2007 ASI Division-wide Convention
Let the Zeal for God Ignites Our Hearts!

ASI Convention is a Spiritually Uplifting and Networking Gathering of SDA Laymen Organised by Laymen. A Fulfilling Convention!

Date & Days: 10 – 13 August 2007 (Fri eve till Mon noon)
Venue: The Twin Towers Hotel, Bangkok
88 Rong Muang, Patumwan, Bangkok, Thailand
Tel: (66-2) 216 9555 Fax: (66-2) 216 9544
Registration: Forms available @ Mission Office or
E-mail: asi.convention@gmail.com

Three Wonderful Days of Talks, Seminars, Testimonies, Music, Networking & Fellowship.

Full Registration Fee (US$ per person)

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Display & Sales Booths (2x3 Meters) are available at US$300 / booth.
Please contact Mr. Kamol at kamoljong@gmail.com
Special Times in Special Places

Special times call for special coverage, and that’s what we’ve planned for you in this colorful issue of *Flags*.

Just as we were going to press with the October 2006 issue, Dr. Stephen Guptill was elected president at the institution’s Management Committee meeting near Washington, D.C. In November, Dr. Guptill was officially installed as the seventh president of the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies.

In this issue you can listen in as our new president shares his hopes and plans for the future and tells how God has led in the past. You can experience the special service of installation, and read excerpts from his new year’s chapel presentation.

The cover story features the historic trip our AIIAS delegation made to China. One especially memorable aspect for the delegation was meeting with the Rev. Cao Shengjie, President and acting General Secretary of the China Christian Council (CCC). This was the first time a Seventh-day Adventist delegation had been granted the privilege of an official meeting with the head of this official government religious organization in China. You’ll also read about the progress being made toward a much-needed new building on campus, visit a graduation in Thailand, and keep informed about what's happening in and around AIIAS. You’ll learn more about another one of our outstanding alumni, and meet Samuel Bangura, current student and president of the on-campus M.B.A. Club.

Our new alumni section offers the opportunity to meet old and new friends alike. Thank you to the friends and alumni who have written in. We’re always pleased to share your news and photos with the worldwide AIIAS community.

There are many good things happening at AIIAS and we’re glad to share them with you. If you’re interested in knowing more about how you can be a part of these good things—we would love to hear from you. There are so many ways to become involved: alumni activities, scholarship funds, sponsoring students from the 10/40 window, contributing to a much needed place of worship, sharing and learning. . . . Why not write to us today at flags@aiias.edu?

See you in our next issue of *Flags*!

Gina Wahlen, editor

Letters to Editor

Dear Editor,

I very much enjoyed reading the new *Flags* magazine from cover to cover. It's good to hear what's going on at AIIAS. This way I still feel like a small part of it.

I had a great time while studying at AIIAS and I wish you and all the faculty all the best and God’s wisdom for the future.

The education I received at AIIAS helps me here in my pastoral ministry.

Greetings from Switzerland,
Christian Stroeck
Mamishaus, Switzerland

Dear Editor,

Please receive my greetings from the University of Arusha. I am very happy that you could remember us as one of your readers of the new *Flags* periodical. On behalf of the University of Arusha I wish to register our greatest appreciation for your effort.

We are a young university and as we are building up we will be very happy to receive more periodicals on all subjects. Pass on our greetings to all there. Thank you.

Abraham O. Chiebana, Librarian
University of Arusha
Tanzania

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About the Cover

The AIIAS delegation to China visited with government officials as well as seminaries and famous sites, including the Great Wall.

In Shanghai, Dr. Musvosvi is pictured receiving a welcoming gift from the Rev. Dr. Cao Sheng-jie who is president of the China Christian Council for the entire country of China.
Meet the President: Dr. Stephen Guptill
By Gina Wahlen, editor of Flags

Flags: Before becoming President of AIIAS, you served as Director of the Education Department at the Southern Asia-Pacific Division (SSD) of the General Conference. How long were you at SSD and what were some of your major projects there?

Guptill: I began at SSD in 1995. It has been my pleasure to work with outstanding leaders in the unions and institutions throughout this Division. We had a great team that worked to develop Bible textbooks, REBIRTH values education resources, Subject Supplements, and resource CDs. We managed various scholarship programs offered at SSD including the Nelson Scholarship Endowment which has grown to over US$1 million in just the last few years. The Education Aid, Bursary, and LEAD scholarships are a major part of the department’s efforts and have had a huge impact on the church’s education program. Our current project is a series of beautifully illustrated storybooks for grades 1-6. These books will not only help the students learn to read, they will give the students a foundation of Adventist values. The books will also be sold by literature evangelists.

Flags: What attracted you to AIIAS?

Guptill: AIIAS is a great institution with some outstanding faculty. This institution is providing leaders for our colleges and church work. I have seen the influence of the graduates in the classrooms and leadership positions of our church. I have enjoyed living in this community and personally knowing many of the faculty and staff. At first, I had no thought of coming to AIIAS because I enjoyed my work at SSD so much, but many at AIIAS urged me to pray about it, and it seemed clear that the Lord was leading me in this direction.

Flags: This is not the first time you have been a college administrator. What do you see as some of the unique strengths and experiences that you bring to the office of president?

Guptill: I have learned a lot from my experiences in higher education. My work on the faculty of Hong Kong Adventist College, then later as vice-president at Pacific Union College and as President of our college in Bangladesh has taught me a lot about higher education and Asia. Serving on accreditation teams for so many years also helped me to identify strategies for excellence.

At AIIAS we offer degrees in religion, education, health, and business. It is helpful that I have degrees in three of these areas. I feel a kinship to many of the issues and needs because of this background. My former work in institutional advancement and development has led me to appreciate this part of the work.

I have also had the privilege of working with some very fine educators, both at the General Conference and in the Asia-Pacific region. Their counsel and example have done much to mentor me for this work. I helped organize the College Presidents’ Council for SSD, where we brought together the 16 presidents of higher educational institutions within the division. These experiences have been a great blessing to me.

Flags: I understand that while you were president of the Bangladesh Adventist Seminary and College you were instrumental in major campus development, including the construction of a new church, women’s dormitory, dining hall/gymnasium, bell tower, library, and walkways and landscaping around the campus. Can you tell us a little more about your time there?

Guptill: Bangladesh was a challenging place to work. But it was a place where you could see the hand of God much more clearly because of these challenges. It was my pleasure to see God take a village school
We orient our programs to these areas. AIIAS has been responsive to the needs in the relied heavily upon AIIAS to help them address leadership needs in education. Our mission is very focused, practical, and the church has education, health, and theology. We do not simply offer general education to meet the leadership needs of our church—in business, its educational system. Here, to have AIIAS located in this part of the world to address some programs abroad did not emphasize the issues and needs that we have. Study abroad became a rare opportunity for a select few. It is a huge cost to send people to other parts of the world for study. To have a high quality, international-level graduate program in Asia. Guptill: AIIAS unique?

Flags: What does AIIAS have to offer the world church? What makes AIIAS unique?

Guptill: AIIAS was established to meet an urgent need for Adventists to have a high quality, international-level graduate program in Asia. It is a huge cost to send people to other parts of the world for study. Study abroad became a rare opportunity for a select few. Often, the programs abroad did not emphasize the issues and needs that we have here. To have AIIAS located in this part of the world to address some of the higher educational needs has been a blessing to our church and its educational system.

AIIAS is vital to the mission of the church. We are educating people to meet the leadership needs of our church—in business, education, health, and theology. We do not simply offer general education. Ours is a very focused, practical mission, and the church has relied heavily upon AIIAS to help them address leadership needs in these areas. AIIAS has been responsive to the needs of the field, and we orient our programs to fill those needs.

Flags: What do you see as some of the challenges that AIIAS faces?

Guptill: One of the biggest challenges is developing stable financial support that goes beyond yearly appropriations. We need to move to financial strength beyond the appropriations level. What I mean by that is that we need to develop some endowments for professors and for scholarships that will give financial strength to the institution to ensure its continuation even in times when appropriations may be limited.

Another related challenge will be to maintain a high quality faculty and staff. That is core to academic excellence. We need to attract and maintain the best people. Keeping our facilities up to international standards and maintained with quality support services will require my attention. Academic excellence in areas such as the library, equipment, teaching resources and nurturing a stimulating learning environment will all be on the agenda.

Flags: What are some of the tasks you see ahead of you at AIIAS?

Guptill: A new building complex is being planned that will provide a much better place of worship, as well as a number of rooms for church and campus needs. In addition, it will have some multipurpose classrooms that can serve as needed Sabbath School rooms. I am eager that the auditorium also be a place for us to nurture some of the fine arts that would bless not only our campus but the community as well. All the planning and building will take a considerable part of my time.

Our world is changing rapidly. So is education. AIIAS needs to be responding to these trends by how we deliver education. We see a growing interest in our Division of Online Learning. Our library currently has more than 9,000 journals and periodicals online to support our distance learning programs and online courses. This requires us to keep a close eye on trends and educational needs in all these areas.

Attracting and holding an excellent faculty will be an important work. Gaining official recognition for AIIAS in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Malaysia, and Indonesia is one of my most important tasks. There are so many low quality programs in this region that it is a challenge to overcome stereotypes and establish a solid reputation and recognition worthy of our product.

AIIAS needs to keep its focus on fulfilling the mission of the church. To me this is a core issue. We’re not just training people for jobs. We are here to help people fulfill the mission of the church. We need this on the personal level in our walk with God, but also AIIAS needs to continually ask, “How can this program or this class prepare students to carry the gospel to the world?”

Flags: If you could choose one major accomplishment for the time you are at AIIAS, what would it be? What would you like to be known for?

Guptill: If I had to put it in one word I would say excellence. Excellence in our academic programs, in our faculty, in our facilities and library, but most of all in the spiritual lives of those who work and study here. We should be a spiritual community. When God does something He does it right. At the end of creation week, He said “It is good.” AIIAS needs to do things well also. I hope when I am done at AIIAS, we can say “This is excellent.” That will be my work and prayer.

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Dr. Stephen R. Guptill was installed as the seventh president of the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies (AIIAS) during a weekend of celebratory events featuring a groundbreaking service for a new multi-purpose building and a festive international concert on Friday, Nov. 10, followed by the service of dedication and installation on Nov. 11.

During the presidential installation service, Dr. Paoring Ragui, vice president for student affairs and public relations and the longest serving AIIAS faculty member, recalled the history of how God has led the institution.

“This is my personal testimony,” said Ragui, “because I have seen how God has always brought the right leader at the right time.” Illustrating his talk with slides of the six previous AIIAS presidents, Ragui expressed confidence in the process of God’s leading Guptill to serve as the next AIIAS president.

Dr. Eugene Hsu, vice president of the General Conference and chairman of the Management Committee of AIIAS, emphasized God’s leading in the life of Dr. Guptill, who has served in educational leadership positions in Asia for over 21 years, most recently as the education director of the Southern Asia-Pacific Division (SSD) of the world-wide church.

In his dedicatory address, Hsu explained, “this service is more than a time for change in leadership. It is a time for establishing the next level or direction of vision for the institution. This is a critical point in the history of AIIAS as it faces a world that is ever changing and the challenges that are ever increasing, both inside the church and in society. But I am pleased that we have found the right individual to lead AIIAS into the twenty-first century in the person of Dr. Stephen Guptill.”

In his acceptance speech, Guptill reminded the audience of the role AIIAS plays in preparing world-class leaders. “This is a great university with a wonderful heritage, of which I am proud to be a part. The alumni of the seminary and graduate school hold prestigious positions around the world, including university presidents, world church education leaders, and health professionals. . . .

“The true measure of leadership and success is how well we can fulfill the mission of the church, and the plans God has for this institution,” Guptill continued, “and I realize what a privilege we have to prepare Christian leaders for service to the whole world.”

The service of dedication and installation began with a flag processional featuring the 45 countries represented by the faculty, staff and students of AIIAS. Musical anthems presented by AIIAS Junior Academy children, under the direction of Mrs. Margaret Whidden, and the AIIAS International Ladies’ Choir, directed by Mrs. Mi Hyang Song, enriched the program, as did trumpet voluntaries by Dr. Ron Vyhmeister.

At the special request of the new AIIAS President, soloist Dr. Demuel Dee Berto, sang “Find Us Faithful,” following a prayer of dedication by Pastor Alberto Gulfan, president of the Southern Asia-Pacific Division.

Representatives from the world church, along with delegates from SSD, community leaders, faculty, staff, and students, as well as the greater AIIAS community attended the service, which was the highlight of a series of special events that weekend.
Excerpts from the first Chapel presentation by the new AIIAS President, Dr. Stephen Guptill, on January 9, 2007

I am delighted to be on this campus. Thank you for your warm welcome. Because I am new, there is much that I have to learn about this institution and about you.

Let me share a few things with you this morning to help you know some of my first thoughts and dreams I have for AIIAS . . .

AIIAS must be a place of spiritual nurture for the staff, faculty, students and families who live, work and study here. Everything else we do loses its meaning and value if we are not rooted and growing in our walk with God.

AIIAS must be mission driven. We are not just giving or getting an education at AIIAS, we are preparing to carry the Three Angels' Message to the world. We are training to better fulfill the mission of the church by our efforts here. Every class, every project, every assignment should enable and empower us to address that essential work in a better way.

AIIAS must be an institution of excellence. It was established to be an institution with international standards and faculty located here in Asia. Our continued existence is based on this characteristic . . . We best serve the church and the institutions that rely on us for their leaders by offering top quality education.

Excellence means top faculty, quality learning resources, and learning environments. So I expect that one of my great challenges will be to identify and recruit great teachers and personnel. . . . Continued on page 13
“From AIIAS to Andrews”

When Ranko Stefanovic arrived at AIIAS, he was determined to learn English. Getting up at 4 a.m. every day, the Bosnian-born pastor walked around the campus for two hours, trying to memorize a list of 20 new words for the day.

“While sitting in class or reading a book, I would write down the most frequently used words,” he recalls. “Then I would go to the dictionary, write their meanings, and add them to my list for memorization.” The hard work paid off and after a year Ranko had become fluent in English.

Ranko first heard about AIIAS from his brother, Zdravko, who was teaching Old Testament classes at the AIIAS Theological Seminary at the time. “I didn’t know what to expect when I first arrived at AIIAS,” said Ranko. “But I found the people very friendly, and it was a wonderful opportunity to meet people from different countries and to become acquainted with other cultures.”

Three months after arriving at AIIAS, which was then located on the campus of Philippine Union College (now Adventist University of the Philippines), Ranko’s wife, Estera, and children Vladimir and Zeljka, joined him. The children attended the elementary school on campus and picked up English very quickly.


“I found AIIAS to be a very strong institution,” he recalls. “We had a very good faculty there and I really appreciated the academic side.”

After graduation from AIIAS in 1990 with his master’s degree, Ranko went to Andrews University in Michigan, U.S.A. for doctoral work, completing his Ph.D. in New Testament in 1995. While working on his dissertation on the Book of Revelation, he also taught classes on this book at the Seminary at Andrews.

Moving from the U.S. to Canada in 1996, Dr. Stefanovic taught classes and chaired the Religion department at Canadian University College until he returned to Andrews in 1999 to teach in the Department of Religion and Biblical Languages in the University’s College of Arts and Sciences. He was recently made chair of this department.

Having a special interest in Revelation, Stefanovic wrote a 670-page commentary, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, now used in Adventist colleges across North America as the standard textbook on the subject.

Having also written a number of scholarly articles, Dr. Stefanovic presents seminars across North America and Europe on Revelation as well as other Biblical topics.

Although he enjoys teaching, Ranko has never forgotten that he is also an ordained minister. “I am a teacher and an ordained pastor. This twofold aspect of my ministry defines all of my teaching,” he said. “We cannot separate teaching from pastoral ministry—they are inseparable and must go together.”

Ranko has also never forgotten his experience at AIIAS. “I cherish the very good times that I spent there. My time in Asia added to my life experience something that I deeply cherish. Many times when I teach in class, I use my experiences there to make a point. AIIAS has a special place in my heart.”
From Islam to AIIAS
By Daniel Wahlen

Samuel Bangura, from Sierra Leone, is a Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.) student at AIIAS. He grew up in a region of Africa where Islam is quite popular. His parents were good Muslims, who went to the mosque regularly to pray.

In his hometown of Patifu/Mayeppoh is a Seventh-day Adventist church and school. As a little boy, Samuel remembers sitting outside the school door listening to the lessons until the teacher saw him and invited him in. After a few lessons, the teacher spoke with Samuel’s parents, who decided to allow him to attend.

At the church school, Samuel was encouraged to attend the Adventist church on Sabbath, where he continued to learn about Adventism. He enjoyed the church and became active in many of its activities. His church involvement drew him closer to the Adventist faith and he decided to be baptized. Surprisingly, his parents did not try to prevent him from being baptized, saying that “Adventism and Islam are too similar, particularly in diet, to find much fault.”

Immediately following his graduation from the Adventist school, Samuel’s family moved and he was sent to a Roman Catholic school. Because the new school did not accept all of his credits, Samuel had to repeat the previous year’s work. Seeing how well he performed, the school offered him a scholarship. There was only one condition—he must be baptized into the Catholic church. But Samuel would not leave Adventism just for a scholarship, so he decided to attend a government-run secondary school instead. Pressure to renounce his Christian faith was strong, but Samuel remained faithful to the principles he learned at the Adventist school.

Upon graduation from high school, someone offered Samuel a full scholarship to study at Valley View Adventist College in Ghana, which he gladly accepted. After two years, Samuel moved Nigeria, where he completed a major in religion and a minor in business administration at the Adventist Seminary of West Africa.

This was also where he met Lilian, who happened to be the sister-in-law to the president of the mission where Samuel was hired as an accountant, eventually becoming the mission treasurer. As often as possible, Samuel visited Lilian, who was staying at the president’s home. After five years of courting, Samuel and Lilian were married in 1999.

In 2004, while Samuel was on business in Singapore, Pastor Mark Chan told Samuel about AIIAS. As an AIIAS graduate, Pastor Chan highly recommended the school, saying it was “well organized, professional, and yet very affordable.”

Upon returning to Sierra Leone, Samuel discussed with his wife the possibility of going to AIIAS to study for an M.B.A. degree. To raise money for airfare, they sold their property and asked friends and relatives for help.

In June 2005, Samuel and Lilian arrived at AIIAS. He smiles as he remembers his first course at AIIAS, “Organizational Behavior.”

“I was asked to write a term paper, and present it in class. I was so tense, nervous, and afraid of the program, because AIIAS is a university, very high class, and I wondered how I was going to cope at this very high level. It went well though, I got a good grade, and that gave me confidence.”

Because of his academic achievements, Samuel is one of the recipients of the Gunawan scholarship—a fund set-up specifically for business students at AIIAS.* As part of his program, Samuel also works in the AIIAS Advancement office where he has been instrumental in setting up an alumni database and serves as the advertising manager for Flags.

Elected by his peers as president of the M.B.A. club, Samuel sits on the business faculty committee as a student representative, and is also active on the public relations committee.

After completing his studies at AIIAS, Samuel plans to return to his homeland where he hopes to teach and to start his own business in micro-credit financing.

Samuel recommends AIIAS to friends and colleagues, sending them the Academic Bulletin and Flags magazine.

“AIIAS is the best place in the world to study,” he says. “I am very glad I decided to come to AIIAS and have no regrets. Being here is a great experience—meeting other people from around the world and gaining an excellent academic and practical work experience.”

*Samuel is grateful to God, and to those who provide funds for student scholarships. Many students depend on scholarships in order to study at AIIAS. If you are interested in supporting worthy students, please send an email to flags@aiias.edu or write to the AIIAS Advancement Office, P.O. Box 038, Silang, Cavite 4118, Philippines.
A team of seven AIIAS faculty visited China from October 16 to 27, 2006 as part of a growing friendship with church members there. The trip, organized by Dr. Robert Wong of the Chinese Union Mission, included visits by the delegation to churches and seminars in Hong Kong, Beijing, Nanjing, and Shanghai and meetings with top religious officials.

Dr. Stephen Guptill, President of AIIAS, underscored the significance of this visit. “AIIAS was happy to observe the level of academic interest in China and we would be pleased to pursue a friendship with leaders and educators there.” Reflecting on the possibility of further visits, he added: “It’s been a personal interest of mine to visit China and to learn more about its country, culture, and people and I would be happy to see this relationship grow.”

Dr. Joel Musvosvi, dean of the AIIAS Theological Seminary, preached on the “Prodigal Son in the Book of Revelation” at the Adventist worship service at the Guang Wa Shi church in Beijing. “What a wonderful privilege it was to share with our brothers and sisters in China,” Musvosvi observed.

At the conclusion of the service, those visiting for the first time were invited to join the Bible class. Of the more than 1,100 in attendance, more than 30 came forward. Hundreds stayed by in the afternoon for the Bible class. Afterward, young people listened to presentations by Dr. Jim Park, an applied theology professor at AIIAS, and he and the other visiting AIIAS professors informally answered the young people’s questions about practical Christianity on into the evening hours.

Christianity entered China under the Tang dynasty in the seventh century but it never became widespread until recently. Today there are 16 million Chinese Protestants officially reported worshipping in 15,000 churches and meeting points. In Beijing alone, the delegation saw five new churches, each seating over a thousand people. Wu Weiqing, a doctoral student of AIIAS Seminary, pastors one of these. His wife Ruth, also an AIIAS graduate, teaches at nearby Yanjing Theological Seminary.

The group from AIIAS was warmly received by Rev. Yu Xin Li, Chairman of the Beijing Christian Council and Three Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM) and President of Yanjing Seminary. During an informative discussion about the challenges pastors face in China, Rev. Yu extended a generous invitation for AIIAS professors to come and give lectures. In addition, preliminary arrangements were made for an exchange of scholarly journals. “This is a trip of ‘firsts,’” remarked Pastor Robert Wong. “Almost everything about this visit was never possible before.”

One of these firsts was a meeting with the Rev. Dr. Cao Sheng-jie, President of the national Chinese Christian Council located in Shanghai. After showing an informative video on Protestant Christianity in China, she shared with the group more specifically about the challenges the church faces. “We are united as Christians,” said Rev. Dr. Cao, “but unity does not mean uniformity—we still have diversity. People are free to choose how to worship. Communion is held every week in some churches and others have footwashing.” As another Chinese pastor noted, “China is so diverse. It’s impossible to feed China at one table.”

One of the greatest challenges, according to many in China, is a
shortage of qualified church workers. Among the educational institutions the delegation visited was the Jiangsu Bible School, where they were received by the Rev. Xin Yi An, chairman of the TSPM of Jiangsu. Because the church is growing so rapidly, the training of lay workers is also important to help Christians remain faithful to the teachings of the Bible. According to officials there, one way the AIIAS Seminary can help is by sending professors to give lectures.

Among China’s 18 theological seminaries, the delegation visited the national seminary in Nanjing which is currently being expanded from its present capacity of 160 students to serve up to 1000 in their undergraduate and graduate programs. Because of this, there is a need to hire new faculty as well as to develop existing faculty. The seminary also publishes a number of important journals, including the quarterly *Nanjing Theological Review*. Selected articles from this journal are translated into English and appear in the annual *Chinese Theological Review*. Copies of these journals were presented to the AIIAS delegation and Nanjing Seminary will be receiving from AIIAS recent issues of the *Journal of Asia Adventist Seminary*. Officials from both the Nanjing Seminary and Jiangsu Bible School expressed interest in AIIAS’s English Center (which prepares students for graduate-level study) as well as the English language program for children attending AIIAS Junior Academy.

Toward the end of the visit, the Rev. Dr. Cao expressed the hopes also of the AIIAS delegation: “We desire your understanding and better fellowship with you,” she said. “We must understand each other as Christians and also those of other religions.” From the perspective of those from AIIAS who were there, this first visit was an important first step in that direction.

Looking Ahead

After returning to AIIAS, the delegation discussed ways to follow up this growing friendship. Among their recommendations were:

(1) Prepare AIIAS students from China so that they have a better understanding of the unique situation there and will be more effective when they return
(2) Seek further contact and dialogue with seminaries and Bible schools in China, especially where Adventists attend
(3) Continue to nurture relations with the CCC and TSPM
(4) Establish a special China collection of books, journals, and other materials, including cultural studies that have been done in China so that professors traveling to China may have a better understanding in advance of their visit;
(5) Pay special tribute to the Chinese Union Mission and the team they sent with us, as well as to the Northern Asia-Pacific Division of the church, acknowledging the wonderful hosting, food and accommodations, planning, and financial support that made this groundbreaking trip possible.
News and Development

Celebration Marks Ground Breaking
By Ivy Ng

The dream of having a building, whereby a truly worshipful experience could be felt, came one step closer to reality on Nov. 10, 2006 at the AIIAS hilltop. A colorful groundbreaking and thanksgiving ceremony was held to celebrate God’s goodness and power in providing a major portion of funds for a much anticipated new building on campus.

The new structure will not only serve as a place of worship, but also will house a preaching/media lab, classrooms, social hall, and other urgently needed facilities.

Dr. G.T. Ng, then secretary of the Southern Asia-Pacific Division (SSD), made the initial personal contact with a major donor. Dr. Ng remarked that “worship is an essential part of higher education at AIIAS and we are confident that the new building will promote spirituality and deepen our commitment to discipleship in Christ....The new building will also be a center of fine arts as well a place for academic learning and will enhance the nurture and training of our students for the ministries of Christ, which are truly central to the mission of AIIAS.”

This dream was made possible through the generous donation of a major donor, the founder of Crocodile International Ptd Ltd, based in Singapore, philanthropist Dato’ Dr. Tan Hian-Tsin and his wife, Tan Sui-Lan. Through their gracious gift of US$300,000, together with matching funds from the General Conference and the Southern Asia-Pacific (SSD) and Northern Asia-Pacific (NSD) Divisions, as well as donations from AIIAS Seventh-day Adventist church members and others, the new building is nearing reality.

Other participants in the groundbreaking ceremony included Dr. Eugene Hsu, General Conference vice president and chair of the AIIAS Management Committee, Pastor Roscoe J. Howard III, secretary of the North American Division, Pastor Alberto Gulfan, president of SSD, Dr. Stephen Guphill, president of AIIAS, Mr. Keith Heinrich, SSD treasurer, and Dr. Miguel Luna, ministerial director of NSD. Representing Dato’Dr. Tan and the AIIAS Church were Mrs. Ivy Ng, chair of the AIIAS church fund raising committee, and Pastor Eliezer Barrientos, senior pastor of the AIIAS Church.

You Can Be Part of the Dream:

While three-fourths of the needed funds have been raised, the remaining US$150,000 is still needed for completion of the building. If you feel God is calling you to contribute to this much needed center, please contact Gina Wahlen by email at flags@aiias.edu.

In addition, donations may be sent to AIIAS, c/o General Conference of S.D.A., 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904, U.S.A. Please mark checks for the AIIAS Building Fund. More information is available at www.aiias.edu/campus/church/fundraising/index.html
General Conference VP Speaks at March Graduation

Ted N.C. Wilson, a general vice president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, was the commencement speaker at the March 2007 graduation ceremony. Dr. Wilson was elected as a general vice president in July 2000 during the General Conference Session in Toronto. His 32 years of church work includes serving as secretary, and prior to that as departmental director of the Africa-Indian Ocean Division in Abidjan, Cote d’Ivoire (1981-1990), associate secretary of the General Conference (1990-1992), president of the Euro-Asia Division in Moscow, Russia (1992-1996), and president of the Review and Herald Publishing Association (1996-2000) in Hagerstown, Maryland USA. He is an ordained minister and served in the metropolitan New York area as a pastor in the Greater New York Conference from 1974-1976 and as assistant director and then director of Metropolitan Ministries (1976-1981). He holds a master of divinity degree from Andrews University, a master of science in public health degree from Loma Linda University School of Public Health, and a doctor of philosophy degree in religious education from New York University.

Dr. Wilson is married to Nancy Louise Vollmer, a physical therapist, and the couple has three young-adult daughters; Emilie Louise, Elizabeth Esther married to Pastor David Wright, and Catherine Anne.

The 56 graduating members of the March 2007 class chose as their theme and motto: “Growing in Christ, Conquering New Horizons.” Class officers include Kaserekha Muthavyal Wa-Mbaleka, President; Andri Daimbani, vice-president; Mel Hutabarat, secretary; Francis Hutabarat, treasurer; Davidson Razafiarivony, class pastor; Franklin Hutabarat, music coordinator; Nery Vasquez, class decorations coordinator; and Kim Bong Kyu, class photographer coordinator.

Drs. Eustacio and Myrtle Penniecook are the class sponsors, and Mrs. Glenys Perry is chair of the graduation committee.

The class includes representatives from 15 countries, including Chile, China, Congo, Indonesia, Korea, Madagascar, Myanmar, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Rwanda, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, and the U.S.A.

Fifteen graduates received Master of Ministry degrees, six Master of Divinity degrees, and one the Master of Arts in Religion degree. One received a Certificate in Business Administration, and seven the Master of Business Administration degree. Eleven candidates received the Master of Arts in Education, and two the Master of Public Health degree. One candidate received the Education Specialist degree. Three will receive the Doctor of Ministry degree, and seven the Doctor of Philosophy degree—three in religion, and four in education.

Building financial support for AIIAS must be an important part of my agenda. We need to establish endowments which support faculty positions in each of the schools. We need student scholarships that will aid students in paying the high price of top quality education.

I am very interested in nurturing the fine arts as part of the educational experience of AIIAS. I would like to see AIIAS offer a fine arts series with a yearly calendar of presentations drawing the best talent from our community as well as the best of our own campus talent. . . . I don’t intend that this should be a financial drain to the institution but more like a sweet seasoning to a wonderful meal of learning.

Everyone is important to the function and success of AIIAS. I have been impressed with the staff I have already met at AIIAS. I want to affirm the importance of the role of our campus staff. Keep up the good work. Remember, you are serving God in the tasks you do.

People are the most important asset AIIAS has. Faculty, you are the heart of our campus. Your loving, caring and yet professionally demanding contributions are vital to AIIAS. Your efforts here are core and I am committed to supporting you as our primary providers.

Students, you are important to our campus as well. I am a very firm believer in the collegial concept of higher learning. Unlike the elementary school where students come like empty vessels to be filled with learning from their teachers, graduate education is based on the concept of a community of scholars and a rich learning environment where students and teachers interact in guided learning experiences. In this model, a greater responsibility is placed on the student in the learning process.

As we stand at the start of a new year, let’s consider again the priorities and essentials of our personal lives. . . . We should not forget how God has led us in the past—How He established this institution, guided in its development, bringing the right leaders, donors, students, and faculty to this place.

One of my favorite authors said, “We have nothing to fear for the future, unless we forget how God has led us in the past.”

As we make our resolutions for this year and for the future, let’s put God first in our plans. Let’s put God first in our families. Let’s put God first in our personal lives. Let’s keep our mission clear. All that we have, all that we are, all that we hope to be is in God’s hands.
Cultural Night
The Tradition Continues

Each year the AIIAS Student Association and the Office of Student Affairs produce an exciting evening of culture, showcasing many of the national groups represented on campus.

This year ten cultural groups participated in the “Different Origins Same Destiny” program. Hosted by Nicola Wieland, Gay Tubales, Donald Odondi and Rubert Vimahi, the evening included performances and cultural trivia questions for the audience.

The Indonesians started the program with an elaborate form of traditional storytelling using masks and costumes. The Japanese delighted the crowd through their creative use of “Japanese Tamasudare”—special sticks used to create many designs, including the AIIAS logo! A short video featuring the various cultures of Africa was shown before the North American group sang patriotic songs accompanied by stunning nature slides of the U.S. and Canada.

The Europeans involved the audience in a Swiss peasant’s song entitled, “Es Burebuebeli mani nid” (A peasant boy I do not like). While singing the refrain everyone was invited to link arms with their neighbor and sway side to side.

“Balancing” plates on sticks was a special feature of the Chinese presentation, followed by the breathtaking beauty of the Korean fan dance.

The Latino group presented “Virgenes Del Sol” featuring the “Quena,” a traditional wind instrument from the southern region of South America, along with guitar, maracas, and bombo. Individuals in the audience were invited to come on stage and participate in the Indian group’s lively performance.

The evening closed with a colorful presentation from our host country, the Philippines, featuring couples from various islands and provinces of the vast archipelago that forms the country.
The sun shone brightly that Sunday morning, October 29, 2006. As the birds sang me awake and I began to regain consciousness, I suddenly remembered with excitement why we were here in Thailand. Graduation! It all seemed like a dream. Five years earlier, a group of Thai students had begun their class work in the only Distance Learning Center with translations currently being run by the AIIAS School of Graduate Studies (SGS). Though our Thai is not fluent (it doesn’t exist, actually), yet we had come to know and love these committed teachers from Thailand through our intense summer programs. We had come to appreciate and depend on our translators, and to enjoy Thai food as well as the wonderful Thai hospitality and sense of humor. Now they had completed all their requirements and would be graduating with the Master of Arts in Education degree, most with a double emphasis: Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Administration.

Earlier in the year, when the DLC coordinator had asked me whether we could hold a ceremony in Thailand, rather than asking all 25 graduates to fly to the Philippines for the commencement service, I was filled with misgivings. But the administration was supportive, and there we were, with all the diplomas stacked in my suitcase and their robes and hoods hanging in readiness.

On Sabbath, the Mission President, Pastor Rungsit Sattayavaksakool, gave the dedicatory address and various graduates presented the Sabbath School program.

As I prepared for the ceremony to be held in the Bangkok International Church on Sunday morning, I reflected on the changes in Thailand in the years since this program began. The Adventist schools had grown larger and more sophisticated. My students had moved up into positions of leadership and responsibility. Some are now married. The church and government leadership has changed. But the Lord’s work continues. As the trumpet sounded and the graduates filed in and took their places, I felt proud. Proud to be a part of the Lord’s work. Proud to have contributed in a small way to equipping workers to serve the church. Proud of these youth, their talents, their creativity. Dr. Graeme Perry, Dean of SGS, addressed the graduates, charging them to reach out and touch lives and save souls for God’s kingdom. The sincerity on the faces of these students as we prayed together, committing their talents and their ministry into God’s hands was the kind of reward that money could never buy.
Welcome to the Guptills

Dr. Stephen and Peggy Guptill are familiar faces at AIIAS. Having lived nearby at the Southern Asia-Pacific Division headquarters for the past 11 years, the Guptills have frequented the AIIAS campus—attending the AIIAS church, leading out in the Junior Sabbath School division, and meeting with various faculty members from time to time. Now the Guptills have officially moved onto campus, though Peggy continues her work as an executive assistant to the associate treasurer at SSD.

Dr. Guptill has served in various capacities in Asia for over 23 years. He was assistant professor of theology and chair of the Health Education department at Hong Kong Adventist College from 1974-1980. Being an ordained minister he also served as the pastor of the college church. After completing a Doctor of Education degree in Educational Administration and Leadership from Loma Linda University in California, U.S.A., Dr. Guptill served as vice president for public relations, alumni, recruitment and development at Pacific Union College, also in California.

In 1990 he and his family returned to Asia where he served as president of Bangladesh Adventist Seminary and College. Beginning in 1995, Dr. Guptill worked in the Education department of SSD, serving as Director of Education since 1997. As a musician, Dr. Guptill enjoys collecting and playing folk instruments. He also enjoys photography and computers, as well as collecting stamps, currency, wooden ducks, match boxes, and shells. He and his wife, Peggy, who have been married since 1970, have two grown children—Christopher Scott, a computer graphics designer at Loma Linda University Press, and Wendy Raylene, a missionary nurse serving in Palawan, Philippines.

Welcome to the Cloutens
By Chantal Klingbeil

The word “retirement” is often associated with rocking chairs and quiet stay-at-home days. However, for head librarian Keith Clouten and his wife Ngaire, this is by no means the case. They have volunteered to cross the ocean to come and share with AIIAS their wealth of knowledge and experience.

Keith and Ngaire are no strangers to world travel. Keith is an Australian by birth and Ngaire is from New Zealand. They have worked in Australia, Canada, and at Andrews University in the USA. Since their official retirement they have also served as volunteers in Ghana and at the Middle East University in Lebanon.

While director of the James White Library at Andrews University, Keith contributed to librarianship in Adventist educational institutions by leading in the formation of the Adventist Library Information Cooperative (ALICE) and Services to Adventist International Libraries (SAIL). Keith also broke new ground in the library’s arrangement of Adventist books, including E.G. White books, by expanding the Library of Congress classification scheme.

Keith sees his particular contribution at AIIAS as working with our librarians in creating a vision and plan for the Leslie Hardinge Library’s future development.

Keith and Ngaire will be returning to Lacombe in Alberta, Canada in May where daughter Linelda and her family live. Their other daughter, Kerrie and family, live in Texas. AIIAS is grateful to the Cloutens for sharing their expertise as well as for their wonderful example of service as a way of life even in their retirement years.
“Growing In Christ”
Theme For Seminary Forum

Over 200 church administrators from the Southern Asia-Pacific Division (SSD) headquarters, as well as from unions and conferences, along with pastors, theology professors and students attended the 2006 AIIAS Theological Forum held on campus Oct. 29-31. The annual Forum, organized by the AIIAS Theological Seminary, featured presentations from AIIAS professors and students as well as from church administrators.

Speaking on this year’s theme, “Growing in Christ: Conversion, Baptism, and Growth,” Pastor Albert Gulfan, Jr., SSD president, officially opened the forum Sunday morning. Later that morning, Dr. G.T. Ng, then secretary of SSD, gave the keynote address with the provocative title, “Infanticide: The Phenomenon of the Newly Baptized.”


Pastor Rick McEdward, Global Mission Director for SSD, gave the morning devotional on Monday, followed by a presentation from the dean of AIIAS Theological Seminary, Dr. Joel Muvosvsi, entitled “Baptism in the New Testament.”


The last day began with a devotional from Dr. Reuel Almocera, associate dean of the seminary. Dr. Gerald Klingbeil, professor of Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near Eastern Studies, gave a presentation on “Empty Forum or Vital Teacher? The Role of Ritual in Spiritual Growth and Nurturing.” Seminary assistant professor Chantal Klingbeil presented, “New Life after Baptism . . . But What Culture?”

A joint presentation was given by Ph.D. in Religion-candidate Noel Nadado and a School of Graduate Studies associate professor, Dr. Shawna Vyhmeister, on “Why Christians Convert to Islam: A Filipino Perspective.”

Dr. Aecio Cairus, professor of Systematic Theology, presented a paper on “Church Growth or Character Growth?: The Meaning of a Famous Ellen White Statement.”

The forum’s final presentation, entitled “Equipping Local Church Elders and Pastors: A Strategy for the Assimilation of New Converts,” was given by Dr. Benonie Llanto, president of South Philippine Adventist College.

The 2007 Theological Forum, to be held at the end of October, is being jointly organized by the AIIAS Theological Seminary and the Adventist Theological Society.

SGS Forum Gives HEED
By Glenys Perry

“Higher Education Empowering Development” (HEED), was the theme of the School of Graduate Studies (SGS) annual forum, held Nov. 16-18. The forum was jointly sponsored by SGS and the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), Philippines. This was the first time an SGS forum committee has worked with an allied organization, demonstrating the value of cooperation with agencies for empowering development.

Five international speakers, in addition to local personnel, delivered keynote addresses and presentations, along with a series of workshops which ran concurrently with some of the main sessions.

The Forum was officially opened by Dr. Stephen Guptill, AIIAS president. Following was a keynote address by Dr. Ron Mataya, originally from Malawi and currently Chair of the Department of Global Health, Loma Linda University. He spoke on ways in which higher education, and schools of public health in particular, can empower development in needy communities.

Two brothers from Argentina, now working in different parts of the world, also gave presentations at the forum. Mr. Ronald Kuhn, director of ADRA-Thailand, addressed political and ideological issues in development, while Dr Wagner Kuhn, associate director of the Institute of World Mission at Andrews University in Michigan, U.S.A., gave presentations on “The Gospel as Holistic Mission: The Challenges and Opportunities of Contextualizing Relief and Development” and “The Role of the S.D.A. Church in Relief and Development.”

Dr. Kuhn also spoke for the Sabbath worship hour, asking “Does Your Professional Life Reflect the Face of God?”

Professor Reveleino Garcia, from Philippine Christian University, along with three AIIAS professors from the Business and Public Health departments, reported on issues and research related to development and on AIIAS student involvement in outreach activities.

The ADRA workshops were coordinated by Mr. Göran Hansen, director of ADRA-Philippines. One workshop, conducted by Mrs. Annalyn Ignacio-Bruce, addressed how to prepare project proposals. Annalyn also told of her conversion to Adventism, which was a direct result of her employment in the Sudan by ADRA.

A total of 158 participants registered for the three-day forum, including ADRA-Philippines coordinators from twenty provinces and seven staff members from the head office in Silang, Cavite.
AIIAS Hosts NOCEI

In January, AIIAS hosted for the first time the research committee meeting and research seminar of the Network of CALABARZON Educational Institutions (NOCEI). The group meets monthly to establish collaboration for research consulting services and to hold colloquia for research dissemination. AIIAS joined NOCEI a year ago, appointing Dr. Eric Nasution as its representative.

Presentations were given by Dr. Dolf Oberholster, who outlined the research structures, policies, and program of AIIAS, including its institutional linkages and recent research, and by Dr. Shawna Vyhmeister, who spoke on “Writing With Integrity.”--Glenys Perry

LLU Partners with AIIAS

Every summer, faculty and students of the Integrated Community Development (ICD) class of the Global Health Department of Loma Linda University (LLU) School of Public Health visit developing countries for field experience. In the past, the department had been taking students to a different country every year but last year they decided that in the future, they would work at only two or three sites.

According to Dr. Ron Mataya, chair of the department, the Philippines featured prominently and was ultimately chosen as one of these sites. Thus, while visiting AIIAS last November as the keynote speaker for the Higher Education Empowering Development (HEED) Forum, he met with the AIIAS Department of Public Health faculty to discuss the possibility of their hosting groups from LLU. The idea met with hearty approval.

The plan involves the Department of Public Health at AIIAS making arrangements for faculty and students from Loma Linda to meet with local health care organizations to give health lectures and presentations, and to assist with community projects, as well as arranging for local travel, accommodations, and other needs.

This year, fifteen students and two faculty members from Loma Linda will be at AIIAS from July 22 to Aug. 8. Plans include visiting the World Health Organization headquarters for the Western Pacific Region, the Philippine Department of Health, UNESCO-Philippines, International Rice Research Institute, International Institute of Rural Reconstruction, and other organizations in Metro Manila, as well as provincial and local health units. The group, together with AIIAS public health students, will also be involved in several community development and health promotion projects. Dr. Klaus Irrgang will be the coordinator for this visit. It is anticipated that this developing partnership will lead to annual visits by the Loma Linda group to the AIIAS campus.--Gina Siapco

JAAS Growing Fast

At the end of January appeared the first issue of volume 9 of the Journal of Asia Adventist Seminaries, the biannual peer-refereed academic journal published by the Theological Seminary of AIIAS. Over the past weeks many positive reactions have begun to come back to the editorial team. Renowned academic institutions, such as Yale University and Princeton Theological Seminary in the USA, have already subscribed. Over fifteen journal exchange agreements with prominent academic institutions all over the world have been initiated, including the University of Münster (Germany), the University of Pretoria (South Africa), Calvin Theological Seminary (USA), Northeast Normal University (China), or the University of Lausanne (Switzerland). JAAS is indexed in Index Theologicus (Universität Tübingen, Germany), International Review of Biblical Studies (Brill, Netherlands; Universität Paderborn, Germany), Religious and Theological Abstracts, Old Testament Abstracts, New Testament Abstracts, BibIL (Bibliographie biblique informatisée de Lausanne, Switzerland), Bulletin de Bibliographie Biblique, and THEOLDI (Theological Literature Documented In Innsbruck, Austria). If you need more information about individual subscriptions or institutional subscription contact Emmer Chacon at subscription.jaas@aiias.edu. If you have editorial questions contact Gerald A. Klingbeil at editor.jaas@aiias.edu.--Gerald Klingbeil

Professor Publishes Study

Dr. Gina Segovia-Siapco, chair of the AIIAS public health department, was the primary author of an article appearing in the February 2007 issue of the Public Health Nutrition journal. Entitled “Validation of a food-frequency questionnaire for measurement of nutrient intake in a dietary intervention study,” the article reported the validation of a food frequency questionnaire, designed by Dr. Siapco, that was used to assess nutrient intake during a walnut intervention trial. Findings of the study suggest that this food frequency questionnaire can be used without having to resort to more expensive and time-consuming dietary assessment methods to accurately determine changes in intake of the intervention nutrient, said Dr. Siapco. The questionnaire also demonstrated relatively good intake estimation of some important nutrients in the dietary intervention trial.

Results from the Loma Linda University walnut intervention trial, of which the questionnaire was a part, “suggest the beneficial effects of eating about a handful of walnuts everyday,” according to Dr. Siapco. “The study found that this amount resulted in elevated levels of the essential fatty acid, alpha-linolenic acid (ALA), in the red blood cell membranes which can be heart-protective.”

Correction from the October 2006 issue of Flags:
Noriezl Cam, administrative assistant to Dr. Paoring Ragui, worked for three years as a recruitment assistant (rather than as a tutor) for the Manpower Department of Skills International in Manila, before coming to AIIAS.
M.P.H. Alum Publishes Monographs

Christy Onuiri, an October 2003 M.P.H. graduate, has recently published three project monographs in relation to her work with the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA)-Cambodia. The monographs are entitled: “Hearth Nutrition Pilot Project: Lessons Learned From The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA)”; “Traditional Beliefs and Practices Affecting Pregnancy and Childbearing in Kampong Thom Province, Cambodia”; and “A Study of Two Community Health Volunteer Models in Kampong Thom Province, Cambodia.”

Christy, who has fond memories of her time at AIIAS, is grateful to her professors in the public health department for the valuable training she received while a student here.

Alumnus Pastoring in Switzerland

After graduating from AIIAS in March 2004 with an M.A. in Ministry, Christian Stroeck served for two and a half years as an intern pastor in St. Gallen, Switzerland. Last December he transferred to the capital city of Bern where he serves as an assistant pastor and lives near the mountains. “It’s beautiful scenery and last night we received the first snow,” he wrote. “We are in a very small conference, with only 14 ordained ministers and about 30 churches. We have a small mission group and we try to do lots of outreach. We’d like to establish a new church and I’m giving Bible studies to several people. I’m also involved with the youth, Pathfinders, as well as with older people in the church. It’s very interesting and I like it a lot. In addition, I also serve as a pastor at the conference summer camp and computer camp, where I do the worship.

Congratulations to Alumnus Serving in Thailand

Dr. Boonrat Moolkeo, a 1997 graduate of AIIAS, is currently serving at the Thailand Adventist Mission where he is the director of the Sabbath School, Personal Ministries, and Stewardship departments as well as the secretary of the SDA Association and of the Adventist Church of Thailand Foundation.

His wife, Raveewan Moolkeo, works at the Ekamai International School. The Moolkeos have two grown children who have recently graduated from Mission College—a son who majored in English and a daughter who majored in education and psychology.

Last December, Dr. Moolkeo completed a Ph.D. degree in Philosophy from Assumption University of Thailand, which is the country’s first international university.

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