

“Tow’ring O’er the Wrecks of Time”

By Martin Dicke

It has been a difficult few months. In September, Typhoon Mangkhut devastated parts of Hong Kong, Macau, and Eastern China. Please continue to pray for those affected. Fortunately, all those traveling to a meeting of the LCMS Asia Missionaries in Taiwan arrived safely, although several were not able to attend. I’m not sure why meteorologists named a typhoon after a small, wonderful, and sweet fruit like the mangkhut.

Typhoons are a regular thing in the Pacific. After a typhoon that devastated Macau in the 1800s, Sir John Bowring (1792-1872) visited the area. A literary genius as well as a hymn writer, he was serving as the Governor of Hong Kong. The harbor of Macau had been completely devastated. The only thing that remained standing was one wall of a great cathedral that overlooked the harbor. On top of this wall was an iron cross. This scene inspired Bowring to pen the hymn “In the Cross of Christ I Glory.” Knowing the story makes the next line of the hymn more meaningful” “Tow’ring o’er the wrecks of time.”

We had a similar experience in October. Early on the morning of October 16, the Administration Block of Highland Lutheran International School where we live was burnt down. The only

thing that remained standing was a stone wall with an iron cross on it (at right). While in the midst of the crisis, Marie wrote these messages to immediate family. They describe the situation best:

Thanks for thinking of us. Our days are full of many things that we don’t plan. God sends people with many kinds of needs to our door. The hard part is discerning the validity and urgency of their requests and prioritizing them. At the same time, we have several other projects that we are working on that will provide the other pastors, seminary students, teachers, and school children with the necessary books and other materials to learn about God and His love, grace, and mercy for them.

Then there was another arson attempt the next week:

We have been in crisis mode here. On October 16 at 2:00 am someone intentionally burnt down the Administration Block of Highland International Lutheran School. That included the offices, three classrooms, the library, and bathrooms. Then, on October 24 at 4:00 am there was an arson attempt on another block of buildings. Thank God it was caught in time. There are many accusations and rumors about who is responsible, but no solid proof who has started these fires and what their motive is. At the request of the Governor of the Enga Province, Marty has been working with the teachers and community to address the situation and determine



what the next steps should be. We had no idea this is what we would be doing here. We really need prayers for God’s wisdom, discernment (who we can and cannot trust), and guidance. Classes resumed on Monday, October 29, so please also pray for Deputy Principal Trevina Gima, and School Administrator Suzanne Suiba, the teachers, and the students.

The cross of Jesus Christ is still standing, as it always will!



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