

Asian American Language Ministries Update

April 2007

Asian American Language Ministries (AALM): Goals & Vision

In 1996, the United Methodist General Conference adopted the Asian American Language Ministry to address ministries needs among Asian Americans. The 2000 & 2004 General Conferences continued the Asian American Language Ministry. This study has addressed Asian American ministry concerns in four areas - resource development, leadership development, congregational development, and community development.

Goals for 2005-2008

- Continue implementation of congregational development plans
- Establish 20 new churches and 5 next generation ministries
- Provide culturally relevant Leadership development opportunities in 15 Asian languages, including training for pastors who are serving immigrant congregations
- Expand youth and young adult internships and leadership development
- Develop strategies to encourage Asian American congregations to better serve the spiritual, social, and physical needs of their communities
- Coordinate development of appropriate language worship and educational resources for 15 language groups and facilitate information sharing across the connection
- Identify innovative and cost-effective ways to produce language resources for small constituency groups

Vision: Mandated Areas for the Implementation

- Congregational Development
- Leadership Development
- Community/Outreach Ministry
- Language Resource Development

Developing Next Generation of Leaders: South Asian Youth Convocation

By Sonia Barkett (Waynesburg, PA)



SAY (South Asian Youth) is an annual conference in Illinois in which young South Asian Methodists are brought together to confront the many issues this particular subculture encounters. These issues range from the in home frustrations between generations to the cultural identity conflicts brought upon by society in both the United States as well as in countries of origin. We will begin our fourth year of planning this January using the theme, "Building Bridges." The Planning Committee will work together to design various workshops and activities, which will culminate in August at our conference in Dixon, Illinois. I am a twenty-one year old student at the University of Pittsburgh. I have been on the Planning Committee since January of 2003 when Iwy Patel contacted me to work with her on her new project. Since then, I have benefited a great deal from working with SAY.

First and foremost, the relationships I have developed with the young adults on the Planning Committee and also those who have attended the conference are irreplaceable. I believe all of us take comfort in knowing that there are others in all parts of this nation who deal with the same obstacles. We have attendants from New York and Chicago as well as Iowa, Ohio, and West Virginia. Some of us grew up in highly concentrated areas of South Asians while others grew up in small towns where they are the only South Asians in their churches. These differences provide us with perspectives based on the experiences of others far removed from our own lives.

I believe the success of SAY has been rooted in the struggles of the culture clash. In South Asia, we are a minority because of our religion. For example, Pakistan is approximately only three percent Christian while the rest of the country is predominately Muslim. In the United States, we are a minority not only because of the color of our skin, but also because of the different values of our culture and the family life in which we have been raised. There is generally a looming deviation between what we see and encounter in our daily lives and that of our parents and generations before. SAY strives to encourage these young adults to find themselves, and more importantly find themselves in the Lord while doing so. Our ultimate goal is to provide experiences and teachings in order for South Asian youth to exude confidence in working for the Lord and in reaching for success. I can attest that our conference has been successful. Growing up a minister's daughter in southern West Virginia, I faced many conflicts in discovering exactly who I am supposed to be. Although still in the process, SAY has helped me to realize that these issues are a reality and encouraged me to work through them by finding my faith and keeping it as I go through life.

Congregational Development: First Chinese United Methodist Church in the Greater Atlanta Area

As the only Chinese United Methodist congregation in the greater Atlanta area, First Chinese UMC has been very active in providing a place of worship and community services in the Chinese American community. In the past few years, there has been a rapid growth of Chinese population in this area and the trend is expected to continue. Under the leadership of the Rev. Jiade Wu, who is also a network engineer, the ministry has experienced a rapid growth in the past two years increasing its attendance by three-fold. The target goal for adult attendance in worship by the end of the 2007 is 100. In addition to the spiritual growth opportunities such as worship, Bible study, and fellowship, the church also offers Chinese language and Chinese art classes to minister to the families in the area. This outreach effort has been very well received with participation of more than 40 children on any given Sunday afternoon.



This congregational development project was made possible through a joint partnership with the North Georgia Annual Conference, the Norcross United Methodist Church, and the GBGM/AALM. The North Georgia Annual Conference leadership was intentional in identifying this as a critical ministry of the Church and provided the needed resources to get this ministry off the ground. The Norcross United Methodist Church generously provided the use of the facility and the office supplies and considers this congregation to be a part of the "same family." As all of these entities pooled their resources together to breathe new life into this ministry, the result has been to invite and nurture many Chinese Americans – both new and old Christians – into the family of God. It is truly amazing to see how the Spirit of God is working through Rev. Wu and the leadership of this congregation to reach out to the growing population of Chinese Americans in the greater Atlanta area.

Asian American Language Ministries (AALM): Funded Ministries & Projects for 2005

Cal-Nevada Cambodian Ministries: To support the salary supplement for six Cambodian ministries in Cal-Nevada Conference

Johnson City Laotian UMC, Johnson City, NY: To support the first year funding for salary supplement for the pastor

Fuzhou Speaking Chinese Ministries, New York Conference: To support the development of two Fuzhou speaking Chinese ministries (Flushing and Brooklyn) in New York Annual Conference

Detroit Vietnamese Ministry, Detroit, MI: To support the Vietnamese ministry in the greater Detroit area which has been the mission of the Annual Conference

Louisville Asian American Ministry in Crestwood, KY: To start a new fellowship for Asian American young professionals in Louisville area. The project was jointly sponsored by SEJ Asian American Ministries and AALM

Reno Filipino UMC, Reno, NV: To provide a salary supplement for the pastor

Cal-Nevada Hmong Ministries: To provide salary supplement for Hmong pastors in the conference (including Fresno)

WJ Indochinese Youth Convocation: To support the Indochinese Youth Convocation in the Western Jurisdiction

Bellflower Filipino UMC, Long Beach, CA: To support the development of a new Filipino American fellowship under the leadership of the district superintendent of Long Beach district

Japanese Language Ministry in White Plains, New York: To provide support for salary and outreach ministries for a new ministry for Japanese speaking persons in the greater New York area

Long Beach Cambodian UMC, Long Beach, CA: To support outreach ministries and salary supplement for Long Beach Cambodian UMC

Atlanta Chinese UMC, Atlanta, GA: To provide salary support for the pastor at Atlanta Chinese UMC

Gum Moon Women's Center, San Francisco, CA: To support the program on Domestic Violence for Asian American Women at Gum Moon Women's Center

Ruston Chinese Ministry, Ruston, Louisiana: To support salary supplement for the pastor of the congregation.

Leadership Development for Filipino Americans, Las Vegas: To support the leadership development workshops held at the Filipino National Convocation in Las Vegas

South Asian Youth (SAY) National Convocation: To support the annual gathering of South Asian youth for leadership training, network building, and information sharing

Las Vegas Filipino UMC, Las Vegas, NV: To provide a salary supplement for the pastor of the congregation

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