



LUTHERAN  
CHURCH  
OF AUSTRALIA

INTERNATIONAL MISSION

# BORDER CROSSINGS

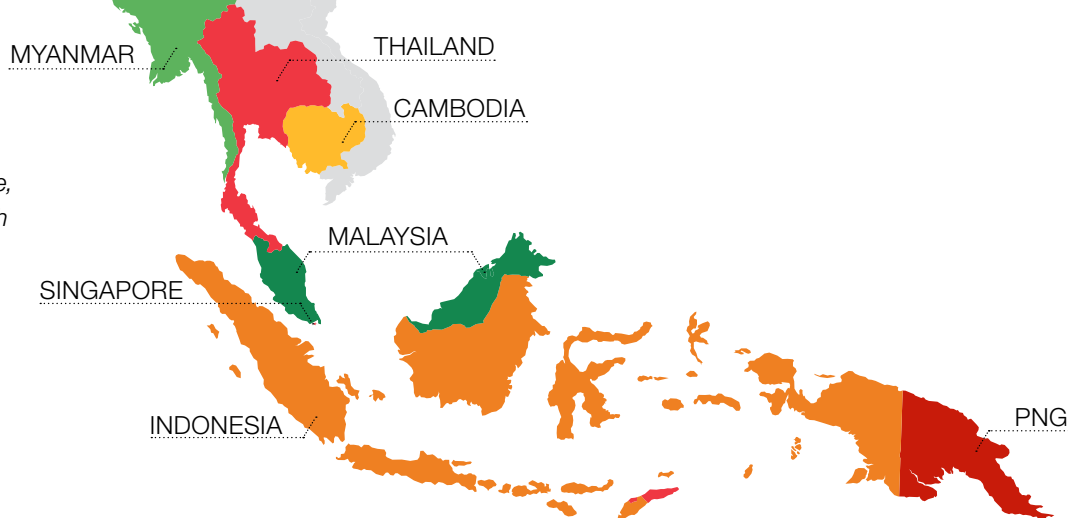


*global partners · local church*

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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

## PARTNERS DEMONSTRATE THE URGENCY OF OUTREACH

*Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. (Ephesians 5:15–16)*

The Easter long-weekend is anticipated with great enthusiasm in Australia and New Zealand.

Many people in our communities follow an annual ritual - though this may not include using these holy days to give thanks to God that our Lord Jesus was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification (Romans 4:25). Instead, it's just another chance to get away, to party hard and to forget everyday burdens.

What a contrast it is for our brothers and sisters in our partner churches in Papua New Guinea and South East Asia! In these pages, you will read how the young church in Thailand embraces Easter as a wonderful opportunity to teach Christians of Jesus' victory over sin and death. It is a chance to be equipped for the ongoing spiritual battle as the gospel breaks the chains of the demonic spirits who have imprisoned the people for generations. Similarly, our partners in PNG tell of how their youth rise before dawn on Easter Sunday to march through the streets singing songs of praise, inviting villagers to join them in celebrating Jesus' resurrection.

For our partners in mission, there is real urgency in reaching out with the saving gospel of Jesus. They are surrounded by reminders that the days are indeed evil and so they seek to *use their time wisely*, in a way that strengthens faith and invites others to believe and be saved.

The recent coup in Myanmar has been a powerful reminder of this. Amid an incredible crisis, our partners there are embracing opportunities to offer an eternal hope to people.

That's why LCA International Mission continues to support and equip our partners so that they can *make the best use of their time* as they reach out with God's forgiveness and life in Jesus' name during these *evil* days. We are delighted to share the news that, through a new funding partnership, we have been enabled to call Rev Dr Michael Lockwood to take up this task as a seminary lecturer in the Philippines.

Our partners in mission have much to teach us about the use of our days. In our relative comfort, it's easy to forget the urgency of the gospel for the life of the world. But thanks be to God our partners can remind us of this joy-filled urgency and spur us on to the wise use of our days for the sake of God's mission.



TRAINING  
IN THE

• GOSPEL •



Come over here and help us!

by Rev Matt Anker

'A vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing there, urging him and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us"' (Acts 16:9).

The LCA might be a relatively small church in Australia and New Zealand, but God calls us to support his mission among churches of neighbouring countries. Answering that call will make an eternal difference for many people.

In 2020 the president of the Lutheran Church in the Philippines (LCP), the Rev Antonio Reyes, called on LCA International Mission, just like the man in St Paul's vision. Rev Reyes asked us to come over and help LCP train pastors and deaconesses. LCP's seminary in Baguio City had two faculty vacancies and needed support.

LCA International Mission was not in a position to respond to this request

alone. But God provided the way through a funding partnership with the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod in the USA.

The LCA's General Church Board called Rev Dr Michael Lockwood to serve as a missionary to the Philippines under LCA International Mission. Dr Lockwood accepted the call and, together with his wife Naomi and children Asher and Jadon, is preparing to take up teaching duties in July 2021 at Lutheran Theological Seminary, Baguio.

'I am very excited about this opportunity to be part of what God is doing in the Philippines and within the region, and to be able to play a part in equipping pastors and church workers with a deep understanding of God's word and the good news of Jesus Christ', Dr Lockwood said.

Rev Reyes is excited about the arrival of the Lockwoods, as well as the developing partnership between our churches. 'We are truly thankful to God and the LCA for sharing with us this precious privilege of learning from Rev Dr Lockwood', he said.

Bishop John Henderson wholeheartedly endorsed this new partnership. 'I see the call to Dr Lockwood to serve among our fellow Lutherans in the LCP and our region as a significant moment for the LCA's participation in the mission of God', he said. 'We do not stand alone, but alongside others whom God has called into the same mission.'

'Dr Lockwood's service in the Philippines will enrich not only the LCP but also the LCA. The church is a connected community of believers. We will be the richer for his service through this partnership in Christ.'

How are we training in the gospel?

***Through the call of Rev Dr Michael Lockwood, LCA International Mission is partnering with the Lutheran Church in the Philippines to train pastors and church workers to serve with the good news of Jesus Christ in the Philippines and across Asia.***

How can you support this training in the gospel?

***If you would like to support the Lockwood family as they serve at the Lutheran Theological Seminary, Baguio, Philippines, please refer to the donation form on the back of this edition.***

PROCLAIMING  
THE  
• GOSPEL •



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

***LCA International Mission partners with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea and supports its members by supplying birthing kits, providing ways for the development of the theological capacity of the seminaries and the training of pastors and laypeople in theology, consulting on Lutheran education, sending and promoting the work of Australians to serve in Papua New Guinea in teaching, Biblical translation advising and medical support.***

How can you support the proclamation of the gospel?

***If you would like to support Mick Hauser as he serves as a lecturer at Martin Luther Seminary, Lae, Papua New Guinea, please refer to the donation form on the back of this edition.***

# Celebrating the RESURRECTION OF JESUS

by Rev Kinim Siloi

I remember being a young boy in my village in the 1970s and 1980s and hearing the sound of the traditional Papua New Guinea instrument garamut on Easter Sunday mornings, calling people to worship. You can hear the deep sound many miles away and it can wake people who are sound asleep!

As early as 3am or 4am on Easter Sundays, the elder of the congregation would hit the garamut to wake people, indicating that it was time to get ready for worship. People walked to the service, holding dry coconut leaves or dry bamboo which was alight, showing the way. As they arrived, each person would throw their light onto a single pile, keeping the light going. Most Easter Sunday services were not celebrated in the church but at a cemetery or a nice location like the beach or on a hill.

When everyone had arrived, the celebration and service would start, often as early as 5am. After the pastor opened with the invocation and prayer, young men and women would dramatise the resurrection story, songs were sung in their own languages and vernacular church language used. Many songs were traditional tunes composed by the worshippers, to fit the occasion. The celebration and worship ended with reflection on the resurrection story, prayer, the Lord's Prayer, benediction and a sending hymn. The celebration service would be finished by about 6.30am or 7am.

In some urban congregations people process to the church. On Easter Sunday, the congregation gathers at some distance from the church, lights candles and starts singing. Youth groups lead the procession to the church carrying candles. Sometimes members lead with traditional kundu drums, singing songs in vernacular language. When they enter the church, the pastor shouts, 'Christ is risen' and the people respond, 'He is risen indeed'.

In my small congregation, in Lae/Malahang, we also celebrate our Easter service early. Women members are up as early as 4am, going to the church to sing and meditate, as they wait for others to arrive. They hit kundu drums and sing in Tok Pidgin, Kote and Yabim languages. When others arrive at around 5am, the elder gives them a candle. We follow the usual Sunday liturgy for the service and praise God with songs in different languages.

**Rev Kinim Siloi is Director of Inter Church Relations and Ecumenism for Evangelical Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea.**





# EASTER MESSAGE CHANGES LIVES

by Pastor Harison 'Tovo' Ratovohery

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thailand is still a relatively new church, which is also true of the growing congregations in Nan Province. It is here that the gospel of forgiveness and life in Jesus' name has transformed the lives of the Lua people, who make up the majority of Christians in this area.

Traditionally, spirit doctors have dictated the future for the Lua people. The successes of agriculture, family relationships or health have been the realm of the spirit doctors, who have claimed special powers, and the people have followed their instructions.

Now that many Lua people are Christians, they have been freed from the tyranny of the spirit doctors. For many of our new Christians, their understanding of the scriptures is not yet complete and so they are vulnerable to spiritual attack and falling back under the control of the spirit doctors.

Thus, during the festival of Easter, we use this opportunity to teach the Christians more about the Bible and present a short story based on the Scriptures. The liturgy we use is similar to the regular liturgy but is more based on the historical event of Easter and Jesus' victory over sin and death and the devil.

Mission among the Lua people requires patience and perseverance, as the life-long hold of the spirit doctors and all that they represent takes time to be undone. A central part of this mission work is the constant and faithful teaching from Scripture.

Easter, and its message, provides a perfect time to teach about Jesus' victory for our sake and to strengthen the faith of the people, so they can resist temptations from the devil.

While congregations in Bangkok celebrate Easter in a very similar way to those in the major churches around the world, Holy Week in Nan Province looks a little different. Maundy Thursday and Good Friday are filled with home visits, during which people are supported in their faith and encouraged to gather to worship in their village homes.

Easter Sunday, however, is a time for church worship and, like the saints of all times and places, the people of Nan Province lift their voices in praise as they celebrate Jesus' resurrection.

**Pastor Tovo is a Malagasy missionary serving in Thailand's Nan Province.**

**TRANSFORMED  
BY THE  
• GOSPEL •**

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

***LCA International Mission supports evangelists serving through the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thailand and working in Northern Thailand among the Lua people.***

How can you support this work?

***If you would like to support the Lua evangelists as they constantly and faithfully teach from Scripture, please refer to the donation form on the back of this edition.***

STORIES OF MISSION

TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

AROUND THE GLOBE



# SHARING IN THE BODY OF CHRIST *through language*

The Lutheran Church of Australia has many partners around the world. Last month we saw two demonstrations of the way we share in the body of Christ for the task of Bible translation, through our links with Wycliffe Bible Translators Australia and SIL International.

On 14 February, at Our Saviour Lutheran Church, Aberfoyle Park, in Adelaide, Rev Matt Anker (Assistant to the Bishop - LCA International Mission) participated in the Commissioning Service of Dr Philip Townsend for Phil to take up a new role in the ministry of Bible translation. Two days later, in Darwin, Pastor Joseph Theodorsen (Top End Lutheran Parish) along with The Right Rev Dr Greg Anderson (Anglican Bishop of the Diocese of the Northern Territory) prayed for Phil during his Induction Ceremony for the position as Director of the Australia Timor Group (ATG) of SIL International.

In the early 1980s, Phil worked for three years as a school teacher in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands at Pipalyatjara community in the north of South Australia. That's where he began to learn about culture and language, living alongside Aboriginal people. He then spent most of 23 years as a missionary in Papua New Guinea (PNG), where his main role was as a Bible teacher in a bilingual ministry training centre. He also assisted in a Bible translation program. When he returned to Australia in 2010, Phil worked for six months with the Bible Society of Australia, producing resources in languages for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. He also did a doctorate looking at the training of Indigenous people to become school teachers and has worked with four universities.

This year is the 60th anniversary of the start of Bible translation work by SIL in Australia. Over that period, SIL staff worked among 23 traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages, two new languages,

as well as Aboriginal English. Printed material includes one complete Bible, seven New Testaments and portions in 16 other languages. There are also audio recordings in some of these. ATG staff are currently working in five languages and assisting work in 14 other languages. There are continuing opportunities to work alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The ATG works through the agency of the Australian Society for Indigenous Languages Inc. (AuSIL) and has personnel working with two language groups – Alyawarr and Anmatyerr – in partnership with Finke River Mission. Most of the New Testament and some of the Old Testament in Alyawarr have been printed. It is exciting that a short version of the New Testament (11 books) in Anmatyerr has now been printed and special events to launch it are planned from March to May, including in three communities and at the Alice Springs Lutheran Church.

God has prepared Phil for the role of director through his extensive cross-cultural experience with Indigenous peoples in Australia and PNG in remote, bilingual contexts and his academic qualifications and networks. Please pray for him and contact him for further information, by phone on 0468 931 370 or via email at [director\\_atg@sil.org](mailto:director_atg@sil.org)

## How can you support this work?

*If you would like to support Phil in his role as Australia Timor Group Director, as he supports communities to use language in oral, written and artistic forms to reach out with the gospel in the heart language of the people, please refer to the donation form on the back of this edition.*





PARTNERING  
WITH THE

◦ GOSPEL ◦

# PRAYING FOR PEACE IN MYANMAR

by Rev Matt Anker

Myanmar was plummeted into insecurity and uncertainty in February, as the military seized power and detained democratically elected leaders, alleging electoral fraud in November 2020 elections won by the National League for Democracy party.

However, the Myanmar people are not giving up their hard-won freedoms without a fight, albeit a non-violent one. Many thousands of people have gathered in protests across the country almost daily.

LCA International Mission partners with four church bodies in Myanmar through the Federation of Lutheran Churches in Myanmar (FLCM). Although Christians are a marginalised minority in Myanmar, they stand in solidarity with fellow citizens to protest this assault on their democratic rights. One church leader\* reports that, despite a military decree that people are not to gather in groups larger than five, 'the demonstrations are still going on and will not end until we get democracy'.

Tragically, as the protest has strengthened, so too has the military response. The same leader has also highlighted that, as of mid-March, more than 100 people have been killed because of the military's

increasingly violent response to the protesters. 'Civilians are still arrested by the police and soldiers at night and in the daytime, they brutally crackdown on the peaceful protesters. We need international attention and deeper involvement in bringing down the military regime. Please share and continue to pray for the people of Myanmar.'

With COVID-19 already having devastated the Myanmar economy and severely hampered church activities, the coup has led to greater unpredictability, as worship attendance and church income have dramatically dropped, and the ability to engage in mission projects has been severely curtailed. However, church leaders are concerned, but not despairing. With people's eyes opened once again to the fact that even good leaders cannot guarantee a secure future or peaceful life, they recognise that the message of the gospel is timelier than ever.

The leaders and members of our partner churches continue in their commitment to share the gospel and offer an everlasting hope amid their current uncertainty. Please join us in praying for a peaceful resolution to the situation in Myanmar, and for

our brothers and sisters in Christ. May our Heavenly Father send his holy angels to watch over the churches of Myanmar and the entire country, and use this moment as an opportunity for the gospel of forgiveness, life and salvation to be proclaimed even more widely.

*\*Names of church leaders are being withheld due to safety concerns*

How are we joining  
with God partnering  
in the gospel?

***LCA International Mission partners with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Myanmar, the Lutheran Church of Myanmar, Mara Evangelical Church in Myanmar and the Myanmar Lutheran Church, who work cooperatively as the Federation of Lutheran Churches in Myanmar, to reach those in their faith communities, as well as non-believers, with the gospel.***

How can you partner?

***Please pray for the people of Myanmar, as they endure insecurity and uncertainty following the military coup in February.***



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

- the people of Myanmar, as they endure insecurity and uncertainty following the military coup in February. May God provide opportunities for the churches to offer the hope of the gospel for so many who have been disappointed by the promises of this life
- Rev Dr Michael Lockwood and his family as they prepare to relocate to the Philippines for his service at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Baguio City
- the gifts of patience and perseverance for the Lua evangelists, as they minister to people who have been in a life-long hold from the spirit doctors
- Christians in our partner churches, who will find great encouragement in their Easter celebrations to persevere in the faith even in the face of grave persecution. Pray they will be renewed to face another year in the sure hope of the resurrection for all who believe
- Philip Townsend as he carries out the role of pastoral care for Australia Timor Group members; liaises with partners and stakeholders and provides administration and strategy support. Pray that through his work, the Bible will become more accessible so that people are more likely to clearly hear God's voice

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.

To download monthly prayer points, go to [www.lca.org.au/international-mission/join-gods-mission/pray/](http://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](http://www.lca.org.au/enews)

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



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

### AUSTRALIA

Lou Moss would appreciate assistance from experienced pruners to prune apricot trees from late May until late June at Moorook in SA's Riverland. Proceeds from apricot sales support LCA International Mission projects and the Mango Tree Centre for people with disabilities in Tonga.

### MALAYSIA

The Lutheran Church in Malaysia (LCM) is seeking IT support personnel in the areas of graphic design, web design, copyright and content creation to assist its congregations to go digital.

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

LCA International Mission staff prepare publications, newsletters, eNews bulletins and mission promotions and need assistance with editing articles used for this purpose. This person could be based anywhere in Australia or New Zealand, as content can be sent via email.

### AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

LCA International Mission wants to put together resources for volunteers to use when they are teaching English overseas. This is ideal for people who have some experience with teaching English as a second language.

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



## 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.)

- ☐ Lua evangelists serving in northern **Thailand** \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Rev Dr Michael Lockwood, lecturer at the Lutheran Theological Seminary, Baguio, **Philippines** \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Mick Hauser, lecturer at Martin Luther Seminary, **PNG** \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Phil Townsend, Director of the Australia Timor-Leste Group, serving in **Alice Springs, Darwin** and **Dili** \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ I would like to leave a bequest for LCA International Mission in my will (please send me information)

**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/](http://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