



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
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of Australia

WHAT A JOY TO SEE GOD WEAVE THE STORY OF HIS CHURCH

In August, I visited our friends in the Lutheran Church in Singapore (LSC) and had the joy of spending time with their new bishop, Rev Guan Hoe Lu. A very small church in terms of membership numbers, it is a much larger church in the way God is working through it to extend his kingdom.

In Singapore, I visited the Thai Good News Centre which LSC established to reach out to Thai labourers coming to Singapore for work around 20 years ago. This outreach centre and worshipping community are in a building that has been home to Thai ex-pats for many years. Amid 'massage parlours' and stores selling occult talismans, the centre shines Christ's light in one of the darkest parts of Singapore. What a joy it was to meet Rosanna and Kawee who serve there and whose story features in this edition.

After Singapore, I flew to Thailand to meet newly elected Bishop Rev Chanda Saiyotha. Imagine my joyful surprise when he told me that the Thai Good News Centre was where his father came to faith! So, the centre has played a significant role in his own conversion and now leadership of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thailand.

How incredible it is to witness the way God weaves the story of his church in mission across countries and regions, through what appear just random encounters. Imagine if Rev Chanda's father had not gone to Singapore to work nor dared to enter the Thai Good News Centre and if the LSC had not been bold in its outreach. Through all of this, God has provided a new leader for the church in Thailand who knows what it's like to live without Christ, and who is well equipped to help his church reach out to the Buddhist majority.

Could it be that the Lord is also working through your humble service to bless the church and its mission? What threads will tie you to the Lord's ongoing story of mission?

I pray that the articles in this edition do much to encourage you to never discount the significance of your faithful witness in the name of Christ. An encouraging conversation that leads to a young person becoming a teacher or pastor; an act of kindness that leads to a question about why you would do such a thing; or an invitation to a friend to 'come and see Jesus'. You never know where any of these deeds done in faith will lead. The church in Singapore certainly never expected to produce a Thai bishop! Who knows what God will do through you?



**PARTNERING
WITH THE
• GOSPEL •**

NAVIGATING A FAITH JOURNEY TOGETHER

Around 10 years ago, Navigator College at Port Lincoln in South Australia sought to explore a partnership with a school in another country. After consultation with LCA International Mission, and a lot of prayerful consideration, a partnership between Navigator and SMA GKPS 1 Pamatang Raya, Indonesia, was born.

Through God's provision and blessing, this partnership continues today, and during this time, SMA GKPS has grown from serving around 130 students to more than 700.

While COVID-19 prevented reciprocal visits between 2020 and 2022, in other years students and staff from SMA GKPS have visited Port Lincoln to experience Australian culture and learn about which teaching, learning and administration practices might be used in an Indonesian school context. And each year in Term 3, a group of Year 11 Navigator students has embarked on a Service Learning trip to Indonesia as part of their Christian Studies course. Through these visits, Navigator students have been able to experience Indonesian culture and learn about what faithful service in a Christian context looks like. They have gained an understanding of Christian service not only through serving others but also by being served by

students and staff of SMA GKPS – a powerful example of God's gifts being used for his glory. Over time there has been more emphasis during these visits on how we as part of the global church can spread the love of Jesus.

However, school improvement is still very much a part of the partnership. In the most recent trip in 2019, Navigator College Principal Stephen Jude led SMA GKPS staff through professional development, which in future will allow school Improvement to be directed by school staff.

Students and staff who return from a trip to SMA GKPS talk about how the partnership has affected them. Experiencing life in a different culture has a significant impact. They also gain a deeper understanding of the global Lutheran church through visits to the GKPS office and attending a local church service. Knowing that we are all a part of something

larger is important to everyone but is particularly significant due to Port Lincoln being a small, remote community.

While COVID disrupted any 10th-anniversary partnership celebrations, we are confident that in 2023 the two schools will reconnect and celebrate. We thank God for blessing this partnership and pray that learning and connection continue long into the future.

**Jamie Fewster, Navigator College
Head of Senior School**

How can you partner?
If your school would like to know more about how to connect to the mission of God through an LCA International Mission partnership, please contact us.

How are we joining with God partnering in the gospel?
LCA International Mission works in partnership with Lutheran Education Australia and our overseas partner churches to provide opportunities for Lutheran schools, teachers and students from Australia to develop long-term, sustainable relationships and transformative service partnerships, which are mutually beneficial to the Australian school and the school of the overseas Lutheran church.

Guided to teach others



Jesus' love and guidance have always been evident in my life. Being adopted, God protected me and provided for me with a loving Christian family. My Mum and Dad, Helen and Ronald Zarnke, brought me to baptism at Peace Lutheran Church Gatton in Queensland, where I was adopted into my spiritual family.

When I was five, my mother died but my dad and church family nurtured in me my love for education and God. My Dad modelled a love for God's creation and encouraged my creativity. His death when I was 20 inspired me to graduate from the then Luther Seminary (Australian Lutheran College – ALC), following my Bachelor of Arts in Visual Arts.

After teaching in Christian colleges in Australia and Germany, a friend suggested I study theology further and serve with him as a missionary in Papua New Guinea (PNG). But my vision of a forever home in Australia blinded me to this possibility and we went our separate ways.

However, God continued to gently guide me through a beautiful missionary couple, Pastor Norman and Joy Wurst, who helped heal my heart, clear my mind and prepare my hands for mission. I gained a Masters of Education from ALC and a Masters of Sacred Theology from Concordia Seminary St Louis in the US.

Currently, I teach academic English to Indigenous students at the University of Southern Queensland.

After a missionary to PNG mentioned that teaching positions there can be vacant for years, I felt my life experiences unite to serve in this way.

Now I hope to serve the Evangelical Lutheran Church of PNG as an English lecturer at Martin Luther Seminary, an English-speaking institution. While this church also has seminaries teaching in Pidgin, qualifications in English are highly desirable as it is the international language. Students from the seminary will be able to serve not only in their own country but in any English-speaking nation. They will be prepared for higher-level studies in institutions across the globe and may publish books, lecture, and hold church leadership positions. This is why I am so excited about this mission.

Prayer for the spread of the gospel, safety and financial and spiritual support is crucial. Being part of this team allows you to be part of something amazing. We are the body of Christ, his mind, his heart and his hands to people on earth and being part of this team means you can help usher in God's kingdom across the world from wherever you are. So, come join me in the adventure!

Cathryn Zarnke

How are we training in the gospel?

LCA International Mission supports the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea as it trains pastors for service in the churches across PNG.

How can you support this training in the gospel?

If you would like to support Cathryn Zarnke as she teaches English to the students at the Martin Luther Seminary, please refer to the donation form on the back of this edition.



STORIES OF MISSION

◦ TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH ◦

AROUND THE GLOBE

FINISHING LIFE WELL

'Mzungu! Mzungu!' yell the children as our four-wheel drive slowly weaves its way over the goat tracks that serve as a poor substitute for roads in the mountains around Gitega, Burundi, in east-central Africa.

The children's excitement over seeing a mzungu (white man) reminds me how remote this part of Burundi is. The local people are mostly from the pygmy tribe indigenous to the area – a people largely forgotten and unseen in a country which is among the poorest on earth.

Mama Eddissa loves and serves a large family made up of her children, orphans and others she has found in need. Her husband's arm was crippled in an accident and so, the daily struggle to survive is even harder for this family. Despite this, Mama Eddissa welcomes us with pride and joy into her humble mud brick hut, which was built with the help of members of Hope Evangelical Lutheran Church from the nearby city of Gitega.

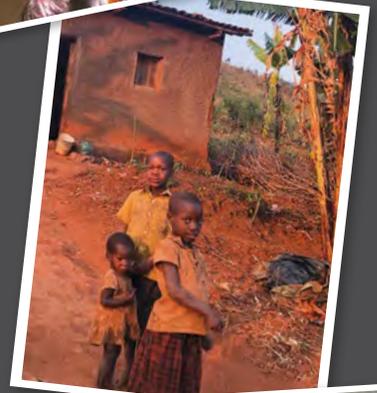
Mama Eddissa talks about her life before faith in practical terms. 'Before I knew Jesus, life was terrible', she says. 'We had no place to live and no way to buy food. I spent every day as a beggar so that I could help my family.'

Some years ago, Pastor Alphonse Polisi and members of his congregation visited this struggling community and met Mama Eddissa and her family. As they shared the gospel with these new friends, they also helped with practical needs – making bricks, building the small hut and exploring how Mama Eddissa could make an income to support her family. Having a secure roof over their heads, and a newfound income through selling traditional pottery and raising pigs provided by the church, the family has a new sense of dignity and security.

While Mama Eddissa expresses deep appreciation for the church's support, she is most grateful for the gift of faith and thanks God for the saints who brought her the good news of forgiveness and life in Jesus. Through a translator, she describes the joy and peace she has since coming to faith because of all that Jesus has done for her. Mama Eddissa and her children were baptised in the local church built by donations from members of the LCANZ, and every Sunday she hears the word of God and receives the life-giving sacrament there.

When I asked what her hopes for the future were, she replied simply, 'I want to finish life well as a Christian'. What more is there to hope for?

Pastor Matt Anker



How can you support this work?

LCA International Mission supports Hope Evangelical Lutheran Church in Burundi through the provision of a small annual scholarship to train pastors. If you would like to support the training of pastoral candidates in Burundi, please refer to the donation form on the back of this edition.

TRANSFORMED
BY THE
GOSPEL



The 'Slum Bishop'

As we struggle through Bangkok traffic, it's clear Bishop Chanda can't wait to reach our destination – the infamous Khlong Toei slum.

When he graduated from seminary, he prayed that the Lord would call him to serve a 'nice' congregation in a good area. Instead, he was called to serve in the slum. He now thanks God for this call, which taught him about truly serving. He loves the slum because he loves the people there.

Bishop Chanda Saiyotha, or 'Ant' as he prefers, is the newly elected bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thailand (ELCT). Bishop Ant's wife Pranee Saiyotha works at Immanuel Music School which reaches out to children from the slum, and they have a 13-year-old son.

In a Christian-minority country, Bishop Ant leads the church with a good understanding of the challenges of reaching out to the Buddhist majority – he himself is a convert from Buddhism.

'I had never heard about Jesus', he says. 'Life was difficult in our village and my father had to move to Singapore to earn enough money to support our family. There he heard the gospel from the Thai Good News Centre, which is run by the Lutheran Church in Singapore. When he returned home, he began sharing his newfound faith with me and my mother.

'When I heard that, I was very angry with my father. Everybody in my village was also against him. But my father didn't give up, he prayed for me and my mum and continued sharing the good news of Jesus.

'One year later, God opened my eyes to see my father clearly. I asked myself, "Why has my father changed? Before he was an expert drinker, a very bad guy and didn't care about his family. Now he is very patient, gentle and loving his family". This made me open my heart to learn about Jesus.

'After that, my mum and I were baptised. Now, we are a Christian family and many people from my hometown have turned their life to Jesus. It was the Holy Spirit who acted in my heart. This led me to commit my life to be a servant of Jesus Christ.'

Walking through the slum, Bishop Ant stops at every second house to greet people and ask after their families. Many are still Buddhists, and he knows the journey to faith can be long. But he also knows it brings true peace and hope and so, even as bishop, it's his delight to be in the slum pointing people to Jesus.

As we drive away, Bishop Ant smiles and tells me he is happy to be known as the 'Slum Bishop'.

Pastor Matt Anker



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

LCA International Mission partners with the ELCT to support five evangelists reaching out to the Lua people in northern Thailand.

How can you support this work?
If you would like to support the mission work being undertaken by the Lua evangelists, please refer to the donation form on the back of this edition.



GOOD NEWS FOR SINGAPORE NEWCOMERS

In the 1980s, as Singaporeans made plans to build the tall infrastructure that fills their skyline today, many workers were recruited from other countries, including Thailand, to provide the labour.

The Lutheran Church in Malaysia and Singapore (LCMS) realised a need to bring the gospel of Jesus Christ to Thai people who were living and working in Singapore. The Thai Good News Centre (TGNC) was established in 1989, as a partnership between LCMS and missionaries from the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission and the Norwegian Mission Society.

In August 1996, the TGNC was recognised as a congregation of LCMS and then in March 1998 as part of the Lutheran Church in Singapore (LCS). Since its formation, 17 men who received support at the centre have come to know Jesus. After their return to Thailand, these men studied theology at Luther Seminary before returning to their home villages and starting churches.

Rosanna Hutagalung, a former missionary who served in Thailand, is now supervising ministry at the centre. As a young woman, she spent a year at the TGNC as an Intern while studying at Singapore Bible College. She served in Thailand for 18 years, returning to Singapore

for three months of furlough in 2020. But COVID-19 struck, borders were closed, and she was unable to return to Thailand. In December 2021, LCS Bishop Rev Lu Guan Hoe invited Rosanna to serve at the TGNC.

Since the pandemic, the centre has changed its mission focus. Many foreign construction workers returned to their home countries while others stayed away. The TGNC's focus is now on building relationships with Thai women who have married Singaporean men, and who work in the shops surrounding the centre. These women are often from rural Thailand and know little English. Often, they have married in the hope of being able to send money back home, rather than for love. However, TGNC still continues to minister to the construction workers who came to mingle in the building.

Rosanna and parish worker Kawee minister to these women, listen to their challenges and pray for them, encouraging them to release their cares to our Heavenly Father. The Holy Spirit has been present through this ministry and three of the women have been baptised. Each month, the centre distributes food to Thai people living nearby. A tract is included in the packages offering English lessons at the centre.

Rosanna and Kawee have a deep love for the Thai people and want them to know the love of Jesus.

The two women recognise their purpose as the same as Paul and Apollos in 1 Corinthians 3. They plant the seed through the Thai Good News Centre, and it is watered, but God makes it grow.

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

LCA International Mission is delighted to serve as a partner alongside the Lutheran Church in Singapore as it reaches out to people who have moved to Singapore from Thailand.

How can you support the proclamation of the gospel?

If you would like to support the Thai Good News Centre as those who serve there connect with Thai people living in Singapore, please refer to the donation form on the back of this edition.



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

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.

- Rosanna and Kawee, as they befriend Thai workers in Singapore and provide them with care, support and a connection with their loving Saviour
- The community of Navigator College from Port Lincoln in South Australia and their school partnership with GMA GKPS in Indonesia. Pray the schools may continue to support each other, and staff and students will grow in faith and love as they demonstrate what God means in their lives
- The newly elected Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thailand, Chandra Saiyotha, his wife Pranee and their family. Pray for strength and wisdom as he serves his church, proclaiming God's love and grace to Thai communities
- Pastor Alphonse Polisi and the members of his congregation, as they walk beside the people of the Gitega region of Africa. Pray these people know the security and joy of living in Jesus' love and grace
- Cathryn Zarnke, as she prepares to work teaching English at Martin Luther Seminary at Lae in Papua New Guinea. Pray she would sense God's peace in her heart and his direction in her calling

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 – STAMPS RECEIVER

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

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.

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**.



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.)

- Support of education within Lutheran schools in **Indonesia** \$ _____
- Cathryn Zarnke, English teacher at Martin Luther Seminary, **Papua New Guinea** \$ _____
- Lua evangelists serving in northern **Thailand** \$ _____
- Thai Good News Centre in **Singapore** \$ _____
- I would like to leave a bequest for LCA International Mission in my will (please send me information)

Please send this completed form to **LCA International Mission**
197 Archer Street, North Adelaide SA 5006

Please send me a receipt

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 Electronic Funds Transfer; please contact LCA International Mission on **08 8267 7300** for more details
- OR fill out the form below (credit card or cheque)

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 _____