

**Lutherans in Medical Missions Needs and Resources Forum**  
***Crises and Disasters: How Do We Respond?***

March 7-8, 2008  
Crowne Plaza Hotel 11228 One Eagle Drive St. Louis, MO 63044

**Forum Overview**

**Friday March 7**

***Bible Study and Devotions*** Tim Hetzner, DCE, President of Lutheran Church Charities, Addison, IL .

The Bible study on John 4:1-43 stressed the importance of knowing one's culture. The title of the study was: The Woman at the Well OR Things Are Not Always as They Seem! The Story of the Good Samaritan was also examined in a cultural context. Tim's vast experience from travel and study in the Middle East opened everyone's eyes to these familiar Biblical stories.

***LCMS World Mission: Working with Congregations as Responders*** Rev. David Birner, Associate Executive Director, LCMS International Mission Team and Sue Pfeil, RN, LCMS Medical Missionary, Kyrgyzstan

Rev. David Birner started his career as a LCMS in Papua New Guinea in 1977 at a time when there were 110 missionary members on that field. Sue Pfeil started her mission work in 1998 in the new field of Kyrgyzstan with a team of four. The New Guinea field had a major hospital in the highlands as part of their mission work, with clinics established attached to the hospital. Sue's work has been with a Mobil Medical Van supported by the Concordia Mission Society. Both have helped grow the local church.

Sue stated that volunteer visits help the national workers/believers know that they are part of a greater team. Training is always important for continuing good health care practices and sharing the word of God. In these last 10 years, Sue has had over 100 short-term volunteers work in Kyrgyzstan. Even though Communism has changed, work in Kyrgyzstan is a challenge as political laws regarding expatriates and their work is always changing.

Birner and Ron Scherch, recruiter for World Mission, stated that the sending of short-term medical teams is in cooperation with World Relief and Human Care. The goal is that 1000 congregations will be mobilized to serve on the mission fields, that there will be 300 short term teams, 300 short term individuals and 1500 long term individuals that will have served by 2010. This is an ambitious goal that will involve many people and organizations. If we work together, we can make it happen.

### **Saturday March 8**

***Bible Study and Devotions*** Tim Hetzner, DCE, President of Lutheran Church Charities, Addison, IL

Tim focused on the Gospel of John 13 where Jesus was in the upper room (Passover). John focuses on another aspect – washing of the feet. We are called to serve others. He talks to the disciples about being a disciple. He used a parable about grapes and the vine. “I am the True Vine and my Father is the gardener.” Tim’s study opened our eyes to new understanding of this passage when viewed from a Middle Eastern cultural concept.

***Malaria: the Crisis of Immense Proportion*** David Wesche, MD, PhD, consultant for the Clinton Foundation

Dr. Wesche gave a thorough review of malaria, its history, symptoms, treatment and current conditions in world health. 300-500 million people are infected annually with malaria. 1-2 million people die but this number is decreasing. Most deaths are in children under 5. Anopheles mosquitoes pass the parasite from one person to the next. If the cycle is interrupted, the disease will not be transferred. Dr. Wesche is currently working on developing a drug to prevent malaria through his private company. He has worked as an expert consultant with many national groups fighting malaria currently with the Clinton Foundation. He discussed bed net access and programs like Roll Back Malaria, The President’s Malaria Initiative and LWR’s plans for Malaria containment through the Lutheran Malaria Initiative.

***Mission Agencies Respond to Crisis. Uganda:*** Rev. Peter Kelm, Christ for Africa, Mission Society, Inc. **USA:** Carli Zygowicz, PhD, Extra Mile Ministries.

## *Uganda*

Rev. Kelm served in Ghana as a vicar from 1997 to 1999. The Ghanaian church has now sent a missionary to Uganda who is partially supported in his work by Christ for Africa, a mission society that Pastor Kelm established. Congregations are moving in a direction of accountability in the area of meeting evangelism and human care needs overseas. Congregations and Mission Agencies need to work together in meeting the challenges of the church around the world. “When you make an impact on the life of someone, you want to do more. When you communicate this impact to a congregation, they want to do more.”

## *USA*

Carli Zygowicz spent time with Extra Mile Ministry at Virginia Tech and Northern Illinois University after the tragic shooting. Georgie, Marley & Honey (K-9 – Golden Retrievers) are transfer therapy dogs that bring comfort, hope and joy in a crisis situation. Up to 400 people petted the dogs a day and received their “fur fix.” When crisis occurs people are open to talking about their faith. Carli also shared her experience as a short-term volunteer in Kyrgyzstan counseling with women who had been physically abused in a culture that feels this is normal and acceptable.

***Engaging Community Response Globally:*** Betty Roon, R.N. and John Lautenschlager, M.D.

John, a former career medical missionary and Betty, a short-term volunteer have visited 21 countries between the two of them. Roon said there is no best approach to meet health needs—there is room for every approach, none is best. Lautenschlager felt we are asking the wrong question, that we should focus on the presented problem rather than our processes—we are not always culturally aware of the real situation. Short-term and long-term missions are different and do not result in the same experiences and goals. Short-term missionaries rarely impact the culture but provide important services (the provision of supplies being one) and needed fellowship with global Lutheran Christians.

In the 70’s, hospitals were built and illnesses were treated. Later clinics were established in many communities away from the hospital center. Today, community health educators are trained to empower people to change their health practices in simple but effective ways. Standards have

shifted. Now the mission trip is popular, but needs haven't shifted. Medical mission leaders need to look at missions from all angles with a broader perspective. Short-term & long-term missions – both are valuable.

***Disaster Response vs. Crisis Response: Changing Chaos into Compassion***

Rev. Glenn Merritt, Director of Disaster Response, LCMS World Relief & Human Care

***Disaster*** is an event that causes serious personal and public loss, wide spread destruction, severe hardship, general unhappiness, or death – an event out of our control. There have been 73 disasters in the last 10 months in the USA.

***Crisis*** is a situation in which things are very uncertain for a time during which action must be taken to avoid a catastrophic disaster. This is the time for Christian response and care delivered in an efficient and effective way. Preparedness, a readiness for action, makes all the difference between chaos and compassion.

- Chaos is a state of complete disorder and confusion caused by a lack of preparation.
- Compassion is sympathy for the suffering of others with the desire and ability to help.
- Chaos is a reflection of human nature during a disaster.
- Compassion is a reflection of Christ's nature during a disaster.

Christ's mandate and example of love for the whole person remains our supreme example for life in this world, and for the care of the needy, body and soul.

Christ's Palestinian ministry combined proclamation of forgiveness and acts of mercy, care and healing (Luke 5:17-26).

Preparedness Planning enables us to serve, process, implement, provide, understand, and develop. A failure to plan is a plan for failure.

Christian care calls for collaboration and commitment. World Relief and Human Care works in partnerships with districts, congregations and other agencies. A disaster can happen to anyone anywhere anytime!

***Ready to Respond: Medical Missions "On Call?"*** President Keith Kohlmeier, Kansas District, Moderator with Panel Sally Henrickson, R.N.

World Relief and Human Care, Marlene Kohlmeier, R.N., Parish nurse and medical volunteer, Rev. Steve Hughey, Director of CALMS.

What has challenged you over the past couple days?

Steve mentioned that he was challenged by the first Bible study by Tim. Things are not always as they seem and this emphasized the importance of doing research. “We may not know all the right answers for the changing world but I know now it is all about asking all the right questions.” .

Sally felt that we have massive global communication but we have a lack of internal communication.

Keith stated that medical missions and pastoral ministries have been separated.

Steve felt there should be more orientation events to overseas fields to learn and build relationships. There is a need to focus on strategic projects – right projects, right people, right attitudes. Mentoring by international friends in the States or by long-term missionaries is a good model.

**Recognition Banquet** Speaker, Lisa Bonds, PhD, Lutheran Malaria Initiative, Lutheran World Relief

John Speckhard introduced Ruth and Al Senske. Al and Ruth are both life-long educators. Al was Director of LCMS World Relief and was on the founding board of LIMM.. LIMM asked them to represent the many wonderful people who support LIMM.

Betty Roon introduced Missionary Nurse Sue Pfiel. Sue has been a missionary for 10 years in Kyrgyzstan where she has been instrumental in the wholistic ministry of the Mobil Medical Van.

Bobbie Lautenschlager introduced Bob Roegner, Executive Director of LCMS World Mission. Bob supported LIMM at our 1<sup>st</sup> forum and has continued to truly be a partner in LIMM’s ministry.

Dr. Roegner stated that LIMM exemplifies the great commandment: Loving the Lord your God and Loving your neighbor as yourself. He is happy to be our partner.

## **Dr. Lisa Bonds: Casting Nets, Saving Lives – The Lutheran Malaria Initiative**

LCMS, LWR & ELCA are joining together in a relationship to contain malaria by instituting the Lutheran Malaria Initiative and thinking outside of the box. LWR was approached by the Bill Gates Foundation & UNF (United Nations Foundation) with the challenge to mobilize Lutherans to contain and maybe eradicate malaria. LWR wants to get United States Lutherans involved. “All US Lutherans working together on one action to change the world.” There will be a study of the 30 countries that are hardest hit by malaria. Hopefully, millions of lives will be saved and thousands of hospital beds empty. LWR’s dream/vision: “imagine what we could do together.”