

**JOAN AND DAN****DR JASTRAM'S CALL**

Pastor Jastram serves as a manager for theological education in Asia, based in Tokyo, Japan. He assists the regional director in mission planning as well as developing, coordinating, and supporting theological educational activities; makes periodic visits to seminaries in the region; and supervises theological educators throughout Asia.



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Religiously “Unreligious” — A Conversation

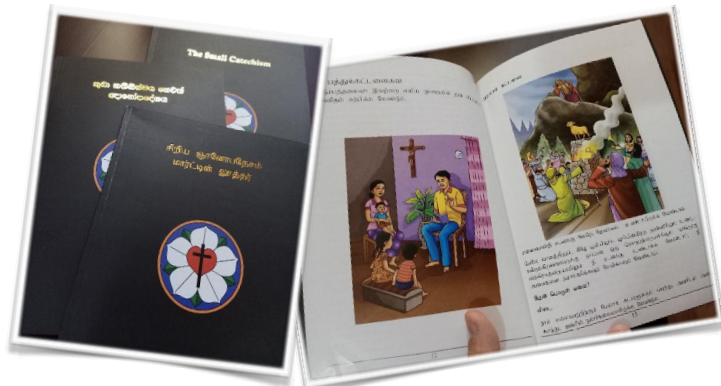


This small, local 300-year-old Shinto shrine is only a five minutes' walk from our home in Tokyo.

A polite Japanese passenger of mid-thirties' age sat in the next reserved seat on an early morning express train. She asked courteously about my trip and background as a foreigner in Japan. Having given the briefest of replies about my early Sunday morning trip to visit a Lutheran church for worship services, I asked about her trip. She was visiting her hometown for a family Buddhist funeral. Hoping to touch sensitively upon, and hear more about, the religious views of this highly—but paradoxically—“non-religious” country of shrines, temples, and Buddhist funerals, I asked whether she thought that all people, regardless of religion, background, or culture, would experience the same—or a different—afterlife, depending on their nationality or religion. After taking a few moments to think about the implications of the question, she surprised me with her intriguing

answer: even though most Japanese don't identify with an organized religion, they do have a “religious” viewpoint of life. They often pray to, and worship, gods and ancestors at shrines, temples, or private altars according to the customary rituals of Japan without any obligation of specific doctrines or membership. Her experience was that Japanese school children aren't even taught about Japan's indigenous religion of Shintoism, even though they do learn something about Buddhism and Christianity. Nevertheless, Japan remains a country steeped in tradition and peppered with shrines, temples, and sculptured images around every corner—all of them frequented according to standard Japanese custom and culture—albeit “non-religiously.” No wonder then, that in Japan, less than 1% or so identify with Christianity as an organized religion. Pray that God's light will shine more brightly in Japan.

Light Unto Salvation



Ceylon Evangelical Lutheran Publishing House recently published catechisms in Sinhala, Tamil, English, Hindi, Mrathi, Punjabi, Gujarati and Bengali.

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

- God's blessing in providing future pastors for our partner church bodies.
- Continued good health while living and working overseas.

GIVE THANKS FOR:

- Missionary safe travels.
- Concord in doctrine and practice as we work with various partner church bodies.
- God's blessings of His clear teaching as witnessed in our Catechism.

PRAISE GOD FOR:

- You! The many congregations and individuals who pray for us, encourage us and support us.

HOW YOU CAN HELP:

With extra projects, travel, and responsibilities come extra expenses. Help us expand our network by prayerfully considering an increase in your financial support as well as recruiting others to partner with us. We believe we will meet our needs when we have an additional 20 sender gifts per month along with 25 new monthly "sustaining" mission senders ranging from \$25/month to \$500+/month. Stay tuned!

NEWSLETTER ARCHIVE:

tiny.cc/dvv9iz

PROJECTS GALORE

I am tremendously excited in my work with the nine LCMS missionary colleagues serving on the Asia theological education team. We are now starting to plan this next cycle of theological education projects in our region. More than seventy projects have been submitted to me for consideration! Not only have our leaders in St. Louis and our Asia office affirmed our emphasis on the need for theological education, but there is strong input from the field that these projects are earnestly needed. Those projects include translation work for bibles, hymnals, catechisms, catechetical helps, doctrinal explanations, theological textbooks, commentaries, OT & NT introductions, church fathers, pastoral continuing education workshops, and support for seminary

faculty development. Keep us in your prayers as we prioritize projects and move forward with them!

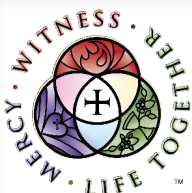
FOR A BILLION PEOPLE

As you may have noted, all of our work in some way relates to the preparation of national pastors for our partner church bodies in Asia so that they can preach and teach in their native language. One of these projects is the collaboration being carried out by our theological educator, [Rev. Dr. Edward Naumann](#), in Sri Lanka with the Ceylon Evangelical Lutheran Church: "Catechisms launched for a billion people" is how they describe recently published catechetical works in eight languages on their [website](#). Because of your support, our LCMS missionaries can continue to bring light where there is darkness.

Next Stop, Baguio!



January 30th I will be heading to the Philippines again to substitute-teach at their seminary for [Rev. Roger James](#)—our LCMS theological educator in Baguio—while he is in the States working towards completion of his doctorate in Missiology. Our partner church there is eager to promote faculty development and Rev. James' hard work is helping to accomplish that in an energetic way.



There are many opportunities to serve as short-term or GEO missionaries. Check out the current list and download an application at lcms.org/service. Click on "Service Opportunities."

To support the LCMS through the work of Daniel Jastram, you may send a tax-deductible gift to:

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
P.O. Box 66861
St. Louis, MO 63166-6861

Make checks payable to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Mark checks "Support of Asia-Jastram."

Gifts can also be given securely online through the LCMS website, on my online giving page at lcms.org/givenow/jastram.