



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.



PRAYING CONSTANTLY

A CHALLENGE AND JOY

'We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers' (1 Thessalonians 1:2 – ESV).

How often we water down St Paul's words to make them more 'manageable'. How could Paul have prayed **constantly** for fellow Christians? Regularly? Sure. But constantly? Isn't this just pious exaggeration?

The thought of constantly remembering fellow Christians in prayer can seem daunting. With all the worries and busyness of life, such an approach can seem yet another burden. And yet St Paul always connects constant praying for the saints with the joy he experiences because of their faith in Christ.

This prayerful joy is something I have regularly experienced among our Asian partner churches. Despite their own dire needs, our brothers and sisters throughout PNG and South-East Asia hold you and me before the throne of grace every day, praying expectantly for God's blessings.

While I know many in our church pray unceasingly, others of us struggle to keep focused on the needs of global brothers and sisters.

I encourage you to join me in constantly praying for our fellow Christians, by bringing the saints in Myanmar to God daily at this crucial time. You might remember that in February the military took control of Myanmar and imprisoned the democratically elected government. The unlawful coup and brutal new regime have plunged the country into uncertainty and exacerbated the devastation of COVID restrictions. People who speak against the regime often disappear and deadly attacks on remote communities are commonplace.

In September one church leader there sent me this message: 'Today [the] acting president has declared the state of emergency and announced civil war to eradicate the military ... Food and medicine prices have skyrocketed, and we are heading toward uncertainty and [an] unimaginable future. Please keep us in your prayers and [pray] for the churches!'

Our brothers and sisters who shine Christ's light into an uncertain world in Myanmar know their future is certain in him but feel obligated to share that hope with those who suffer around them. What they ask of us more than anything is prayer – prayers for peace and that they may remain faithful and continue to offer others certainty beyond this vale of tears because, in Christ, we are freed for life with God forever.

Please join me in thanking God for his faithful saints in Myanmar and praying for them that they continue to bring glory to our Father in heaven, and the hope of eternity to those around them. And as you do, don't be surprised if you experience great joy as you remember the example of these saints every day, seeking God's mercy on their behalf.



Pastor Matt Anker

Assistant to the Bishop
– International Mission
Lutheran Church
of Australia



Fellowship is a lifestyle

Rev Ishak Jonius of the Basel Christian Church of Malaysia, Bahasa Malay (BCCM BM), reflects on what he has learnt about youth ministry. Although from another culture, the former youth director's insights about engaging with youth are also valuable for us.

If the church wants to reach the youth, most importantly they must know their needs, including their understanding of the word of God. I visit every parish and consult every youth group at least once a year, asking them how they run youth fellowship, what are their strengths and needs. Youth share parts of their life through social media. I therefore give the youth opportunities to ask me questions on these social platforms and then analyse the questions to find out where we can best support them.

Once we find out their needs, we hold a discipleship camp for the whole BCCM BM youth. A junior camp for 13 to 17 years one year and a camp for 18 to 35 years the following year. They are separated because their

needs are different. For instance, the older age group are already working.

Part of my role is to build up young leaders among and for the youth. Every two years our youth general assembly chooses new leaders who then attend a training camp to prepare them. Serving as a Christian leader and being a leader in the world have different aims, so they are trained for leadership according to what Jesus and God's word says. In doing so, they are also empowered for ministry outside of the church. We teach them that to be a great leader, you must first meet people at their level and then will gain respect. To do this, you must be among them in their everyday life.

Fellowship and ministry as a Christian is a lifestyle, not just an event. If it is just about being together on Sunday for a service, I believe it will fail. Fellowship is learning the Bible, visiting your friend, going to a restaurant. A strong youth group will have close relationships outside of Sunday services.

And, if you have good fellowship in the church, you have more love for non-Christians. If you start a badminton tournament, you can invite non-believers to play. If they don't like badminton, play football! Get their number, invite them to coffee time, share about God with them. The field of the kingdom of God is not only in the church but also in the supermarket! We encourage youth leaders to be teaching their young people how to have fun with non-believing friends and, as they are having fun, to pass on spiritual faith. Deep friendship is the way in which the gospel can be shared most naturally and effectively because it involves openness and trust. Unless our relationships are at a level where people are comfortable to tell us their stories of joy and pain, and we are able to tell our own stories of how Jesus has helped us in these times, people will not be able to encounter Jesus and faith in us.

– Rev Ishak Jonius

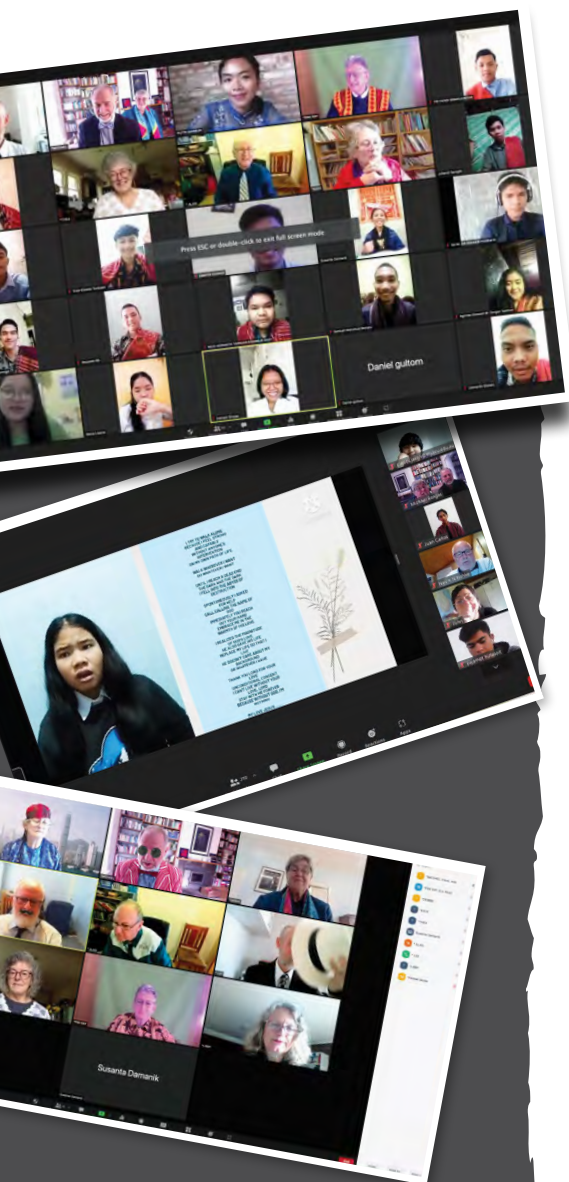
How are we joining with God as he transforms people through the gospel?

LCA International Mission supports the Basel Christian Church of Malaysia Bahasa Malay youth ministry program for young indigenous people living in Sabah.

How can you support this work?

If you would like to financially support this ministry, please refer to the donation form on the back of this edition.

TRAINING IN THE • GOSPEL •



How are we training
in the gospel?

**LCA International Mission offers
volunteer teaching conversational
English opportunities for our
overseas partners.**

How can you support
this training in the gospel?

**If you would like to volunteer to teach
English online, please contact Nevin
at nevin.nitschke@lca.org.au or phone
08 8267 7334.**

GOD DOES THE IMPOSSIBLE

My husband Michael and I were very surprised to read an email from Abdi Sabda Seminary in Indonesia (via LCA International Mission's Nevin Nitschke), requesting that 'Michael and Debbie Borgas help us with our English program online'. We became involved because Michael loves talking to people from other cultures.

The program was to deliver conversational English lessons to 200 seminary students each weekday morning for 4 weeks. The sessions had students engage in both a larger group setting of approximately 30 people and small 'break-out groups' of five to seven students and one native English speaker.

Michael is skilled at encouraging people to get involved – including me! He thought contacts from Wycliffe Bible Translators could support us, and they joined the project. Michael oversaw the endeavour, coordinated team meetings, wrote curriculum and disseminated information about requests from Indonesia.

God's generosity in providing willing volunteers surprised us! And Marg, from Wycliffe, said she believed that 'the little' we had to offer could be used by God for great things. We hoped for 40 volunteers and God provided more!

The volunteers' dedication and generosity in giving their time were inspiring. Some worked against significant obstacles to continue. Many of us learnt Zoom internet conferencing skills we didn't have before.

There was wonderful camaraderie. Praying together, as the students joined for the day, was delightful. Volunteers included members of the LCA and other denominations who joined us via Wycliffe connections. The joy of working with Christian brothers and sisters outside our denomination was a great experience of the family of God serving other parts of the family.

The love we felt toward the students still inspires me. I am moved as I recall hearing them pray, seeing their enthusiasm and observing their growth in confidence.

We saw God do the 'impossible'. We didn't know how the students' village internet connections would hold up. The timeframe to prepare for the course seemed unrealistic. A suitable curriculum didn't exist in complete form. Young people living apart from one another in crowded village homes had to apply themselves to instruction in another language, via Zoom.

If he decides to honour stumbling attempts to do something, it will work! From seeing the students grow from non-comprehending faces on Day 1 to speaking prayers and testimonies in English at the course conclusion – absolutely Jesus was at work!

I now don't think of our brothers and sisters in Indonesia as a vague group of fellow believers, but as brothers and sisters I know and can pray for by name.

– Debbie Borgas



WILL YOU MENTOR THE YOUNG IN FAITH?

**PARTNERING
WITH THE
• GOSPEL •**

Can you recall when you were 22?
When you were beginning to balance
responsibilities in a world that seemed
to offer many possibilities?

That's how old Sanglura is. He's on his
phone, ready for an interview that will
explore his life and new role as a youth
pastor for the Lutheran Church of Myanmar
(LCM). He is being mentored by LCM
President Rev Martin Lalthangliana. Rev
Martin has the smile of a proud 'father',
watching with love and patience as the
one under his wing journeys into the world.

'I'm a Christian and my parents are Christian,
but I didn't always have the assurance that
I am saved', says Sanglura. 'I was 15 years
old when I had an abnormal heartbeat that
required hospitalisation for a week. I was
afraid I would die because I wasn't sure
about my life and if I would go to heaven or
hell. I asked God to assure me of salvation.'

The following year, at a summer camp run
by the LCM, he realised he was a child of
God and was assured of salvation because
of Jesus. 'If you believe in Jesus, you will
go to heaven', he says. 'Jesus can help and
heal because he is powerful, and he is love
– that's why I love.'

Sanglura's favourite Bible story is the Good
Samaritan, as it shows our need to love
others. As a youth pastor, Sanglura works
with children at the Damadi orphanage,

a place where he spent his early years.
He leads daily devotions and shares
stories there.

Three years ago, Sanglura was part of the
LCANZ's Grow Leadership program. At that
time, he wrote a reflection: 'Rev Martin is like
my father because when I was a young boy,
he took care of me and spent time with me.
He helped me when I was in trouble. He is
very kind to me, loves me and supports me.
He is a great mentor for me. He has a lot
of experience.'

Importantly, in a country facing political
uncertainty and large numbers of
COVID-19 cases, it is apparent that
Sanglura is a leader. Being blessed with
good mentoring will be part of his maturing
process so that the next generation can
share their love for Jesus in Myanmar.

Please pray for Sanglura and the Myanmar
churches. Not even coups can stop the
enthusiasm of young people shaping
their society's future.

Is God asking you to do more than just
reflect on your life? Is he asking you to
walk alongside and encourage a young
person you know?

– **Nevin Nitschke**

How are we
joining with
God partnering
in the gospel?

***LCA International
Mission is a partner
of the Federation of
Lutheran Churches in
Myanmar, which is an
important platform for
bringing unity among
member churches
and other ecumenical
churches in Myanmar.***

How can
you partner?

***If you would like to
financially support the
ministry and mission of
the four LWF member
churches which are
part of the Federation,
please refer to the
donation form on the
back of this edition.***

PROCLAIMING THE GOSPEL



Home is where our Lord is

As Australian Lutheran Mick Hauser reflects on his time in Papua New Guinea (PNG), many things fill his thoughts. He is married to Milka and they have a son, Kelly. And, while lecturing at the Martin Luther Seminary in Lae, Mick is also studying a doctorate part-time and preparing for ordination as a pastor. Life is busy.

'My wife is here', Mick replies when asked what he most loves about living in PNG. 'And that means that I have started to put roots here, which is what I love most. Also, the people here can be incredibly difficult, but they are also incredibly loveable.'

Reflecting on the impact of COVID-19, he sees God at work in the people through the way they come to terms with death and how they confront suffering. 'Their faith in the face of those things is incredible', he says. 'People have so little but smile often and are thankful for all the Lord has given them. They are eternal optimists, and this is based upon a God they know loves them and is gracious toward them.'

Mick's doctoral thesis is focused on the world of the occult. He is being confronted by the spiritual realm in PNG and this has pushed him to rely on his baptism and the protection it offers those marked by the name of Christ. And at that name, all other powers fold their knee. To trust in that and to teach that, he says, 'You have to live it'.

Mick says he never wanted to become a pastor but has 'appreciated the blessing of speaking the gospel to people', as God has led him on an unexpected journey.

'It's about discovery with God's word and preaching and teaching God's word', he says. 'In order to preach and teach it, God acts upon us first as we become that vessel. I like that it was changing me and somewhere along the way,

God said, "Now it's time to speak my word to somebody else". It is an honour to be called into that position.'

Mick also wants to say 'G'day' to people in Australia. He misses Australia and during the past six months of planning an extended visit, including for his ordination, he has realised what blessings he has, but also what he has given up to serve as part of God's mission in PNG.

However, he also knows that no matter where God has placed us or led us on earth, we're all only visitors or, at best, temporary residents. 'As people of God, we are aliens in the fallen world', he says. 'We don't necessarily need to get too comfortable in one place. We belong in our heavenly home.'

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

LCA International Mission is supporting Mick Hauser as he serves as a lecturer at Martin Luther Seminary, Lae, Papua New Guinea.

How can you support the proclamation of the gospel?

If you would like to financially support Mick, Milka and Kelly Hauser, please refer to the donation form on the back of this edition.



HOSPITALITY FEEDS THE HUNGRY SOUL

As Christian households, we have been uniquely placed by God into our community to offer a welcoming invitation of hospitality, to reach out to those who have no place to go and to let them know there is room at the table for them.

God first opened his doors and made room at the table for us. And now he invites us to extend that invitation to others, to break through the isolation and loneliness so prevalent in our culture today – and to do so with joyful hearts.

Inviting someone to eat with you doesn't just have physical benefits. Eating with others can be a profoundly spiritual act when there is a focus on hospitality, community and mission, and when it is used as a way to express love. There is an opportunity to affirm your guest's value and worth, as you demonstrate love and care toward them.

It is a time of generosity where hearts meet, love is passed on and received, what's most important can gradually come to the surface, and where Jesus himself can enter people's homes and hearts.

The Bible encourages a joyful relationship to eating that acknowledges the blessing of food. Eating together can be an act of worship, expressing thankfulness to God for his provision of food and community.

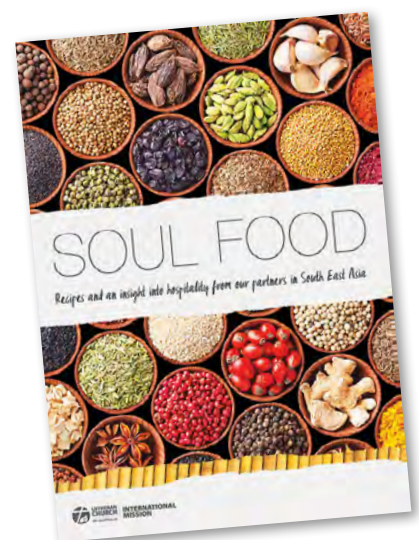
Gathering over a simple meal is one of the best ways to love people and invite them into a closer relationship with God. Eating together in most cultures is important for building, maintaining and developing deep connections. This is because when we eat together, we create a network of trust and kindness – sharing meaningful conversation and engagement. When we enact hospitality, we share what we've been blessed with – most importantly, the treasure we have in Jesus.

Hospitality is strong among the cultures where the recipes in the book *Soul Food* come from. Many of the LCA International Mission partner churches use gathering around a meal to strengthen their bonds of fellowship and to bring those who don't yet have a relationship with Jesus, into his presence.

In Romans 12, we are told: 'Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. Bless those who persecute you ... Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud but be willing to associate with people of low position.'

These verses indicate that hospitality is to be shown to both those who are God's people and others who are still on the journey to him. It is a spiritual gift given by the Holy Spirit and, by God's grace, is to be used to serve others.

As well as financially supporting ministry done through hospitality among LCA International Mission partner churches by ordering a copy of *Soul Food*, we hope and pray that you will use the recipes it contains from our partner churches' home cultures to provide hospitality to those in your community.



Recipes for shared ministry

The *Soul Food* recipe book is available to order for a donation of \$20. For more information or to order your copy/copies, please contact Erin Kerber at erin.kerber@lca.org.au or phone +61 8 8267 7317.



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

- Sanglura, as he is nurtured to share his love for Jesus with his community as a youth pastor for the Lutheran Church of Myanmar (LCM)
- Opportunities for hospitality and generosity, where hearts meet around the table, love is passed on and received, what's really important can gradually come to the surface, and where Jesus himself can enter people's homes and hearts
- Those living in the unrest in Myanmar, for the powers of darkness to be defeated by the blood of Jesus, so that truth, justice, and love can reign in Myanmar

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.

- Mick, Milka and Kelly Maik Hauser, that they might be refreshed and renewed during their time of furlough in Australia, and strengthened for their return to Papua New Guinea to continue to serve God's people with his word of hope and joy in Christ.
- Those volunteers who share their faith through teaching English online. For the generosity of their time and their dedication despite the obstacles they face

- The young people who learn about the saving love of God through the Basel Christian Church of Malaysia Bahasa Malay youth ministry program

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*

AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND – CONVERSATIONAL ENGLISH TEACHER

Many of the LCA International Mission partner churches would like native English speakers to share their faith and develop friendships with their members while encouraging them in English conversation. There are in-country and online opportunities available.

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.

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**.

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 – 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...*

... 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.)

- ☐ Mick Hauser, lecturer at Martin Luther Seminary, **Papua New Guinea** \$ _____
- ☐ Basel Christian Church of Malaysia Youth Bahasa Malay Program, **Malaysia** \$ _____
- ☐ Ministry and mission of the Federation of Lutheran Churches in **Myanmar** \$ _____
- ☐ Programs which **support hospitality** among our partner churches \$ _____
- ☐ 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

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.

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 _____