

# Presenters for the 2018 CNH District Missions Conference

**Greg Finke** had been ordained since 1989, spending the last ten years of his pastoral ministry pastoring churches with a 1000 or more in worship. In January 2011 he realized he couldn't remain a senior pastor and do what Jesus was calling him to do. [Dwelling 1:14](#) is one of the results of that. Greg and his wife Susan are neighborhood missionaries in a subdivision in League City, Texas.



**Bolorhuu Ligden** is from Inner Mongolia, China. He is the Executive Director for the Asia Leadership Development Network. He is an entrepreneur with 10+ years in Strategic Planning, market entry for US firms into China and Mongolia, healthcare management, and medical technology sales and service, consulting for both for-profit business and non-profit organizations. He is involved in indigenous Mongolian House Church planting in China and Mongolia, where he was one of the first 50 Mongolian Christians in China. While he was an international student, he also led an international student ministry movement in Tennessee. He is involved with leadership development work in China and Mongolia and various Marketplace Ministries in Asia. Bolorhuu and his wife and two children live in Sacramento.

**Robert Newton** grew up in Napa, California. In 1977, he graduated from Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne, IN, and served as an evangelistic missionary in the Philippines, 1977-83. The Newtons returned to the States in July 1983 for Robert to begin graduate studies at the School of World Mission, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, CA. He received his PhD from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, IL in 1993.

- 1985-1998, professor of world missions, Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne, IN
- 1996-97, while on sabbatical with his family served the Gutnius Lutheran Church, Papua New Guinea under the Board for Mission Services
- 1998-2003, senior pastor, First Immanuel Lutheran Church, San Jose, CA
- 2003 - present, president of the California-Nevada-Hawaii District



**Juanita Alarcon** is the Area Director of Joni and Friends Bay Area-Sacramento and a Behavior Intervention Specialist. She has dedicated the past 10 years to accelerating Christian ministry in the disability community. At a very young age Juanita became an advocate for people with disabilities. Having a mom and a brother who were disabled, gave her the special role of care provider early on. There were many challenges growing up in a family affected by disability, including abandonment. With a broken heart she turned to God and His grace came flooding in. Juanita's life story is about God's redeeming love and divine purpose in our brokenness.



**Doug and Colby Benton:** Doug is the Communications Assistant for the CNH District in helping to oversee the District website and social media platforms. Colby assists in communications and social media efforts at Fair Oaks Presbyterian Church. Doug and Colby have been married for five years and live in Folsom, California with their two children.



**Pastor Jim Beyer** has served the CNH District and St Mark Lutheran Church for more than 30 years. He's in his 3<sup>rd</sup> term as a Vice President on the CNH Board of Directors and has a passion for the continued development of mission perspective and application on a parish level. Known by some as "the tools guy," Jim is always looking for easy to use practices which can be learned and passed on to pastors, church workers and lay people of all ages.

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**Vonnie Carlsen** has been involved in ministry at St. Philip Lutheran in Dublin, CA for 23 years. She served as a Stephen Ministry Leader, Strength Finders Course Leader, Vision Training Team, Choir member, Congregational President, and most recently, is serving on the Outreach Team at St. Philip.

Vonnie first learned of Kids Club at a community service meeting called City Serve. She has led a team of volunteers from St. Philip for two years. Currently, St. Philip is beginning a second club in the Dublin School District.

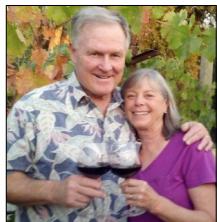


Vonnie is committed to encouraging lay Christians to take up their role as missionaries to their communities, following God's command to "Go ye, therefore," and teach all about Jesus. Vonnie's position at Kids Club as a consultant is to encourage and promote this opportunity to churches in the CNH District. She is also responsible for the smooth operation of six schools in our area.



**Beverly Daily** is President of Kids Club Consultants, Inc. Her ministry is to work alongside local churches who desire to reach their community through public schools. Kids Club is a free after school club, offered one day a week for 1½ hours on the public elementary school campus. X Clubs are free programs offered before school, lunch or after school on the public middle school campus. Beverly began leading a Kids Club in 1993 at her children's local elementary school. From this, Kids Club Consultants was formed, which now provides consulting, training, and support for over 70 churches partnering with public schools, reaching thousands of students.

**Blake Flattley** is a singer, songwriter, liturgist, and worship leader. He has served churches in Southern California, rural Arizona, Houston, and most recently, New York City, leading worship experiences and building bridges into local artist communities. Driven by his passion to help churches understand and integrate liturgy, which when done well, draws us to Christ and preaches the message of the Gospel, Blake founded CommunionArts ([communionarts.org](http://communionarts.org)). CommunionArts is committed to creating training and creative resources and empowering artists to create fulfilling works that enrich their communities. CommunionArts is an affiliate of LINC Ministries International. Blake is a rostered Director of Parish Music and holds a MA in Theology from Concordia, Irvine.



**Ted and Marty Hartman** have been involved in congregational and school ministries as well as Lutheran Marriage Encounter for over 30 years. For the past 10 years they have worked in "Congregational Health, Transitions, and Revitalization" for the CNH District.



**Melissa Karges** served as a missionary to Hungary for six years working as an EFL teacher and ministering to students. She is currently based in Northern Nevada, but she continues to serve Mission of Christ Network as a missionary recruiter, acting liaison to the Hungarian Lutheran Church, and assisting with missionary care. She is passionate about sharing her experiences in mission to inspire others to share the Gospel.



**Michael (Mike) Lange** has been married to Kristi (Peck) Lange since 1988. Mike is a 1988 graduate of Concordia Seminary and has served as an Associate and interim Sr. Pastor in Wayzata, MN and a missionary-at-large in Dixon and Brentwood, CA and most recently Sr. Pastor in Brentwood, CA. He is serving as Executive Director in Missions, assisting the President for the CNH, since August of 2013. Prior to that, he served for three years as a consulting pastor for the CNH District in Revitalization Envisioning and Mission Advancement.

His continuing education has concentrated on seminars and conferences revolving around outreach and church planting. In addition to this, he is a graduate of Pastoral Leadership Institute class of 2002 and Governance Executive Training, also associated with PLI. He has started his D.Min. class work in missiology.

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**Paul Henry Lauaki:** For the last 5 years, Paul has been working as the Assistant Director of a 9-month discipleship program called Master's Commission based out of Phoenix, AZ. While a part of the Phoenix Masters Commission, Paul created new ministries and brought creative ideas. He helped revamp a program that only had 3 students and 1 person on staff when he joined, to now having 4 staff members, and 15 students on average a year. He has now moved back to his hometown of Palo Alto. Together with LINC Bay Area and the support of CNH, he seeks to build on his experience in raising disciples to bring up a generation and a mindset of raising disciples here in the Bay Area.



**John Mehl** was born in Lexington, MO, and grew up in Concordia and Blackburn, MO. He earned an A.A. at St. Paul's College in Concordia, MO, holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Concordia University, Ann Arbor, MI, and received a Master of Divinity degree from Concordia Seminary in St. Louis MO, in 1985. In 2012, he earned a Doctor of Ministry degree from Concordia Seminary with a concentration in missional leadership.

Dr. Mehl served eight years as a parish pastor at St. Paul's in Lincoln, Kansas before being called by LCMS Board for Mission Services to serve as a church planter in Moscow, Russia in 1993. While in Moscow he supervised the "Moscow Seminars" where were an ongoing theological education program for Lutheran pastors. In 2004 he and his family moved from Moscow to Frankfurt Germany, when he began serving with LCMS World Mission as the Regional Director for Eurasia. In 2006, the family moved to Hong Kong, where John served as the Regional Director for Asia until 2013. He is presently the Director of Mission Partnerships and Church Relations at Concordia University, Nebraska where he also teaches missions classes.

On January 1, 2017, Dr. Mehl began serving as the executive director of Mission of Christ Network (MCN), an organization that focuses on training sending and supporting the laity in intentional Gospel proclamation.



**Aaron Putnam** is the city director of LINC Bay Area, a network of individuals, churches and agencies working collaboratively to restore the people of the San Francisco Bay Area through Christ.

In 2007, Aaron was called to Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Hayward, California as a church planter focused on ministry with Hispanics. For the past six years he has served as lead pastor at Good Shepherd working with ministries in English, Spanish, Tigrinya and Oromo.

Aaron graduated from Willamette University with a Bachelor of Science in Biology and from Lewis and Clark College with a Master of Arts in Teaching. After spending five years as a public high school teacher in Oregon, he moved to Guatemala and worked as a volunteer missionary with Lutheran Church of Guatemala for five years. Upon returning to the U.S., he entered Concordia Seminary in St. Louis and graduated in 2008 with a Master of Divinity degree.



**Dominic J. Rivkin** serves as the Executive Director of LINC Los Angeles. This network is blessed by Rev. Rivkin's 20 + years of experience in the development of strategic systems that clarify, align and implement God's vision for His people.

The path to LINC began in a successful career in business development for Siemens Corporation from 1995-2001. It was then that Dominic returned to Concordia Chicago, where he completed his B.A. in Communications with a focus on Group Dynamics. The Rivkin family then relocated to Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, where he entered the Master of Divinity program with an emphasis on Missionary Formation. Rivkin was called as a Mission Developer for the Pacific Southwest District of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod and ordained into the Pastoral Ministry in 2006. Trinity Temecula, a strong family of faith deeply connected with its community, was officially "born" in the spring of 2007.



**Jesse Yow** chairs the Board of Elders at Our Savior Lutheran Ministries in Livermore, California and serves on the Commission on Theology and Church Relations for the LCMS. He recently retired from Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, but still works as a free-lance writer for Concordia Publishing House. Jesse's contributions for CPH include study note author for *The Lutheran Study Bible*, editor for *Faith and Science in a Skeptical Age*, contributing author for *The Christian Difference* (in preparation at CPH), and author of *Standing Firm: A Christian Response to Hostility and Persecution*.