

# BORDER CROSSINGS



*global partners · local church*



**LUTHERAN  
CHURCH**  
OF AUSTRALIA

**INTERNATIONAL  
MISSION**

*global partners · local church*

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# BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS



'So speak encouraging words to one another. Build up hope so you'll all be together in this, no-one left out, no-one left behind. I know you're already doing this; just keep on doing it' (1 Thessalonians 5:11 – The Message).

Building relationships with people around us is one of the great joys in life. We can do this through listening to their stories and encouraging them on their walk.

In mission, relationships are just as important. As brothers and sisters in Christ we walk together as God's family from many nations.

As in all relationships, at some point face-to-face encounters need to happen to build trust and a deeper understanding for each other.

Recently we were delighted to host leaders of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea. The opportunity to tell stories about what is happening in our countries and to share our dreams about where God may be leading us encouraged us as we follow Jesus.

As you read the stories in this edition of *Border Crossings*, may you gain a deeper understanding of God's love and grace active in his people in Australia and our near neighbours in South-East Asia and the Pacific.

What a joy to be encouraged by and be encouragers of our brothers and sisters in Christ!

**Nevin Nitschke**

**Program officer LCA International Mission**  
**Lutheran Church of Australia**

**The LCA has two arms reaching out across the borders of our country to share Jesus' love – LCA International Mission and Australian Lutheran World Service (ALWS).**

LCA International Mission has the responsibility for mission and evangelism so that, through the work of the Holy Spirit and in partnership with others, we can bring the life-changing news of the gospel to people overseas and cross-culturally in Australia.

Through LCA International Mission you are enabling Jesus' love to come to life in the lives of many people across the borders of our country and particularly in our near-neighbour countries in South-East Asia and the Pacific.







# GOD IS AT WORK *to bring hope*

Sitting on our balcony we hum the tune to 'Give me a home among the gum trees' with irony, as we now live in a concrete apartment block with a balcony that overlooks another elegant concrete wall.

But our new addition of fake grass is bringing some Aussie flavour to our surroundings!

Apartment living is by no means the only adjustment we have made after packing up life in Australia and moving to west Asia last year. Learning a new language has been the toughest assignment, along with living life with angry street dogs, no family support, and being totally dependent on public transport and our legs.

**But we see God is at work in this country.** He has provided us with friends who laugh with us as we practise our language and say, 'I carry a small table to protect myself from the dogs', after confusing the word for stick with small table!

We are also part of a 30-plus member Interserve team from all corners of the globe, whose members have decades of experience. In partnership with the LCA, Interserve has sent us here as ordinary Christians to put faith into action, in a part of the world where tens of millions haven't heard about Jesus.

We are surrounded by countless opportunities to put faith into action. In this country there are several million refugees who have made perilous border crossings and their situation is constantly on our minds.

**But God is at work in this city.** We have been supporting food distribution at the only Christian refugee centre in our city of millions. Food supply is a very real need for them, and there is another urgent need – hope. The refugees have no option to go home. No other countries want them. Many have lost everything.

Last month we shared a meal with several refugee families. We heard their stories, listened to their needs, watched our one-year-old son play with their children and saw some hopeful smiles. 'We love Christians because they are the ones who care for our needs. They are different', one said.



## **God is at work among the refugees.**

As one family left the lunch, with the wife wearing a head scarf, they walked past a small table with Christian resources on it, printed in Arabic. They stopped, looked then left with several brochures and small books in hand.

Working with refugees is complex. Building relationships requires also learning Arabic, which at the moment seems overwhelming. But without it we would not get a long-term visa and therefore no long-term security, which is daunting given other Christians have been deported and had their visas rejected. It would mean being without a 'normal' job. Having no job potentially creates barriers to developing relationships with locals, who already see us as strange foreigners.

So we continue to seek God about how we can bring hope to people around us. Please pray with us as we pursue guidance. Thank you to all the people who are supporting us, both financially and in prayer.

*If you would like to hear more about this family, support them financially in this ministry or hear about Interserve and its partnership with the LCA, please call the LCA International Mission office on 08 8267 7300.*

**Names and places have been intentionally omitted.**



In March this year, seven Australian Lutheran schools (Victory College Wodonga, Faith College Tanunda, Tanunda Lutheran Primary, Unity College Murray Bridge, Endeavour College Mawson Lakes and St Martins College Mt Gambier) sent educators for a visit with LCA International Mission to explore the possibility of partnerships with Indonesian Lutheran schools. Judy Minge was a participant on this journey.

# LEARNING TO BE *partners in mission*

Our week-long itinerary in North Sumatra had taken us to a significant number of Lutheran schools. We had seen many students, sitting up straight at their desks and keen to greet us with their limited English. Our guides and the English teachers in the schools had translated for us, allowing us to ask questions and understand responses from the students. As I walked into the Grade 6 class at SD Swasta GKPS 1 school I expected a similar experience.

Looking at the eager faces, I spoke to one of the teachers present and asked if I could talk to the students. It very quickly became apparent that she did not speak much English. Wondering how I would manage, the teacher pointed to a young girl in the front row, who reluctantly came forward.

I asked her if she could translate for me and she responded that she would try. What followed was 10 minutes of sharing about my life in Australia, the students' lives in Indonesia and their dreams and ambitions. The Grade 6 student translated my questions and the responses of her classmates. An amazing young girl!

Her name is Rachael and she is 11 years old, living in Siantar, North Sumatra, Indonesia. As I spoke with her I learnt a little about her life. Her parents are lecturers at one of the local universities and she has been learning English since Grade 2. Her mastery of the language in the short time she has been learning is incredible.

Rachael's ambition is to live in Australia and be the Indonesian ambassador. She loves her school because the teachers and students are kind. In fact, everyone in her school is friendly. And best of all, Rachael knows and loves Jesus and knows he is always there to help her. 'He really loves me and I pray to him every night', she says.

What a blessing it was to meet this young girl on our principals and teachers visit to the schools of the Lutheran churches in Indonesia.

**JUDY MINGE**

**Year 6/7 teacher, Tanunda Lutheran School, South Australia**



If you would like to learn how you or your school can develop a service-learning and ministry partnership in Indonesia or another South-East Asian country, or in Papua New Guinea, please contact Erin Kerber at [erin.kerber@lca.org.au](mailto:erin.kerber@lca.org.au) or Nevin Nitschke at [nevin.nitschke@lca.org.au](mailto:nevin.nitschke@lca.org.au) or phone 08 8267 7300.



# EXCITED ABOUT A SHARED FUTURE

Wide eyes, beautiful singing, delicious food, busy traffic, different cultural experiences, and unfamiliar sights, smells and sounds were some of my experiences while visiting schools and meeting with Lutheran church and educational leaders in northern Sumatra on the recent Australian Lutheran principals and teachers trip there.

It has been good to take time to reflect on the trip and to consider the personal, spiritual and professional impact.

The generosity of the schools and churches was humbling as they welcomed us, fed us, invited us to watch and participate in music and dance performances and present us individually with gifts of traditional woven 'ulos'. The wrapping of the ulos around us was symbolic of working together with the Batak people, the strength of us being one with them as Christians, and being accepted into their culture.

Spiritually I was thankful for the visit as it caused me to reminisce some 40 years back to a time when I was doing teacher training and visited Papua New Guinea. As a young person, I saw the faith in God openly expressed by the local people. This gave me a resolve to seek where God was leading and be strengthened in my faith – in fact it led me to work cross-culturally overseas with my husband.

Here I was again, 40 years later, in an overseas country feeling deeply touched by the words, prayers and

worship of the Indonesian students, teachers and church leaders.

Principals are keen for students to be strengthened in their faith and for their schools to be highly regarded. Church and school leaders are keen for partnerships to be developed with Australian Lutheran schools.

I felt grateful to God that I was being ministered to and feeling connected with people I had only just met, but who together with me shared in God's grace and love.

This visit was a challenging professional experience which raised many questions. I saw the strengths in the simplicity and slower speed of village community life as the land was worked and meals were cooked and as family members interacted. People seemed happy and content.

I observed and chatted with students in poorly resourced schools, who were eager to learn English and achieve a good education. Schools clearly were requesting help to be more competitive and attractive in order to be viable and provide a quality education with Christian values and teachings.

As I travelled I considered how our school might work with an Indonesian school, what we might mutually share and offer to each other, and what role the local church has in working with the school. I also pondered how whatever is done, whether it be as partnership or similar, might be done in a sustainable manner with dignity and respect for all.



What might St Martins students learn by being involved with these schools/communities and how might we as a school support Indonesian teachers, students and communities? How might all of this be done in a culturally sensitive way?

As our school looks at its vision and values, improving the wellbeing of students and focusing on aspects of positive education, I believe this visit was timely and I am truly thankful for the opportunity and insights it provided for me as a representative of St Martins. I am excited about the possibilities for the future.

**BRENDA MAY**

**St Martins Lutheran College,  
Mount Gambier, South Australia**



# GOD'S SPIRIT DANCING IN HER LIFE

In our Australian society those who believe in Jesus are facing more open opposition and questions about why they believe.

What encourages you to believe God's promises, embrace his hope and live in his love?

Most Christians around the world face similar challenges and questions. What difference does belief and trust in Jesus make?

Twenty-one-year-old Phan (in black blouse, above), a student studying accounting at the University of Cambodia, faced similar questions.

The child of paddy farmers in Kampong Speu Province, Phan grew up with the traditional values and beliefs held by her people.

'Before, when I heard about Jesus Christ, I did not like him, because at that time the word of God did not come to me yet, and the same time I heard that this name "Jesus" was a bad name to me because people said so. I began to hate this name', she says.

A move to the city of Phnom Penh to study only saw her negative view of Jesus reinforced. But then, while Phan was looking for accommodation, a friend of Phan invited her to stay at the Phnom Penh church hostel.

'I heard the word of God being taught and I began to understand about this Jesus the Saviour', Phan says.

'I wondered why people criticised him about not being good, but in fact, he suffered on the cross because of people's sins. After hearing and learning that I am a sinner, I began repenting and accepted Jesus as my Saviour to forgive my sin.'

But why change a lifestyle? Why put your hope in someone your community says is 'not good'?

'After I decided to follow Jesus, I always pray for blessings from him and he always fulfills my purpose', she says. 'This caused my faith to become stronger and I believe that he never leaves or forsakes me. He is always here for me. I never feel hopeless like I used to.

'And, on the other hand, every time I feel uncomfortable, having too much worry, I always bring it to the Lord.'

Phan was baptised by LCA pastor Mark Schultz in 2016. She has more than a story to hold onto. She has God's Spirit dancing in her life helping her understand Jesus changes lives!

'I am so thankful to God that he leads me to know him and, moreover, he saved me from my sins. Thank God', she says.

What signs of love is God placing on your life? What change is he offering you?

**NEVIN NITSCHKE**  
LCA International Mission Program Officer



# JOIN IN GOD'S MISSION

Through LCA International Mission, Lutherans in Australia and New Zealand are following our Lord Jesus Christ in his mission to make disciples of all nations.

## 1 PRAY

Many of our partner churches are working in new territory for the kingdom of God, and therefore spiritual attack is their everyday reality. As a member of a congregation, school, or family, or as a couple or individual, please commit to praying for our partners in mission.



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

- Michael (Mick) Hauser, as he serves as a lecturer at Martin Luther Seminary in Lae PNG
- Hanna Schulz, as she continues in the ministry of Bible translation for the Kope people in the Gulf Province of Papua New Guinea
- Margaret Mickan, Bible translator and linguist in the Northern Territory as she prepares to retire
- Pastor Paul Kerber, as he trains LCA International Mission scholarship recipients Pastor Firman Sibarani (Indonesia), Pastor Jon Riahman Sipayung (Indonesia) and Pastor Shigeo Sueoka (Japan), in Reconciliation Ministry in the second half of 2017
- Bishops, leaders and members of our overseas Lutheran partner churches in Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore, Cambodia, Myanmar and Papua New Guinea, as they share the love of Jesus Christ with people in their regions
- The ministry team and people of the Lutheran Church in Cambodia (LCC), as they continue to share the gospel with their families and people in their schools, universities, villages, rural areas and the city of Phnom Penh
- The new and emerging Lutheran community in the villages of Tang Krang, Kampong Cham Province in Cambodia
- Pastor Amnuay and the evangelists sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with the Lua people in Thailand's Nan Province
- Students of the Rainbow Hostel and City Church of the LCC, as they study and share Jesus' love with others in the hostel and their places of learning
- Mr Ridwin Purba, National Education Secretary for the Lutheran churches in Indonesia, and Dr Neville Highett, LCA International Mission education consultant, as they help to support the education reform in the schools of the Lutheran churches in Indonesia.
- LCA young couple and child as they serve in west Asia
- LCA International Mission Program Assistants: Colin and Ruth Hayter, PNG (volunteers), and Warren and Marianne Schirmer, and David Pietsch, Cambodia (volunteers)
- People willing to serve as volunteers in and with our overseas partner churches
- For God to open our eyes to see the 'fields that are ripe for the harvest' (John 4:35)
- For the love, justice and compassion of Jesus Christ to grow in each one of us and a willingness for us to go and join him wherever he opens our eyes to see the work that he is already doing in the lives of others

For regular prayer point updates, check out the LCA International Mission website [www.lca.org.au/international-mission/act-now/pray/](http://www.lca.org.au/international-mission/act-now/pray/) They can also be accessed via the fortnightly LCA eNews – to sign up, go to [www.lca.org.au/enews](http://www.lca.org.au/enews).

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



## 2 GIVE

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.



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

... LCA International Mission's work with our partner churches  
(Please indicate the people and projects you would like to support and write the amount of your gift/s in the spaces provided.)

- |   |          |
|---|----------|
| <input type="radio"/> Teaching ministry by Mick Hauser in <b>Papua New Guinea (PNG)</b>                                     | \$ _____ |
| <input type="radio"/> Publication of tracts and other Christian literature for <b>PNG</b>                                   | \$ _____ |
| <input type="radio"/> LCA lecturers to teach courses in <b>Lutheran overseas partner churches</b>                           | \$ _____ |
| <input type="radio"/> Scholarships for pastors and teachers of <b>Lutheran overseas partner churches</b>                    | \$ _____ |
| <input type="radio"/> School and ministry training rooms, Phnom Penh, Lutheran Church in <b>Cambodia</b>                    | \$ _____ |
| <input type="radio"/> Bethany Home for young people with disabilities in <b>Malaysia</b>                                    | \$ _____ |
| <input type="radio"/> Ministry to and with indigenous people (Orang Asli) in <b>Malaysia</b>                                | \$ _____ |
| <input type="radio"/> Youth ministry program in Sabah, <b>Malaysia</b>  | \$ _____ |
| <input type="radio"/> Mission work carried out with the Lua people in Nan Province, <b>Thailand</b>                         | \$ _____ |
| <input type="radio"/> Prison ministry in <b>Indonesia</b>   | \$ _____ |
| <input type="radio"/> Books for the seminary libraries (for <b>overseas partner churches</b> )                              | \$ _____ |
| <input type="radio"/> Publication of Lutheran literature in <b>Indonesia</b>  | \$ _____ |
| <input type="radio"/> Ministry in the Mekong region South-East Asia (through <b>Mekong Mission Forum</b> )                  | \$ _____ |
| <input type="radio"/> LCA lecturers to teach courses in <b>Myanmar</b>  | \$ _____ |
| <input type="radio"/> <b>LCA International Mission</b> – sharing the stories of God's mission                               | \$ _____ |
| <input type="radio"/> I would like to become a partner with LCA International Mission (please send me information)          |          |
| <input type="radio"/> Pray <input type="radio"/> Give <input type="radio"/> Connect <input type="radio"/> Go                |          |
| <input type="radio"/> 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/](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 \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Please send me a receipt

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

Want more? You can experience firsthand how God's love is coming to life through the word-and-action gospel work of our partner churches. Please talk to us about volunteering opportunities – and be prepared to be changed forever.



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

### CAMBODIA

- Teach English at the Rainbow Student Hostel (Phnom Penh), English and computing at the Life Centre (Phum Krus) or English at Tang Krang, Kampong Cham Province

### INDONESIA

- Teach English in the schools and seminaries
- Teach English and give practical help in church institutions
- Teach handcrafts and English at Elim Orphanage; skills in child psychology are also helpful
- Teach conversational English at the BibelFrau school for young women learning to be church workers. The school has a strong focus on music and choirs

### THAILAND

- Give practical help at Home of Praise – which includes a day-care centre for infants and after-school programs for children and young people
- Provide practical assistance at Home of Grace, which cares for unmarried mothers and their babies
- Teach conversational English in local schools in the Nan Province – no qualifications are needed

### MALAYSIA

- At Bethany Home (school and group homes for people with disabilities), teachers with 'special' education qualifications or speech and physical therapy skills are needed; as are pastors or people to provide spiritual care and encouragement for staff and children. Adults and young adults are also needed for practical service in areas that include craft, music and sport
- Help at Rumah Luther Ria – a school for people with disabilities where skills needed include music, conversational English and computing
- Assist at Rumah Chrestus – a home for abused children
- Teach English in Sabah in the schools for 'undocumented children' or in youth ministry programs

### PAPUA NEW GUINEA

- Builder/handyman are needed to help with maintenance of houses
- Write scripts, editing and training for radio broadcasts in the communications department

### SINGAPORE

- Teach English at the Thai Good News Center

### MYANMAR

- Teach conversational English at a local orphanage
- Teach farming or agricultural skills in a local village
- Lecture in Lutheran Distinctives

### WHAT TO DO NEXT ...

If you would like to know more about volunteering in mission overseas, or how your congregation, school, youth or fellowship group can partner in mission, check out our website [www.lca.org.au/international-mission](http://www.lca.org.au/international-mission) or contact Nevin Nitschke (LCA International Mission Program Officer) at [nevin.nitschke@lca.org.au](mailto:nevin.nitschke@lca.org.au) or [lcaim@lca.org.au](mailto:lcaim@lca.org.au) or on 08 8267 7300.



**SERVES 4**

## THAI CHICKEN LAKSA

### Ingredients

- 100g vermicelli noodles
- 2 tsp cooking oil
- 4 spring onions (thinly sliced)
- 1 jar laksa paste
- 1 litre chicken stock
- 270ml can coconut milk (light)
- 400g skinless chicken breast fillets (thinly sliced)
- 1 red capsicum (thinly sliced)
- 200g green beans (thinly sliced)
- 1 cup bean sprouts (rinsed)
- ½ bunch of coriander (chopped)
- 3 tbsp mint leaves (chopped)
- 1 lime (quartered)

### Method

1. Place noodles in a bowl. Cover with boiling water. Stand for 10 minutes. Drain.
2. Heat oil in a wok over high heat. Stir-fry white part of onions. Add laksa paste. Stir until fragrant. Add stock and coconut milk. Bring to the boil. Simmer for 5 minutes
3. Add sliced chicken. Simmer for 2-3 minutes until just tender. Add the capsicum and beans and simmer for 1 minute. Stir through green part of the onions, bean sprouts, coriander and mint.
4. Place noodles in 4 bowls. Ladle soup over. Squeeze juice of lime into each serving bowl.