

# BORDER CROSSINGS



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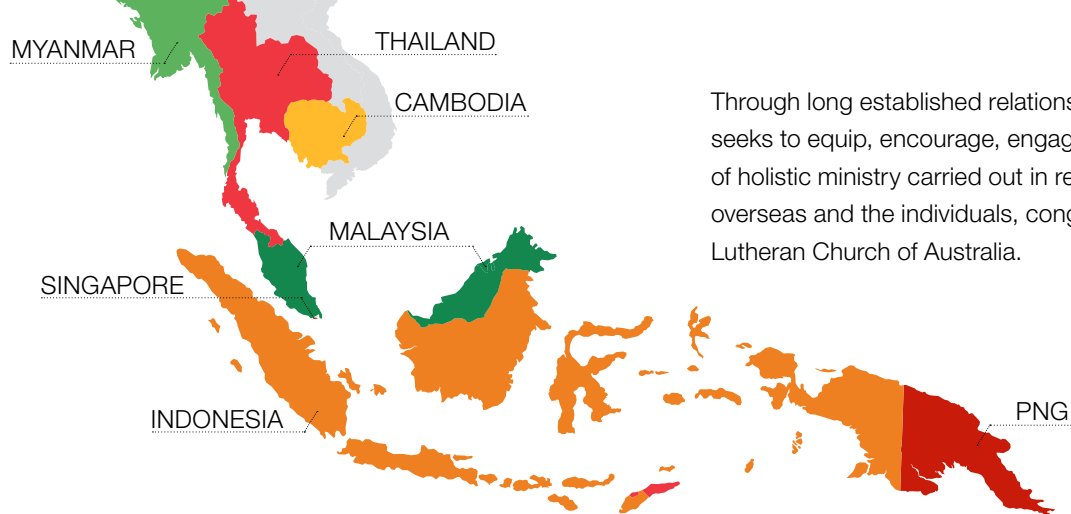
**LUTHERAN  
CHURCH**  
OF AUSTRALIA

**INTERNATIONAL  
MISSION**

*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

# A LIVING WITNESS TO GOD'S SAVING LOVE

As an adult convert to the Lutheran church, I remember clearly the joy of discovering the radical gospel which forms the heart of our theology and life. Like weights being lifted from my shoulders and layers of darkness being stripped away, I came to know the renewal that is ours in Christ and I couldn't get enough!

When the pastor suggested I read *One in the Gospel* (a popular translation of the Formula of Concord), I devoured it and was filled with even more hope and joy.

What a privilege it is in our LCA/NZ that we can immerse ourselves in faithful, biblical teaching and be constantly fed on a diet of Reformation fare that strengthens our faith and increases our joy in the saving gospel.

But I wonder whether we have become complacent about treasuring the theological legacy we have been left – not as some kind of relic, but as a living witness to the love of God revealed in Christ crucified for the forgiveness of sins.

There is no such complacency when I visit our partner churches. Many of these churches would describe their historical formation as having come out of 'union churches', in which Lutheran teaching was not very strong. But the joy of our theology is that it is thoroughly biblical and so they are experiencing an awakening that is leading them to understand what they have been missing out on.

At a recent seminar in Indonesia, we gave Luther's Small Catechism to participants and for some, including seminary lecturers, it was the first time they had seen it. One lecturer couldn't put it down and devoured it like a starving man eating his first meal in days. The same man was devastated to realise that for years his teaching had been obscuring the gospel with requirements of the law. He pleaded for the LCA/NZ's help so that he and his fellow lecturers can better understand Lutheran theology and train pastors to proclaim the true freedom of the gospel, bringing comfort and peace to people.

His words reminded me how incredibly blessed we are because of the theological faithfulness we have inherited. What a joyful responsibility we have to help our brothers and sisters in our region to receive this same blessing. Our prayer is that their churches, too, may be filled with people celebrating the free gift of forgiveness and life that is ours through Jesus Christ our Lord.



# LEARNING THE LANGUAGE OF LOVE



South Asia is a captivating place that overwhelms the senses with its vast crowds, loud noises, vibrant colours, spicy food and overpowering smells. There are thousands of distinct groups of people, who speak hundreds of different languages in this region. The majority of people follow Hinduism or Islam, meaning that most people have not heard the good news about Jesus or, if they have, they probably don't have the complete Bible available in their language.

Audrey\* was introduced to Bible translation in 2004 and has since been on a number of short-term mission trips. During these trips, she has seen how important it is for people to have the Bible in their own languages. 'If pastors struggle to understand the Bible in their country's national language, how can they disciple people from their own local language community?', she asks.

She has also been challenged by how many Bible translations we have available in English – literally hundreds – and by how much work needs to be done to translate the Bible into the almost 1800 languages which have no Scriptures.

In 2014, Audrey returned to South Asia to help at a training workshop for local translators. The experience showed her more about the process of Bible translation and the ways in which she could serve. Now, having equipped herself for the work, she is ready to return long-term. She is excited about serving the local church and working with local Bible translators as they bring God's word alive in their own languages.

Once she arrives in South Asia, she will need to focus on language study and learning new ways of life in a different culture. It can also be difficult to get long-term visas for this part of Asia, so she will be looking for another area of service, in addition to translation.

This is an exciting opportunity for us in the LCA/NZ to join God's work in this area. Martin Luther translated the Bible into German so that 'everyday people' could read God's word, meaning that Bible translation is a key part of our Lutheran heritage.

*Audrey is working through Wycliffe Bible Translators. The LCA/NZ has a Memorandum of Understanding with Wycliffe Bible Translators as we partner in God's work.*

*\*Not her real name*

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

**LCA International Mission is partnering with Wycliffe to support Audrey as she ensures the gospel can be proclaimed in the heart-language of unbelievers in South Asia.**

How can you support the proclamation of the gospel?

**If you would like to support Audrey as she prepares to join God in his mission to extend his kingdom in South Asia through Bible translation, please refer to the donation form on the back page.**



# TRUE BEAUTY IS JOY *of Jesus*

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

***LCA International Mission supports the Lutheran Church in Malaysia in its outreach to the Orang Asli, by providing scholarships for pastoral candidates and financial assistance for congregations and pastors who are part of the Orang Asli District.***

How can you support this work?

***If you would like to support the ministry with the Orang Asli living in West Malaysia, please refer to the donation form on the back of this edition.***

**by Pastor Matt Anker**

The Cameron Highlands in Central Malaysia are breathtakingly beautiful. Untouched jungles border manicured tea plantations, monkeys frolic on the side of the road, and tourists stop for 'selfies' in front of stunning waterfalls. Every turned corner presents a view more beautiful than the last.

But, on a recent visit there with Program Officer Erin Kerber, the most beautiful thing we saw was not the scenery. It was the mission work with the indigenous Orang Asli people, which you support through LCA International Mission.

In the village of Sungai Tidong, I had the privilege of sitting with Rosman and hearing about his life, including that he was baptised by Lutheran Church in Malaysia Bishop Aaron Yap – who was with us – a few years earlier. Rosman's radiant smile reflected his joy as a Christian and Erin commented that you could see Jesus in his face.

Rosman was raised with the traditional religion of his ancestors. Life was governed by the need to appease the spirits and every misfortune prompted more religious obligations to secure a happier life.

He faced near-death situations four times. Twice falling from trees and being badly injured, once falling from a house he was building and becoming entangled in wiring, and once coming close to drowning while fishing. When Rosman reflected on these incidents, he became convinced that his life had not been preserved by accident. And, with his wife being one of the first Christians in the area, he realised he had been saved so that he could come to know Jesus.

As Rosman retold these stories, he was so excited that we had to ask him to slow down so that his words could be translated and shared. He recalled how demon-possessed people in his village had been liberated through prayer in Jesus' name. And our brother in the Lord shared about the freedom he enjoys as a Christian.

Even as a believer, Rosman faces the dangers of life in the jungle and the struggle for survival without a regular income. But as a Christian, Rosman now can face each day with hope, because of his faith in God's promises, secured in the blood of Jesus. Rosman's joy in the Lord was truly the most beautiful thing we saw that day!



# FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

by Lou Moss



## How can you partner?

*The picking season for the apricots will begin this month and continue into mid-January. If you would like to volunteer to help pick and dry apricots, please contact LCA International Mission.*

For more than 11 years, the Apricots for Compassionate Ministries Project has been operating in South Australia's Riverland. Each year, thousands of dollars have been raised from the sale of dried apricots and sent to support those at the forefront of building God's kingdom through the practical demonstration of Jesus' love.

In keeping with Jesus' command to love one another (John 3:34–35) and the biblical reminder that faith not backed up by action is dead (James 2:14–17), the funds have been used to help bring health care, aged care, childcare, disability care, food aid and pastoral training to people in Cambodia, Tonga and Myanmar.

The project has grown out of adversity. God promises to bring good from bad, so be encouraged. Although I had a few years of experience working in orchards and vineyards at Stanthorpe, Queensland, from my mid-50s, I had never had any experience with apricots – growing them or drying them. But two years after a road accident claimed the life of my wife, I bought a Moorook apricot property. I knew the Riverland and chose to come live near my eldest daughter and my family.

From my first harvest in 2008, I wanted to put the proceeds into supporting compassionate ministries. However, I needed the volunteer help of people in the Barmera–New Residence and Berri Lutheran congregations, and the blessing of LCA/NZ leadership to allow the sale of dried apricots through Lutheran churches, to make it happen.

I barely knew any of those people but they happily agreed to contribute and fundraising began in 2009. Since then, many people have given time and energy to help with harvesting and other production tasks. Along with people from Riverland Lutheran congregations, folk from a number of other denominations lend support too.

Of course, without our wonderful buyers, no money would be raised. Our apricots are enjoyed in South Australia and Queensland and, at times, in Melbourne and Sydney. When the proceeds from 2019 sales have been distributed, approximately \$150,000 will have been sent to ministries the project supports.

As to the future, I will celebrate my 75th birthday during the coming harvest. Hopefully, we will be able to find younger volunteers to begin to take over some of the production work!

*We thank God for this gift of love which has, and continues to, produce fruit of another kind – fruit that will transform people's lives now and for eternity.*

## How are we partnering?

*Apricot sales have supported the Lutheran Church in Cambodia's ongoing ministry and, recently, the redevelopment of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Myanmar's Lutheran Bethlehem Church building, to help them become financially independent and thereby continue reaching out with the love of Jesus.*



# DWELLING IN THE • GOSPEL •

## HAVE FAITH IN GOD'S POWER

by Pastor Matt Anker

During a recent visit to Thailand, we were hosted by Pastor Tovo (as pictured on the cover) from Madagascar, who is serving as a missionary in the Nan province. As we pulled up to a roadside restaurant owned by a friend of Pastor Tovo, my colleague Erin asked him if the restaurant owner was a Christian. Tovo profoundly replied, 'Not yet'.

Just those two words – 'not yet' – reveal faith in the power of God's word and his desire for all people to be saved.

How would you respond if someone asked whether one of your unbelieving friends was a Christian?

Too often we find ourselves second-guessing whether people would be interested in the faith and judging whether they would be receptive to the message. The guilt associated with such an attitude can bind us in a vicious circle where we feel incapable of sharing the faith.

But I want to tell you wonderful news. Your sins of keeping silent, of prejudging others, of denying them the chance to hear the gospel, your sins of 'wussing out' and making excuses – all of these have been paid for on the cross of Christ and you are forgiven in Jesus' name.

You are now a new creation, precious and holy in God's sight and free to share this gift that is yours by faith.

 **So let's look at 1 Peter 3:15 and Romans 1:16.**

Does God put limits on who might be receptive to the message of the gospel?

Where does the power to change hearts and create faith lie – in your polished proclamation or in the word of God?

Pastor Tovo has incredible confidence in God's word to do its work and change people's lives. He believes it's just a matter of when they come to faith, not whether they will.

 **Read Isaiah 55:10–11**

What gets in your way of having this radical confidence in God's word?

I remember observing the Roman Catholic *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* – the equivalent of an inquirers class. I was fascinated by how relaxed the leaders were. They were not worried about whether participants became members of the church because they figured that, eventually, they would all come to realise the treasure the church offers. Those who didn't embrace the instruction were also in the category of 'not yet'.

Is this the way you experience life in our LCA/NZ? Or is there more of a sense of desperation when a potential new member joins our ranks? If so, why do you think this is?

We have inherited the wonderful proclamation that we are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone, so this confidence should be second nature to us. Perhaps we have lost sight of the treasure that Jesus has won for us.

So first let God's word do its work in you.

 **Read Romans 5:8.**

Be refreshed in the precious news that 'while we were still sinners Christ died for us'. The Holy Spirit will remind you of the wonderful treasure that is yours to share and give you confidence that he will call, gather and enlighten those who receive this treasure.



TRAINING  
IN THE

◦ GOSPEL ◦

# Your support brings blessings

by Rev Au Sze (Su Su) Ngui

Time truly flies. I graduated in June of 2017 and now it is almost the end of 2019! Having completed my Master of Theology degree from the Lutheran Theological Seminary (LTS) Hong Kong, I returned to Sabah, Malaysia to serve in the Sabah Theological Seminary (STS) as a lecturer.

In my first semester at STS I was assigned to teach a Church History course and an intensive course on the Basics of the Christian Faith, both in Malay or Bahasa Malaysia (BM). I struggled with my BM as I had not used this language for many years on such a high academic level.

The following semester I was appointed Dean of Students and was also the advisor for the Student Association. Besides my duties at STS, I was elected as the Assistant Dean for the English section of Basel Christian Church of Malaysia (BCCM). I was invited to preach at the 10 BCCM English congregations over time. This was a joy as I had never served in the Kota Kinabalu district of Sabah and I began to get to know the various congregations.

I will always be grateful to LCA International Mission which, with your support, sponsored my studies at LTS. I was able to fulfil a desire to study at a Lutheran seminary and I learnt so much from my two years in Hong Kong, including how to preach in Cantonese!

Beside this, I discovered something about myself while I was in Hong Kong away from my denomination and church. I am very, very attached to liturgy. I visited one of the fastest-growing independent English speaking churches on Hong Kong Island. However, I could not continue worshipping there because they never celebrated holy communion when I worshipped there, nor did they have a benediction at the end of services. Going through confession and the pastor speaking absolution is necessary for me, as it is a renewal of my faith and relationship with God. Also, holding the bread and the wine in my hands reminds me of the price Christ paid for my sins. Even though I know that I am loved by God, the benediction at the end of a worship service is the blessing and assurance

of God's presence, along with the understanding that I am sent forth to be light and salt in this world.

It is true that a person never stops learning. Therefore I am very thankful to God and to LCA International Mission for sponsoring my study.

## How are we training in the gospel?

*LCA International Mission provides scholarships to allow further training of pastors such as Su Su (above far left) and lay people in Lutheran theology from our overseas partner churches.*

## How can you support this training in the gospel?

*If you would like to support scholarships for Lutheran theological training in seminaries in South-East Asia, please refer to the donation form on the back of this edition.*





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

We take great care of your financial gifts.

You can be confident that 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.)

- ☐ Audrey's work with Bible translation in **South Asia** \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Ministry to and with the Orang Asli (indigenous people) living in **Malaysia** \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Scholarships for pastors and teachers in **South-East Asia** \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Library support for Lutheran theological material in **Malaysia** and **Indonesia** \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ LCA lecturers teaching on Lutheran distinctives in **Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia** and **Papua New Guinea** \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ I would like to leave a bequest for LCA International Mission in my will (please send me information)

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

*If the ministry you have nominated is oversubscribed, LCA International Mission will redirect your gift to support a similar ministry.*

You can support one or more of the above ministries 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 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)

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Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ P/C \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Please send me a receipt



## 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.**

- our overseas brothers and sisters, as they celebrate with us, the free gift of forgiveness and life that is ours through Jesus Christ our Lord
- Audrey, as she trusts God to prompt people to join with her as partners in Bible translation through prayer, finance and encouragement, so she can move to South Asia in January 2020
- the Orang Asli in Malaysia, who are liberated by the gospel and enjoying freedom as beloved children of God
- Barmera–New Residence and Berri Lutheran congregations, South Australia, together with Lou Moss, as they continue to support the building of God's kingdom through the selling of dried apricots
- Rev Au Sze (Su Su) Ngui, as she teaches her students at the Sabah Theological Seminary (STS) about the blessing and assurance of God's presence among them, and as she encourages them to go forth to be light and salt in this world

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!'*



**Missionaries don't only carry bibles. Some carry laptops and spreadsheets too.**

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