

The Community Connection

April News and Highlights



Children of Peace Mission Trip Update,

Pastor Jeff Neller



Pastor Jeff at Sapa Boarding School –
Hmong Woman in Tribal Dress

I feel ruined for life, in a great way, through participating in Children of Peace International's 2011 Medical Mission to Vietnam, March 9th – 26th. I looked into the eyes (and mouths) of 1800 children and elderly adults ... and saw Jesus among the least of these (cf. Matthew 25) who suffer and are the marginalized in their society because they are orphaned, poor, leprous, a minority indigenous people, or were on the "wrong side" of the Vietnam war with the Americans. I fell in love with the people, and I see the power and effect of a humble and compassion-oriented ministry, which serves the basic needs of the people. It has caused me to reconsider my own life, my values, goals, and lifestyle. My daily experiences and musings (and those of Raina Zeeh and Pastor Jim Munter) can be read in our blogs: to access, go to www.goodshepherdutah.com, Pastors' Blogs (and Mission Blogs).

This year, COPI offered eight medical/dental clinics at the Viet Tri Orphanage, Sapa Boarding School, Tha Phin Village, Soc Son Leper Colony, Tam Ky Village, Cam Thanh Village, Thuan An School for the Deaf, and Ho Chi Minh Youth Shelter, held in northern, central, and southern regions of Vietnam. The clinics started early in the morning and involved assessment, hygiene, medical exams, dental work, pharmacy prescriptions, and then small gifts to the children. The team was comprised of 28 American and Vietnamese doctors, nurses, dentists, translators, drivers, and non-medical personnel. The average number of patients seen per day was near 150 – 250 elderly and children.

This 2011 COPI Mission Trip marks the 17th year of Good Shepherd's involvement in Vietnam, which started in 1994 by supporting two Catholic nuns, Sister Hai and Sister Tan (both now deceased), who were sheltering and providing basic care for 20 orphaned babies and children. Since those early days, Good Shepherd has helped to provide facilities and care for orphans, the building and staffing of an HIV/AIDS center, educational scholarships for orphans and indigenous children, and provide mobile medical/dental clinics in remote villages. COPI has now evolved beyond Good Shepherd to an internationally recognized humanitarian effort to bring medical, dental, and educational assistance to those in need, with the cooperation of the Vietnamese government.

Team members from Good Shepherd this year included:

Raina Zeeh (Trip Leader), Brick and Donna Thompson (Salt Lake Community College Nursing Program Coordinator) and Pastors Jim Munter and Jeff Neller. We, of course, count binh Rybacki as part of our church family.

The trip was a type of first-time pilgrimage for me. Since 1994, I have heard the stories of the needs in Vietnam from binh, Pastor Jim, and others like Curtis and Raina Zeeh who have gone to Vietnam to serve. Most captivating were the stories of the courage and faith of the Catholic nuns, Sister Hai and Sister Tan, who somehow managed to care for over 200 orphans and inspired others to do the same. Many times, I heard Pastor Jim wonder aloud, "how in the world will we be able to care for all these children?" Never, however, did he waver in his commitment or belief that the Lord would provide a way – even when the number we supported reached 5000 children. Then there were the stories of Grandma Tiny and the Soc Son Leper Colony and the isolated, shunned, and forgotten people of a past era. Who can forget the children born with hydrocephalus (water on the brain) hidden away in destitute care facilities? Most of these terrible diseases are treatable with proper medical attention in their early stages of development.



Brick at Tam Ky Clinic –
Helping a Post-Dental Patient



Donna at Tam Ty Clinic –
Medical Station



Raina at Ta Phin Village Clinic - Assessment Station

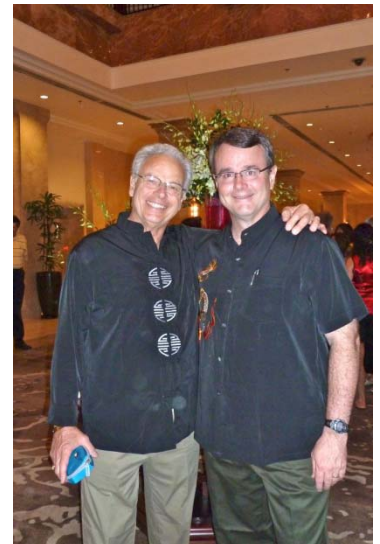
The most stirring of all, however, are the young children, aged 6-12, abandoned by their parents to either roam the streets, engage in thievery, and sold into prostitution. One girl was prostituted at the age of 9 for four years before she was rescued. Several of Good Shepherd families who served with COPI also adopted children from Vietnam. Today, Thane and Nina Zeeh, Preston Roeder, Carly Winsauer, Noah Arnold, and Katie Rose Munter bless us as a living testimony of God's grace and love.

Although you can hear, be inspired and sympathetic to these stories from Vietnam, there is a knowing and understanding that only comes through personal experience.

You have to go, see, and serve the children in Vietnam yourself.

One thing is for certain, I remain inspired by the man who mentored me all these years. Thanks, Pastor Jim for your example, courage, and faith. You are grace in action. Thanks, binh for being so determined, persistent, and dedicated to serving the children. You are an earthen vessel through which the glory of the Lord shines. Thanks, Good Shepherd for loving children in Vietnam. We are blessed to be a blessing to them.

-- Pastor Jeff



Pastor Jim and Pastor Jeff

Transitions: We need to pray for the continuing revision and release of *Transitions: The Mormon Migration from Religion to Relationship*. The videos were released on March 12, 2011. They have been viewed by almost 600 people. The Transitions Team has received many useful comments and the videos will receive some slight tweaks to make them better.

Good Shepherd is playing a major role in the production and release of the videos. Pastors Jeff and Christine have several helpful moments. Tom and Yvonne Krause speak with clear authority and offer hope to other transitioners.

We need to continue to pray because the enemy of our souls hates what is happening. And we need to be ready to encourage the transitioners who find us and want to know if we are real. Let's be real in our love, our prayers, and our service of those who visit us.

Royal Family Kids Camp Needs You! This years' camp runs from August 8th-12th, and will take over 100 volunteers to plan and staff the camp. We have week-long positions, day positions or afternoon positions available. Positions include male and female counselors, Aunts and Uncles, support staff, drama, crafts, sports, and kitchen help. No special skills needed, only a love for helping children! We have something for everyone. So join this amazing mission to serve the neglected and abused children living in your community. Stop by the Serendipity room between services today and next week for more information and to sign up. You may also contact Darlene Johnson at 801-860-1025 or darlenejohnson999@hotmail.com.

Jubilee Fundraisers: The excitement is building as we prepare to celebrate 50 years of working in God's kingdom as Good Shepherd Lutheran Church. In order to have a party we need to raise funds. As the first endeavor, you may have noticed the Latte Bar & treats in the Welcome Center every Sunday between services. Next, we will be assembling a Jubilee Cookbook with all of our favorite recipes. Our last cookbook was published in 1998 by the Women of the Word. You will be able to enter your recipes online or bring them into the office and we will enter them for you. You are welcome to submit as many different recipes as you'd like, the more, the merrier! We would like you to submit at least five. Make sure you try to spread your yummy recipes amongst the different categories. More details will follow soon, but start collecting your recipes today!

<i>March Statistics:</i>			
Weddings:	0	Births:	0
Baptisms:	3/6 Charlotte Anne Mazuran, daughter of Eric & Erika	Deaths:	0