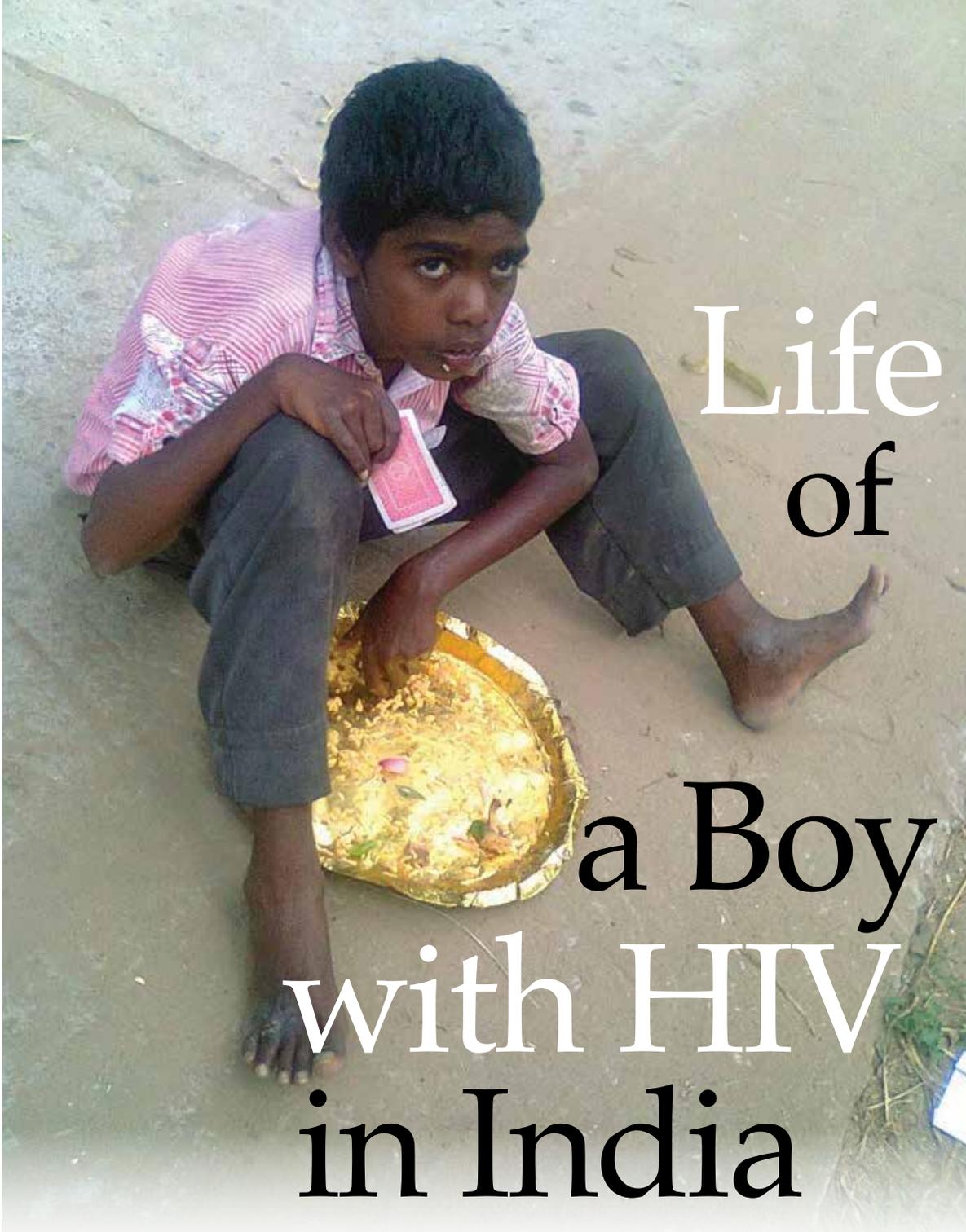
Another reason we always enjoyed visiting schools was to hear the students sing. Everywhere we went, there was singing. In one school the staff called all 800 or so students together on a small hillside under the trees. In some schools we visited class by class, but here they decided to bring the whole student body together. It was a bit of a challenge to speak loud enough without a microphone for everyone to hear, but we made it work. After we spoke, we asked the students to sing. Wow! The student body quickly turned into an 800-member choir singing in harmony! It was so beautiful to hear them raise their voices in praise to God.

Please continue to pray for students like these ones around the world. Pray that the schools would continue to teach the truths of the Bible, but also pray that conditions would improve so that more students would have the opportunity to acquire the skills they need to succeed in life and reach their dreams.

NOTE: The Foreign Mission is excited to see more people from Scandinavia, as well as from the USA and Canada, coming on mission trips. If you are interested in joining a trip, please contact the Foreign Mission Administrator (contact information is on the second page of this newsletter).

Fanny Snellman, Johanna Akerlund, and Anna-li Snellman teaching the song He's Got the Whole World in His Hands.





Life of a Boy with HIV in India

BY DR. SYAM KUMAR AND JEAN MARY
(IN CONJUNCTION WITH ALVAR HELMES)

Greetings to you in Jesus' name.

The boy in the picture lived in a poor and destitute village in India. He was chased out of his house by his Hindu father and mother because he was HIV-positive. Even though

he contracted the virus innocently there was a stigma associated with it, and in the minds of the parents he brought shame to the family and other villagers. He is about 12 years old, but no one knows his real age or birthdate. In the poor villages, births were not often recorded. He had to bathe

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- 12-month pledge program (min. \$10 per month)
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- Pastor support program (\$30 per month)
- Supply a Bible (\$3 each, min. ten Bibles)
- Support an orphan (\$30 per month)
- Buy a bicycle for a pastor (\$80)
- Memorial donations
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- Full time Missionary support (\$200 per quarter – Dennis Hillman)
- Wells in India (\$500 per well)
- Mission Hospital in India

DONATIONS

Donations in support of the Foreign Mission efforts should be sent to:

Apostolic Lutheran Church
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On check, write: Apostolic Lutheran Church Foreign Mission. Donations can be earmarked to support any of the areas identified.

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**HAVE YOU MOVED
RECENTLY?**

When we get returned newsletters, the Foreign Mission has to pay for the return postage. Help us avoid this unnecessary cost by notifying us if your mailing address has changed. Please send email to Kris Matson at krismatson2@gmail.com.

continued from page 7 – Life of a Boy with HIV in India.

in a muddy pond where the villagers wash cattle and water buffalo. He also had to drink from the same water where these animals drank, urinate, and pass dung.

He wanted to continue with schooling, but the school would not accept him after his HIV status was known. The rest of the children in the village would not play with him or talk to him, and he could not be around the other children. No one had mercy or compassion towards him and would not feed him. He had been sleeping on the roadside this winter with temperatures of about 18 degrees C (about 64 degrees F), which is cold for India.

One of our pastors found him picking up discarded food at a garbage dump, took him to his home, and gave him food and different clothes to wear. Three months ago he was found to be HIV-positive. He probably contracted the HIV virus through an infected hypodermic needle injection made by the village doctor. In the poor villages, needles are often used up to 50 times without sterilization. He is

begging our pastors to help him stay alive and wants to go back to school and be like the other children.

He has challenging times before him. First, he has to receive antiretroviral treatment for the rest of his life, which is expensive and impossible to procure without money. Second, he needs nutritious food. And last, he needs to have a home where people will give him shelter and a place to sleep.

He is asking, "What did I do wrong?" To hear the boy's cry is heart-breaking and heart-crushing. Please pray for the boy that God will provide answers to the boy's questions. He is presently being cared for and fed by the family of the pastor that found him and is being instructed in Christianity. The cost of this support is presently being covered partially by a concerned individual in America. Kindly pray for the boy that God will give answers to his questions and predicament.

*For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat:
I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink:
I was a stranger, and you took me in:
Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me...*