

## Prayer requests from Dr. Jim and Carolyn Brown

ELCA missionaries Dr. Jim and Carolyn Brown serve in Cameroon. Dr. Jim serves as surgical program director at Ngaoundéré Protestant Hospital, part of the health care system overseen by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Cameroon, and as a surgical trainer for residents through a program of the Pan-African Academy of Christian Surgeons. Carolyn

serves as a recovery room nurse and provides wound consultations.

From their April 2010 newsletter to sponsors:

- Thanks for staying connected to us and praying for us. This is always an encouragement to us.
- Thank you for your prayers to find fill-in

surgeons for Jim. There are several different surgeons scheduled to come during the three months we'll back in the U.S. for sponsor visits.

- We covet your prayers for the strength and wisdom to do this job and to do it in a way that brings glory to God and accomplishes God's purposes.

The Browns have six adult children, one son and five daughters. Two of their daughters will be married in 2010.

For a copy of *Prayer Ventures*, the guide to daily prayer for the ELCA's global and outreach ministries go to [www.elca.org/prayerventures](http://www.elca.org/prayerventures).

## While chasing down a sponsorship story, the Runner's Club caught me

By Sue Edison-Swift

Every three months, a generous check for Missionary Sponsorship arrives from the "Prairie Coteau Conference Runner's Club," a women's group from LaBolt, S.D. From 1996–2008, the Runner's Club was a covenant sponsor of the Revs. John and Valerie Peterson, ELCA missionaries in Hong Kong. Since 2008, the Runner's Club is a covenant sponsor of Dr. Jim and Carolyn Brown, ELCA missionaries in Cameroon. In December 2010, the Runner's Club will complete its 15th year of sponsorship, giving \$99,079 in missionary support! What a blessing!

To get "the rest of the story," I e-mailed Dr. Brown and Linda Anderson, the treasurer who sends in the club's quarterly checks. "Dr. Jim" e-mailed Linda and Barb Kromer, the president of the Runner's Club, writing:

Dear Linda and Barb,

I recently received an e-mail from Sue Edison-Swift (Global Mission Support) about doing a feature article on the Runner's Club for their long term, very generous support of missions. My wife, Carolyn, and I have been supported by you since at least October '08 when we came to Cameroon, and maybe even earlier when we were in language school.

As you know, Carolyn and I will be back in the U.S. this summer to visit sponsors. We'll be at the Lutheran Church of our Redeemer in Watertown, S.D., on Sunday, August 8. I am not yet sure what kind of presentations the church has in mind for us, but we think it will be participation in the worship service as well as one or two other planned events where we can discuss the work we are doing in Cameroon. I hope the entire Runner's Club will come. We would love to meet you! My wife and I are both runners (it feels more honest to say *prior runners* since it has been extremely difficult to run where we work in Cameroon). Maybe we can schedule a run together.

Hope to see you in August.

Jim

Linda Anderson e-mailed the next day.

Hello to all of you from the Runner's Club!

You are going to be very surprised when you

hear about the Runner's Club! I wish I could say that we are a group devoted to taking a two-mile run each day, but I would estimate that the average woman supporting our mission effort is about 70 years of age and not physically able. Not that we're not an active and energetic organization ...we are just not focused on running.

We are Women of the Prairie Coteau Conference, one of several Women of the ELCA conferences in the state of South Dakota. Geographically we represent the ELCA congregations and their individual women's organizations in the northeastern part of the state. Most of the congregations in the Prairie Coteau Conference are located in very small communities or in rural areas. Some of the women's groups have less than ten members who attend their congregational meetings. Every year about 140 of us come together as a conference for a spring gathering and a fall retreat.

"Runner's" is more a project than a club.

About 21 Women of the ELCA congregational groups participate in giving to the Runner's Club. For years at my congregation's circle meetings, the same little box with "Runner Club" written on it has been placed on the table around which we gather for Bible study. Women drop in an offering before leaving the meeting.

It is the offerings from these 21 groups of women that support the Browns. Gifts in all sizes come to me, the treasurer, on a quarterly basis. Some checks are as small as \$20 from a small congregation with just a few women. Others from the larger congregations can be as much as \$200 per quarter. We manage to send our commitment to the Browns, \$1,700, every three months. Once earlier this year, the balance in our account was below \$20 just after I wrote the quarterly check!

The Runner's Club was founded 39 years ago by Vavi Amodt of New Effington, S.D. She was inspired by "A Parable," an article that appeared in *Scope*, a forerunner of *Lutheran Woman Today* magazine. The article in the *Scope* told the story of a man who lived well and also gave a portion of what he had toward the work of the Lord. Af-

ter a vision where he saw the faces of those who hungered and wept, he was inspired to set aside an amount of money matching what he spent on such items as pet food, candy and others. The idea spread to his friends and neighbors and, together, they found a way to help meet the needs of others.

Vavi was also inspired by Romans 10:14–15, which reads: "*But how are men to call upon him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without a preacher? And how can men preach unless they are sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the Good News!'*" (Revised Standard Version).

Between the magazine's story and the gospel story, Vavi proposed an idea. She encouraged women to wear stockings with a "runner" in them to women's meetings and circle Bible studies, and then donate the price of new pair of hosiery to sponsor mission work. Vavi noted that matching the cost of other items—coffee, a movie—would be fine, too. She asked us to find our own "motivator" to prompt us to support the important work of missionaries. By each of us doing our part in this way, she knew our feet would be beautiful in spite of stockings with runs.

And that is the story behind the Runner's Club which has continued to support missions through the years. We have a Runner's Club Board which oversees the project. Barb Kromer from Sisseton, S.D., just took over as president and I am the treasurer, completing my last year in that position. At our Spring Gathering in April, the women were pleased to hear that the Browns would be coming to South Dakota. We announced the dates of their visit in Watertown and hopefully some ladies in the area will be able to attend.

God's blessing to all,

Linda Anderson

Sometimes a story just keeps getting better and better and this is one of them. As I read Linda Anderson's e-mail I both "LOLed" (laughed out loud) and got tears in my eyes.

**seeds** for the **parish**

[www.elca.org/seeds](http://www.elca.org/seeds)

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