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ISSUE  
APRIL 2013

12

# BORDER CROSSINGS

*Lutheran Church of Australia Board for Mission*

## Border Crossings

Official publication of the Board for Mission  
of the Lutheran Church of Australia.



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**Printed by:** Openbook Howden Print & Design

Donations to cover the cost of this  
publication are gratefully received.

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# FINDING LIFE

**‘I feel lost, hopeless, alone ... I want to find myself.’**

I’ve heard those words many times—echoed by young and older people alike, written in books, sung in songs, cried by rich and poor as they search for answers.

Jesus responds with the words, ‘If you want to save your own life, you will lose it; but if you lose your life for my sake, you will find it’ (Matthew 16:25 (GNT)).

These words of Jesus stand in stark contrast to the voice and attitudes of the dominant, individualistic culture that surrounds us today, and which can even pervade our homes and our congregations.

In this issue of *Border Crossings* you’ll read some stories of people who have taken steps to ‘lose their life for Christ sake’ and in the experience of serving Jesus have come to know in new ways ‘who they are’ and ‘whose they are’.

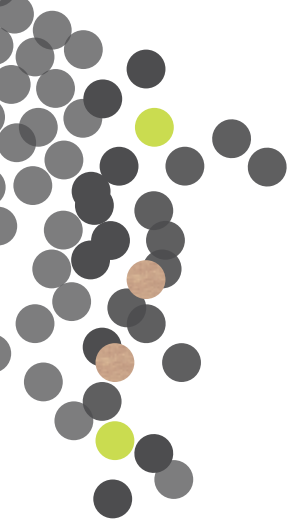
Our deep joy is to walk and work together with you as you join in God’s mission in this world, through the Lutheran Church of Australia (LCA) Board for Mission’s volunteer and partnership programs.

Come join us on the journey with Jesus!



*Glenice Hartwich*

Program Officer  
Lutheran Church of Australia  
Board for Mission



# HOW CAN THEY



# HEAR?

How can they **believe** in the one of whom they have **not heard**? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent?

As it is written,

'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!' (Romans 10: 14,15 (NIV)).

'I didn't know about the people of Cambodia and the amazing work of the Spirit bringing new life here!' Someone recently shared these words with me. The person was truly amazed and thankful for the opportunity to learn more and to support the gospel proclamation going on there.

There are many more places and so many people throughout our neighbourhood of Asia-Pacific whom we have the opportunity to bring hope to through the good news of Jesus Christ.

The LCA Board for Mission (BfM) partners with other Lutherans in our neighbourhood. We work together to bring the gospel to people who don't know the Easter story. They don't know Jesus and his love for them.

The BfM asks you to help to bring the gospel to people in our neighbourhood. We need your prayers. We invite you to volunteer ... to come and see ... to walk with Jesus among the peoples in our region.

This is the first edition of *Border Crossings* in *The Lutheran*. It's part of our renewed effort to share with you the stories, the people, the opportunities, the requests for your much-

needed help to pray, to volunteer and to actively support the amazing mission of God in Christ Jesus in our Asia-Pacific neighbourhood.

Watch out for opportunities for you to be involved via our new website, which will be launched on Pentecost Sunday. Get involved in praying through the weekly prayer points that will be listed on the new website. Contact us if you would like us to visit your congregation, school or group to share the exciting stories. Together, as God's people we share a call ...

**'How can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written,**

**"How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"**

**Pastor Neville Otto**  
Mission Director  
Lutheran Church of Australia





# CAMBODIAN MIRACLES



**Suicide was on the mind of 19-year-old Srey Liak (left), on a day in October 2010 when she was visited by Angie Ng, the former manager of Lutheran World Mission (LWM) in her village in Kampong Chhnang Province, Cambodia. Her father had just died and her mother was planning to remarry, despite the children's opposition.**

Srey Liak and her three siblings (the youngest being only four years of age) had decided to stay with their paternal grandmother instead of following their mother to her new family.

As the oldest child, Srey Liak shouldered the burden of responsibility for feeding and educating her siblings and caring for her grandmother. Life was tough, with no work in the village for a young girl like her. She began to feel helpless and depressed about her situation. She realised her dream of university study could never be fulfilled.

On that October day, Angie shared the good news of Jesus with Srey Liak. Aware of the depressed young woman's situation, she encouraged Srey Liak to come to the Life Centre (in the village of Phum Krus). Reluctantly Srey Liak decided to check it out. At the Life Centre she saw children coming to receive a hearty meal and then staying on for singing and English classes taught by other youth like her. She enjoyed her time with the children and got to know some of the young people. Srey Liak became eager to go to the centre.

After a month Srey Liak was surprised when Angie handed her an envelope with an allowance. Angie had been observing Srey Liak and her attitude as she helped out. The offer to be an intern with a monthly allowance came as an encouraging surprise.

Under the leadership of local Cambodian pastors Daniel and Mose, Srey Liak and other interns learnt and also taught English and IT to other children and youth at the centre each day. Faith grew as Srey Liak listened to the preaching of God's word, she put her trust in Jesus and was baptised.

'My life has changed after I came to Life Centre!' Srey Liak shared. 'My grandma and siblings are all coming to church now and it seems that the many problems we used to have at home are gone. There is peace in my family.' Srey Liak had been sharing the gospel with her mum as well, but had sensed her lack of sincerity. But then, in 2011 her mum handed over a precious 'amulet' from her former religion and asked to be baptised. What a joy for Srey Liak when she stood alongside her mum at her baptism on 1 January 2012!

The pastors noticed that Srey Liak possessed the gift of leadership, was very teachable and passionate about serving God. They recommended that she consider attending a Bible School in Phnom Penh.





Since September 2012 Srey Liak has been studying towards a Bachelor of Theology at Phnom Penh Bible School. She stays with about 50 other young people in the Lutheran hostel in Phnom Penh. There, God is working in mighty ways through the ministry of Pastor Vibol and his wife as they share life with students in their care. Since coming to the hostel, many of the young people have been baptised.

Srey Liak shares, 'I am studying the Bible more diligently these days. I know it is not easy but I will work hard'.

**Sally Lim**  
Mission Coordinator  
Lutheran Church in Singapore

*Together with local Cambodian pastors, Sally Lim shares the oversight of the mission and ministry of this emerging Lutheran Church in Cambodia.*



## in Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Joyful worship was a highlight at the thanksgiving and dedication service held on 9 March in Phnom Penh for the newly acquired Lutheran World Mission City Church and hostel building. Until recently, 50 university students from various provinces had been living and studying in Phnom Penh in hostel units rented by the Lutheran Church in Singapore (LCS).

Through God's generous provision, a new three-storey building was purchased as a key base for mission and ministry to the university students who move to Phnom Penh to continue their education. The accommodation costs for the students are heavily subsidised by the LCS and other overseas partner churches. Lutheran Pastor Vibol Khit and his wife minister to the students each day, living together in the hostel and providing them with a Christ-focused home, which has now been named the Rainbow Hostel.

A visit to the student hostel leaves a lasting impression. On a recent visit to Cambodia, Warren Schirmer (LCA BfM Cambodia Program Assistant), and his fellow travellers shared ... 'On one single day, to move from the horror of the Killing Fields to meet the vibrant, happy, forward-looking students during a Bible study at the hostel ministry was truly inspirational and moving'.

Mr David Pietsch, LLL Board member, said, 'Our visits to Phum Krus village and the hostel in Phnom Penh were real heart experiences. The work our church is doing there is truly inspiring and life-changing.'

LCA Queensland District President Rev Noel Noack, was encouraged too: 'I was inspired to see the way in which the Cambodian young people at the youth hostel showed their love of Jesus'.

As Australian and New Zealand Lutherans, you and I are privileged to join in the amazing work that God is doing in Cambodia through the partnership shared with the LCS, Mekong Mission Forum member churches and the LCA Board for Mission.





# Loved

## & CARED FOR by you!



David and Ruth Craig are not your ordinary couple. Since retirement they have given large amounts of their time as volunteer teachers of English through the LCA Board for Mission's volunteer program. Read what they said about their latest experience.

*We were privileged to go as volunteers to Phnom Penh, Cambodia, for two months in 2012 to teach English to eager university students living in the three student hostels of Lutheran World Mission (LWM). Our focus was to teach basic conversational English.*

*Living in a small unit in one of the hostels gave us many opportunities to chat informally. We—Lok ta (grandpa) and Lok yey (grandma)—shared a bathroom and washing facilities with twelve young men!*

*The students impressed us with their dedication to study, willingness to share their knowledge with each other, cooperation with domestic duties, and their initiation of development projects in the Cambodian provinces.*

*They attended Bible studies on two evenings under the guidance of Pastor Vibol, planned worship and practised songs in preparation for Sunday.*

*It was sad to say goodbye. But we knew we had so much to share with our home congregation (Dernancourt, SA), who have enthusiastically supported the program in Cambodia.*

*These Cambodian Christians are moved and encouraged by the prayers, financial support, love and care shown to them by people they don't even know—encouraged by you through the gospel partnership of the LCA Board for Mission.*

God's spirit is moving in that place!



## Thank you...

for teaching us

When Pastors James San Aung (left) and Martin Lal Thangliana (right) returned to their home country of Myanmar (Burma) late last year, they were full of thankfulness to you!

Through your offerings (which are distributed through the LCA national budget to the LCA Board for Mission), you made it possible for James and Martin to study at Australian Lutheran College (ALC) for three months in 2012. During that time they also experienced Australian hospitality when they visited congregations and institutions of the LCA, and shared meals and cultural experiences with many new and old friends.

You are making a huge difference in the Lutheran churches of our near Asian and Pacific neighbours through the scholarship program of the LCA Board for Mission. Many of the people who have received LCA scholarships in the past have gone on to become bishops, leaders and lecturers in their churches.

Because of you, this year the Lutheran churches in Singapore, Papua New Guinea, Indonesia, Bhutan and Nepal will also be encouraged and inspired in faith through the LCA Board for Mission's scholarship program, as people from these churches study at ALC. Thank YOU!



# REINVIGORATING

# FAITH

**Volunteers from  
across Australia  
work together with  
Australian pastor  
Simon Mackenzie  
in Thailand**

Pastor Simon Mackenzie was assigned to Thailand as the first full-time missionary in Asia, after being ordained in 2004.

While living and ministering in the Thai city of Chang Rai, Simon was aware of the plight of the Lua' people in Nan Province, and the need to support this ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thailand (ELCT).

In 2009, after discussions with ELCT and the LCA, it was agreed that Simon and his family would move to the city of Nan, in Nan Province, to work full-time with the ELCT in its ministry and mission among the Lua' people.

Nan city is situated some 670 kilometres north of Bangkok, and Nan Province stretches up to the Laos border. There are approximately 140,000 Lua' people living in the mountainous regions of Nan Province, about two hours drive north of Nan city. Ethnically, culturally and historically, the Lua' people are not Thai. Their first language is Lua' and they have strong animistic beliefs. Their history and culture have been severely disrupted through war, famine, discrimination and the influence of communistic soldiers.

This was going to be a challenge for Simon—working with a new church, new language, new culture, new people, new beliefs and new environment. 'The Lua' people are so receptive', Simon said. 'They see in Christ someone who can release them from the fear of "faith in spirits".'

More than 1000 Lua' people are now baptised members of the ELCT. 'What a privilege to be here among these people and see such faith ... and see it so alive!', he said.

'This is a first-generation church, so encouragement through teaching to strengthen faith, and modelling Christian life and living are very important. We need to model the way of being a Christian in daily living.'



The LCA supports the ministry and mission in Nan in many ways. The annual mission trips, organised from St Mark's Lutheran Church in Epping NSW, is vital mission work. Simon King is the volunteer team leader and the program assistant for the BFM in this ministry program.

'The annual mission teams are hands-on theology', said Simon. 'We love you! We can't say it in your words, so we love you by doing it in deeds and action.'

The teams have been coming annually to Nan Province since 2009, helping to build roads, houses and preaching places, clearing land and building places for Sunday worship, among other jobs. These practical ways of helping are a godsend for the Lua' people and the visits speak volumes.

In return, this encourages the volunteers by reinvigorating their own faith. You can help from a distance through prayer, visits, volunteering and supporting the annual mission trips.



**'We stand beside  
you as Christian  
brothers and  
sisters. You are  
valued, one body,  
together [we are]  
one in the gospel  
of Jesus Christ.'**



# GETTING INVOLVED

## 'Me—a volunteer?'

Is that a question you ask?

God uses people from many backgrounds and ages to do his work here in Australia and overseas. Students, retired people, young people wanting to fill a gap year, doctors, nurses, teachers, mechanics and accountants, have all joined in God's mission through the Board for Mission's (BfM) volunteer program.

Volunteering takes many forms and can happen in many locations. As a Christian volunteer you're a living example of God's word in action. Most people would agree that through volunteering their own lives have been changed ... forever!

## We need volunteers for ...

- teaching English in schools and orphanages
- practical assistants in orphanages and homes for people with disabilities
- lecturers at seminaries
- maintenance workers

... and the list goes on! Are you interested?

## CHECK IT OUT!

If you, your school or congregation would like to know more about volunteering in mission overseas or here in Australia, please contact the **LCA Board for Mission** office  
bfm@lca.org.au or phone: **08 8267 7334**

## DO YOU WANT TO LEARN HOW TO BECOME A TEACHER OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (TEFL)?

Having done the 'i-to-i' TEFL course last year, I'm excited enough now to think that even I could teach English as a volunteer with the LCA BfM volunteer program!

Why not consider doing the online, 'i-to-i' TEFL course like me? That way you can be more ready to answer a call to 'come and teach us English'.

### Glenice Hartwich

Program Officer  
LCA Board for Mission



#### i-to-i Contact details

Phone: 1300 88 15 90

Website: <http://australia.i-to-i.com/>



## KHMER STIR-FRIED CHICKEN *and snow peas...* (CAMBODIAN)



### INGREDIENTS

2 tbsp vegetable oil	1 cup water
2 cloves garlic, minced	1 tbsp fish sauce
800g chicken breast, sliced thinly	1 tbsp cornflour
1 onion, sliced	1 tbsp sugar
1 carrot, peeled and sliced thinly	1 tbsp soy sauce
500g snow peas (cut tips off ends)	¼ tbsp black pepper

### METHOD

- In a small bowl, mix water with cornflour, fish sauce and sugar; set aside.
- Heat wok or frying pan, add oil, garlic and chicken; stir until chicken is cooked.
- Add soy sauce and black pepper; mix well.
- Add onion, carrot and snow peas; stir well (do not overcook vegetables).
- Add prepared sauce and stir until sauce thickens. Serve hot with rice.

## VOLUNTEER opportunities

Have you considered volunteering in mission with one of our overseas partner churches? The opportunities and places are many and the experience is life-changing!

### Malaysia

- Bethany Home (school / homes for people with disabilities)—teachers with special education qualifications; pastors or people able to provide spiritual care and encouragement for the staff and children; adults and young adults needed for practical service
- Rumah Chrestus (home for abused children)
- Rumah Hope (home for orphans, abused and neglected children)
- Rumah Love and Care (home for aged people)

### Cambodia

- Partnership with Lutheran Church in Singapore and local ministry team working in Cambodia

### Indonesia

- Teaching English in the schools and seminaries
- Teaching English and practical help in various orphanages
- Partnership with Lutheran schools
- Partnership with an orphanage

Consider encouraging your congregation, school, youth group or fellowship group to become personally involved in a mission partnership.

If you would like to know more about volunteering in mission overseas or if you would like to begin to understand how your congregation, school, youth group or fellowship group can partner in mission, please contact the Board for Mission: email [bfm@lca.org.au](mailto:bfm@lca.org.au) or phone **08 8267 7334**