



CNH District LCMS . . .

17 By 17 ... An Ablaze! For God's Mission Update

A Weekly Ablaze! publication from the CNH District - LCMS
October 24, 2007

Ablaze! for God's Mission, in partnership with **Fan Into Flame** is a movement to inspire individuals and congregations in the CNH District to respond as recipients of God's abundant grace through the sharing of resources in the work of mission.

"17 By 17"

The CNH District has a vision. . .this vision is to add **17,000** new faith communities to our District by the year **2017**.

Fan Into Flame

Campaign Update

Commitments from individuals & congregations to date:

CNH District:

\$768,000.

LCMS Worldwide:

\$24,550,181.

Pilot Church Ready To Begin Campaign

Thank you to Bethel Grace Lutheran Ministries, San Francisco, CA! The Bethel Grace Lutheran Ministries congregation is all set to begin their Fan Into Flame appeal which will run from now through Thanksgiving. There are many resources now available on the CNH website for use in all of the CNH churches for their Fan Into Flame appeals. These resources include:

- [Ablaze! Start Up Kit](#)
- [Fan Into Flame Campaign Manuals](#)
- [Videos, Graphics, Photos](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Profiles from successful campaigns in other LCMS congregations](#)



Faith Community Snapshots- Rohnert Park, CA and beyond!

Snap Shot 1: Linda's story:

Linda is one of those people who are a little bit off kilter but have huge hearts for Christ and huge compassion for those who don't yet know him. Linda came to me frustrated about how to encourage a not yet Christian friend in the faith so I introduced her to the idea of Triads. Linda immediately invited two friends to join her in a Triad, those two friends invited two more and suddenly she had a faith community springing up around her of people who would probably never come to a church but are discovering the living Christ in a Triad that is

Matthew 25:21

"His master replied, 'well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness' "

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now transforming into a small group. The people Linda is reaching with the Gospel may never become "members" of our worshiping congregation, but two of the four have already become members of the kingdom of Christ!

Snap Shot 2: Pastor Eric's Story:

After several false starts I finally had the opportunity to invite a husband and wife to join a Triad with me. Through the death of a close family member Shelly was seeking for spiritual answers. Bob on the other hand is an atheist who has never read the Bible but joined his wife in a Triad out of curiosity. Through a non-threatening and grace filled reading of John's Gospel Shelly was introduced to Jesus, came to faith, and will soon be baptized! Bob persists in denying even the existence of God.

Chinese Ministry Update - Prince of Peace

Fremont, CA

On October 15-17, Pastor Wilson will go to Las Vegas with other fellow pastors to continue to help Living Word Christian Church, a Chinese Church, to partner with our Chinese Lutheran Churches to plant a new Chinese Christian Church in Las Vegas.

We have been putting together a ministry plan and assigning projects to individuals as we prepare for 2008. With our growing ministry, we especially hope to strengthen our ministries to children youth, men and seniors. *Pray our ministry plans would not only be our plans, but would be God's plans working in and through us.*



Three Included on Mission Trip to Kenya

by: Sharon Thorpe
Messiah, Citrus Heights, CA



Have you ever wanted to get out of your comfort zone and just work for the Lord? Have you considered doing this, but just were not sure how to do so? Well, three members from Messiah Lutheran Church, in Citrus

Heights, CA, did just that!

After attending classes for several months

through The Sending Place (a Lutheran based mission training facility), Elise Spleiss, Sharon Thorpe and Barbara Romig, were part of a team of twelve members that set off for Kabimoi, Kenya the first two weeks

in August of this year. What an amazing trip it was!

(Click on above image to read the rest of Sharon's story . . .)

Quick Links

[Ablaze! Resources](#)

[Fan Into Flames Resources](#)

[Triads](#)

[Learning Communities](#)

BLOGS now available on the CNH Website

1. [Faith Communities](#)
- 2) [Triads](#)

Three included on Mission Trip to Kenya

Have you ever wanted to get out of your comfort zone and just work for the Lord? Have you considered doing this, but just were not sure how to do so? Well, three members from Messiah Lutheran Church, in Citrus Heights, CA, did just that! After attending classes for several months through The Sending Place (a Lutheran based mission training facility), Elise Spleiss, Sharon Thorpe and Barbara Romig, were part of a team of twelve members that set off for Kabimoi, Kenya the first two weeks in August of this year. What an amazing trip it was!

The best part of this trip was to be a part of God at work in mighty ways... far more ways than any of us could have imagined... far more than we planned, but not more than we knew was possible when you just let go of personal concerns and trust in the Lord to provide for His will to be done! And, thanks be to God, again, for the mighty power He has to accomplish His purposes! Lives were changed on this trip, those in Kenya and those on our team and many in our church family at home! Some of the wonderful blessings in all this was watching our church family get excited with us and we were recipients of their love and support, too! God calls Goer's, and Sender's and Prayer's.. all important in His work!

Leave it to God to change hearts! There are three different stories of how each of the three of us decided to answer God's call to Go, but our purpose was the same, as it was for all twelve members of the team that prepared and set off for Africa.... be willing to share God with others!

Once we responded and put any concerns and fears to rest, God used us to speak to His people across the world. Where the concerns in the beginning were what kind of food we would eat, or what kind of bathroom facilities might we encounter, or concern for our safety and transportation and health, we slowly had our hearts changed as a result of much prayer, reading and preparing and just learning to trust God, no matter what! Our training was thorough and complete, and through the course of it, we were stretched beyond our expectation. By the end of training, the things mentioned before didn't matter; our concern was trusting God to provide for what He wanted done... period. We would go.

Most Lutherans, from what I have seen, are not used to preparing or presenting personal testimonies! As part of our training, we were asked to prepare just that... a personal testimony or talk that we would present to folks on the trip. We brainstormed and came up with the first draft, and, if the others were anything like me, editing and corrections were in abundance! But, you know, there is much to be learned about the condition of your heart when you put your faith on paper, so to speak! And, after the writing was complete, we gave our talks to the group, pausing frequently to allow time for the interpreter to share with those who would be hearing

in Swahili. That, too, was a learning process! But, it was amazing! Of course, there were other preparations to make, too, for devotions and lessons and more.

In Africa, we were met by such loving and kind people! God lives in the hearts of so many, and we were changed... even before any words were spoken. The love in our hearts changed lives, as well, and God just taught all of us about His love... about His plan for His world! The barriers of space and race seemed to evaporate! It took some time for some of the little ones to not be afraid of us, but love won and the bonding of people was just beyond amazing! God and His love and His plan for His people kept all of us quite busy for our two weeks!

Children were changed by hearing God's Word in a Vacation Bible School setting; adults were changed and stretched to expand their knowledge in a Marriage Seminar. We held a Youth Conference that targeted the young college age; went door to door to visit homes to pray with families and bless their homes. We were able to hold a Ladies Tea and share with many of the folks attending The Harvest Church. There was worship each evening, filled with preaching and singing and sharing! It was wonderful - part of our hearts are still there! As you can see in the pictures, their church is very basic, however, they are so proud of their new facility and, there is some mighty worshipping going on there! God will use them in a mighty way.. He already is! We fell in love with our Christian family there! And, it surely made the world a smaller place. It also gave me a better vision of God's plan for all of us! We are one family of God, one universal body of believers in this world. And, so many more still need to hear about Jesus!

Everyone on the team presented their testimony and God used them to unite people together in Him and change lives. New believers were added and those with strong faith were strengthened all the more by His love and His sharing! There's so much more to share about our trip, but it would take far more room than what is available here. As you look at the pictures, you can get a feel for how wonderful the trip was!

The best part of this trip was experiencing, first hand, the mighty work God will do if you just let go of yourself and put yourself entirely in His hands! He will lead you to do mighty things for Him. Actually, He does mighty things using you as His mouthpiece. To God be all the glory.

I hope and pray everyone who reads this will be changed, changed by renewed trust in the Lord and new excitement and wonder as you ponder and then respond to what the Lord is calling you to do for Him, whatever that is! This was my first mission trip, but it won't

be my last, Lord willing. I'm in training now to be included on a mission trip to Hong Kong in March. And, boy, I'm trusting the Lord to lead me and guide me and take care of every detail... for me, for the team that will be going, and for those that He's already preparing to hear about Him.

How is He calling you? How will you answer His call to 'Go, therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.'" Amen.
Matt. 28:19-20. That call is for every believer, not just a few!

God bless you, mightily, as you answer His call right now wherever you are, at home, at school or at work, on a mission trip or wherever He is calling you. Bottom line, it's all about Him and not about you. Just trust Him, get out of your comfort zone and see the amazing things He will do! I promise you He will do them as He always does! And, it will be good!

In Christian love,
Sharon Thorpe

(Photographs can be found on following pages. . .)



Elise Spleiss, Sharon Thorpe and Barbara Romig at a reception at Messiah, following a commissioning service to send us off!



Yes, this is the town of Kabimoi where The Harvest Church is located. The town is very small and very poor. However, the church family is so excited about their new church - and the new bathroom facilities next to it! God is good and at work in this place!



The Harvest Church.



Pastor Hassar Omega and his wife, Eva.



Barbara and Sharon holding these little ones during a church service. They were tentative but warmed up to us before long. They were very intrigued with the light inside our wristwatches!



Eager children waiting for us to arrive to begin VBS. There were about 150 of them the first day. (Over 200 the second day and nearly 300 the third day.)



88 year old, Herman, part of our team, played his harmonica for the children. He was good and they loved to hear him.



Sharon and Sheikh after the Marriage Seminar. Sheikh converted from Muslim just six months ago and is trusting God in very difficult circumstances. The conference was life-changing for many!