



LUTHERAN
CHURCH
OF AUSTRALIA

INTERNATIONAL MISSION

BORDER CROSSINGS



global partners · local church

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>> Through long-established relationships, LCA International Mission seeks to equip, encourage, engage in and support the growth of holistic ministry carried out in relationship with our partners overseas and the individuals, congregations and districts of the Lutheran Church of Australia.



Pastor Matt Anker

Assistant to the Bishop
– International Mission
Lutheran Church
of Australia

THEOLOGY IS FOR **MISSION**

It has been an ongoing joy for me to learn about the link between mission and theology. Many of our partner churches know this well, especially those who have rediscovered the beauty and missional power of the gospel as articulated in the Augsburg Confession. When our partner churches ask, 'help us be Lutheran', they are asking for help to be faithful to the word of God and the gospel of Jesus Christ, as they seek to bring the saving work of Jesus into the lives of people both inside and outside of the church. 'Help us be Lutheran' means 'help us be missional'. In this way, we can understand that all theology is, in one sense, about mission.

I was reminded of this a few weeks ago when we commemorated the anniversary of the Presentation of the *Confessio Augustana* (CA) – which we know as the Augsburg Confession. On 25 June 1530, a group of laymen presented the CA to Emperor Charles V and members of the papal court. This confession laid out the biblical foundation for those who were becoming known as Lutherans. Some people even think that June 25 would be a better day to mark the Reformation because this document is so important.

The CA is the first of our confessional writings contained in the Book of Concord and was written largely by Luther's colleague and friend, Philip Melancthon. At the centre of the CA is the article on justification which states: 'our churches teach that people cannot be justified before God by their own strength, merits, or works. People are freely justified for Christ's sake, through faith, when they believe that they are received into favour and that their sins are forgiven for Christ's sake. By His death, Christ made satisfaction for our sins. God counts this faith for righteousness in His sight'.

This article reminds us that the Augsburg Confession was not an abstract theological exercise but, in essence, was about strengthening the mission of the church, to bring the pure gospel of forgiveness and life in Jesus' name to the people. That remains true of all theology today: it is for the sake of God's mission to seek and save. We endeavour to be faithful to the theology of the scriptures, not for their own sake, but for the sake of those whose consciences are burdened by sin and shame, that they may know the joy-filled freedom of forgiveness and life in Jesus' name.

We can learn a lot from our mission partners and their joy-filled appreciation of the theology of the Augsburg Confession. They know that being more firmly grounded in the grace-infused theology of the Lutheran church will help them to be better missionaries. May God grant us this same understanding and joy which flows from the faith that has been handed down to us through the Confessions of the Lutheran church.



500,000 ways stamps make mission possible

Stamps and missions have a lot in common. While one person or one activity may not appear to make much of a difference on their own, so it is with stamps. One stamp and one person may not be significant but many people collecting many stamps can make a great difference, in the support of mission activities.

In 2018 I was privileged to spend 10 days in Papua New Guinea (PNG). I saw the commitment and dedication of men and women who, from a western viewpoint, had very little by way of earthly possessions, but had a burning desire to spread the gospel. That was when my involvement in Stamps for Mission changed from a high interest to a passion.

Many people are involved with Stamps for Mission. Individuals commit anything from an hour per week or month to a number of hours almost daily dealing with postage stamps. I know several people who spend 15-plus hours each week on this project.

As the song says, 'from little things, big things grow'. That is certainly the case with postage stamps as they help spread the gospel. Every year, for more than 80 years, Stamps for Mission has supported mission projects. For the past 20 years, \$13,000 to \$15,000 has been raised annually. By the end of next year, it is anticipated that this program will have grossed more than half a million dollars in fundraising.

This year, Stamps for Mission is supporting:

- The Sprau family, serving in PNG. Your support enables them to give primary care to locals, as well as supporting Bible translators and mission workers.
- BCCM Agape Centre in Malaysia, a day care centre for children with intellectual disabilities. Your support enables children to learn with the help of dedicated and devoted teachers.
- Translation of church rites for Myanmar. Your support will ensure that Lutherans in Myanmar will be

reminded of Jesus' promises and are strengthened in faith for this life and the next.

- Lutheran Highlands Seminary, Ogelbeng PNG, training local pastors in the pidgin dialect. Your support provides practical help to the families of these pastors.
- Saturday Club, run by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thailand Diakonia department. Your support ensures that children from five villages are able to attend regularly.
- Biblical Reconciliation training for the Lutheran Church in Cambodia. Your support will ensure the participants understand reconciling through God's word so that Christ's forgiveness can bring peace and healing.

It is wonderful to imagine how God has been able to use our efforts to further his kingdom and transform people with the gospel.

– **Peter Nitschke**

How can you support this work?

If you would like to donate used stamps to LCA International Mission, please contact Peter, the national Stamps for Mission project director, on 0418 868 103 or at pmnitschke@bigpond.com

How are we joining with God as he transforms people through the gospel?

LCA International Mission thanks God for the blessing the Stamps for Mission program has been, in raising vital funds for the work of projects which share the good news of Christ.

Thankful for faithful FRIENDS IN MISSION

A sentence that best describes my friend and mission partner, Bishop Terry Kee, is the scripture verse from Romans 1:16, 'For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes'.

Since turning away from his Buddhist heritage and becoming a follower of Jesus in his youth, Bishop Terry has devoted his life to passionately sharing the good news of Jesus with people in his home country of Singapore and beyond. After studying at Singapore Bible College and China Lutheran Seminary in Taiwan, Bishop Terry has served as pastor of Bedok Lutheran Church, Jurong Christian Church, Lutheran Church of Our Redeemer and Queenstown Lutheran Church in Singapore, and as a missionary in Thailand for 10 years with his wife Sally Lim. Until the recent assembly of the Lutheran Church in Singapore (LCS), Terry was bishop of the LCS for the past 12 years.

Over these years, he has also played a key role in the leadership of organisations such as the National Council of Churches, Trinity Theological College and the Inter-Religious Organisation (IRO) in Singapore.

As bishop, Bishop Terry has been a keen, active advocate for interfaith dialogue and has become the respected friend of leaders of the many faiths in Singapore.

As a mission partner of the LCA, he has been a great teacher and support as we have built on relationships with Lutheran churches in South-East Asia. Our international mission partnerships have intersected with the LCS through the Mekong Mission Forum, for which Bishop Terry served as moderator for many years, in Thailand and in our shared partnership with the emerging Lutheran Church in Cambodia.

Bishop Terry was instrumental in the translation and publication of the LCA teaching resource *Growing as God's People* into Chinese. This translation is now used widely in Singapore, the US and Australia.

With his vast general knowledge and the gift of story-telling Bishop Terry has used these skills to engage many people, young and older, in hearing the good news of Jesus Christ.

My favourite memories of Bishop Terry include sitting with him and Bishop John Henderson, together with the Muslim Imam, in a local mosque in Singapore and seeing the deep respect and understanding that Bishop Terry and the Imam offered each other. And watching young children keenly interacting with Bishop Terry as he shared the story of Jesus using a deck of cards in a remote Malaysian village.

Bishop Terry's ministry has been a shared partnership in the gospel with his wife Sally Lim. They live out their faith as lights in the world, unashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We thank God for Terry and Sally and for the way they have pointed us to Jesus.

**Glenice Hartwich, former LCA Assistant to the Bishop
– International Mission**



How are we joining
with God partnering
in the gospel?

**LCA International Mission is partnered
with the Lutheran Church in Singapore
and together we enrich one another
for ministry in our local communities
and those abroad.**

How can you partner?

**If you would like to support the translation
and publication of *Growing as God's
People*, a project instigated by Bishop
Terry, please refer to the donation form
on the back of this edition.**



A MODEL, A LESSON OR A REMINDER?

Some stories from our partner churches across Asia can inspire us in our faith journey. Some can cause us to reflect on similar journeys which we may have been on as a church, while others remind us about what is important. In some ways, this story from Inandangan, a Malaysian kindergarten teacher, does all three.

I am a teacher at a Christian kindergarten in Sabah, which is run by the local Protestant Church in Sabah congregation. I believe, for the sake of the children's faith, it is important for my church to have a kindergarten. My congregation's story, and the challenges of learning about Jesus, could be the story of many of our congregations.

The Mekar kindergarten in Timug, Malaysia, sits in its local community and provides a link between education for children and the local church. While some of the kindergarten children's families worship weekly, they are not necessarily teaching faith in the daily lives of their children. Although some people in the community like to have a Christian status, they do not necessarily participate in Sunday services.

Therefore, although every child who attends Mekar kindergarten is Christian, they are not necessarily worshipping with the church community or practising faith in the home.

I believe there are three distinct benefits for my congregation running a kindergarten.

Firstly, reading your Bible and taking it to church with you helps you to develop faith and become stronger in your love for Jesus, building hope to help you get through trials. God's word helps me to love myself and those around me, even when others hurt me.

The children are given their own Bible and are taught Bible verses to share with their parents at home. This has encouraged many parents to bring their Bible to church. The kindergarten provides this kind of faith teaching. We sing worship songs and teach the Bible. The children enjoy the teachings and want to attend Sunday school.

Secondly, the children are taught to pray. Members of the older generation have commented on the children saying grace before a meal at home. If the parents forget, the children remind them.

The third benefit of a Christian kindergarten is that it is welcoming of students with a disability. We practise social inclusion and those who attend know that Jesus' love does not differentiate. His love is for all. This is important to model in Malaysian culture.

I know that God has called me into my role here and I thank him for the opportunity to serve in this way.

– Inandangan

PROCLAIMING
THE
• GOSPEL •

How are we supporting our partners as they proclaim the gospel?

LCA International Mission partners with the Protestant Church in Sabah (PCS) as they reach out to the young people in their communities through establishing and running kindergartens.

How can you support the proclamation of the gospel?

If you would like to donate to the way PCS is serving young people with the gospel through their kindergartens, please refer to the donation form on the back of this edition.

STORIES OF MISSION

◦ TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH ◦

AROUND THE GLOBE



Small churches BIG VISIONS FOR MISSION

The Lutheran Church in Singapore (LCS) is a small church, with six congregations and a couple of thousand members. They do not break records when it comes to numbers. But God never worries about such things! Despite their size, LCS has enormous vision and commitment to mission, dedicating time and resources to outreach work in China, Cambodia, Thailand and Mongolia. It was our joy, therefore, to support them when they requested help to send a Mongolian student to seminary.

Mongolia is a landlocked country between Russia and China and is still experiencing rapid change after its release from the Soviet bloc in the 1990s. The LCS has been supporting Mongolian Christians for many years, an involvement that predates the establishment of the Mongolian Evangelical Lutheran Church (MELC).

President Puje of the MELC writes, 'MELC may be the youngest Lutheran church in the world in that it is established on Reformation Day 2017. We are functioning as a church little over three years. As a young church, we lack leadership with proper theological education. MELC consists of six main churches, 11 worship places, and 11 preaching stations. But there are three ordained pastors and 11 full and part-time church workers.

'We are sending our candidates to three different levels of study. We encourage our believers to study at MELC Bible school to acquire basic knowledge of the Bible and the ministry. But those who would want to go further enter the Union Bible Theological College in Mongolia. But for those who are in the senior leadership position with an adequate level of English or other languages would be sent abroad.

'Nomyo is one of the candidates to study abroad. Since the church is young, we can't support him financially but find a scholarship from somewhere. We appreciate LCA and LCS for helping MELC send our students and fulfil our mission to build the church on the solid ground of the word. Thank you very much.'

LCA International Mission and LSC are providing a scholarship for Nomyo to study at Lutheran Theological Seminary in the Philippines. Nomyo and his family are known within the LCA as they were members of St Paul's in Sydney for three years. It was there that Nomyo says he 'fell in love with Lutheran theology and sensed a call to be a pastor'. As a civil engineer, Nomyo could pursue a path that guaranteed financial security for his family but having experienced the reality that 'while we were still sinners, Christ died for us', he is determined to spend his days proclaiming this good news to others.

Both the LCA and LCS are small churches by world standards, but God has never needed large numbers to accomplish his mission to seek and save. Like young David before Goliath, or Elijah facing off against 450 prophets of Baal, God can use our small churches to accomplish mighty things in his mission to the world.

– Pastor Matt Anker

How can you support this work?
*If you would like to support Nomyo as he studies,
please refer to the donation form on the back
of this edition.*

LEARNING TOGETHER IN MISSION



Most Friday mornings I hear a wonderful sound: the Skype ringtone. It announces that Pastor Hans Giegere is calling me for our weekly supervised reading session. From my office in Walla Walla, in the New South Wales Riverina, I hear how Hans is going and we discuss an article or book chapter we have read before our call.

Pastor Hans lives 3000 kilometres away in Lae, Papua New Guinea (PNG), where he serves with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea (ELCPNG). As well as leading the evangelism department, Hans is studying within the Masters program at Martin Luther Seminary. As part of this course the program coordinator, Australian Lutheran Mick Hauser, has arranged for each student to be paired with a pastor to undertake a supervised reading unit.

The Skype meetings with Hans began after I received an email out of the blue from Mick. I was intrigued and, having recently started my own Masters study in the field of missional leadership, I thought I would register my interest.

The Skype meetings with Hans began in Semester 1, 2020. We have met most weeks during school term, for 45 minutes to an hour. We agree on a journal article or book chapter to discuss at the following session. Arising from each reading, we share new ideas, things that challenged us, and things we question or disagree with.

An important aspect of this unit is helping the student develop academic-level, critical-thinking skills. We have read articles and books on the subjects of biblical and Lutheran theology of mission, missional hermeneutics (reading the Bible with “missional eyes”), and the history of missions.

I would hazard a guess that I have learnt substantially more than Hans during our meetings. Not only do I learn through our readings and discussions, but I have learnt about Melanesian culture, I have learnt that God has been at work throughout our checkered human history, in and through and despite us, and I have learnt that God is still at work all over the world today.

Likewise, Pastor Hans recently commented how he, too, has appreciated the mutual learning times. ‘My understanding of mission has broadened’, he says. ‘Before, I had a very narrow view of mission, but now I see it differently. It is God’s mission, and he is at work in everything.’

God’s mission is to bring forgiveness and reconciliation to the entire creation through Jesus Christ. As disciples of Christ (a ‘disciple’ is literally a ‘learner’), we are all still learning about the breadth and depth of God’s mission. Hans and I have certainly grown to become learners together in mission.

– Rev Dr Dan Mueller

**TRAINING
IN THE**

◦ GOSPEL ◦

How are we training
in the gospel?

***LCA International Mission
partners with Mick Hauser as he
lectures at Martin Luther Seminary
in Lae, Papua New Guinea.***

How can you
support this
training in the
gospel?

***If you would like to support
Papua New Guinean students
who are studying at the seminary
by meeting with them regularly
online, please contact Nevin
at nevin.nitschke@lca.org.au
or phone 08 8267 7334.***



I'M JOINING IN GOD'S MISSION BY *praying for*

- Rev Dr Dan Mueller and Pastor Hans Giegere's deepening friendship and the opportunity they have to learn about the breadth and depth of God's mission through their regular online communication
- Nomyo and his family as he studies through the Lutheran Theological Seminary in the Philippines to prepare him for the ministry
- Lutheran early learning centres, kindergartens and schools who share with their children and staff about the promises of God's word, love and forgiveness

Prayer is so important because many of our partner churches are working in new territory for the kingdom of God and spiritual attack is their everyday reality.

- Terry Kee and his wife Sally Lim as Terry retires from his role as Bishop for the Lutheran Church in Singapore. Thank God for the way they have pointed us to Jesus.
- Volunteer Peter Nitschke, the Stamps for Mission stamp receivers, and each volunteer who donates their stamps for the work of mission. Thank God for the blessing these seemingly worthless used stamps are for building his kingdom.

To download monthly prayer points, go to www.lca.org.au/international-mission/join-gods-mission/pray/

They can also be accessed via the LCA International Mission eNews – to sign up, go to www.lca.org.au/enews

'Lord, renew your church, begin with me!'



I'M JOINING IN GOD'S MISSION BY *volunteering*

You can experience firsthand how God's love is coming to life through the word-and-action gospel work of our partner churches.

AUSTRALIA and NEW ZEALAND – SUITABLY QUALIFIED PASTOR

The students at Martin Luther Seminary, PNG are looking for pastors who are open to using technology to facilitate learning. An important aspect of this supervised reading unit is helping the student develop academic level, critical thinking skills.

AUSTRALIA and NEW ZEALAND – STAMPS RECEIVER

Volunteer stamps receivers to collect, clean, sort and send out bundles of used stamps to be sold for the Stamps for Mission program. They are also advocates for the program in the community where they live.

What to do next ... If you would like to know more about volunteering in mission overseas, go to www.lca.org.au/international-mission or contact Nevin Nitschke at nevin.nitschke@lca.org.au or lcaim@lca.org.au or phone **08 8267 7300**.

AUSTRALIA and NEW ZEALAND – CONGREGATION REP

Being a volunteer congregational representative for LCA International Mission in your home congregation involves encouraging others in mission by sharing resources and promoting LCA International Mission opportunities.

AUSTRALIA and NEW ZEALAND – VIDEO EDITOR

LCA International Mission uses video to promote God's mission among our partner churches and is seeking volunteers to edit these for use at synods, Lutheran women's conventions and speaking engagements in churches and schools.



I'M JOINING IN GOD'S MISSION BY *giving to...*

We take great care of your financial gifts. You can be confident they will assist our partner Lutheran churches to bring the good news of Jesus to their communities.

... LCA International Mission's work with our partner churches

(Please indicate the ministries and programs you would like to support and write the amount of your gift/s in the spaces provided.)

- ☐ Protestant Church in Sabah, **Malaysia** kindergartens \$ _____
- ☐ The translation and publication of **Growing as God's People** \$ _____
- ☐ Projects supported by the **Mekong** Mission Forum \$ _____
- ☐ Scholarship support for Nomyo from the **Mongolian** Evangelical Lutheran Church \$ _____
- ☐ I would like to leave a bequest for LCA International Mission in my will (please send me information)

You can support one or more of the above mission projects in any of the following ways:

- ☒ online at www.lca.org.au/international-mission/act-now/donate/ (credit card)
- ☒ OR fill out the form below (credit card or cheque)
- ☒ OR Electronic Funds Transfer; please contact LCA International Mission on **08 8267 7300** for more details

☐ Enclosed is my cheque for \$ _____
(cheques payable to LCA International Mission)

☐ Please debit my ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard

Card no

Expiry / CCV

Amount \$ _____

Name _____ Signature _____

Address _____ P/C _____

Email _____

Please send this completed form to

LCA International Mission

197 Archer Street, North Adelaide SA 5006

- ☐ Please send me a receipt