

BORDER CROSSINGS



global partners · local church



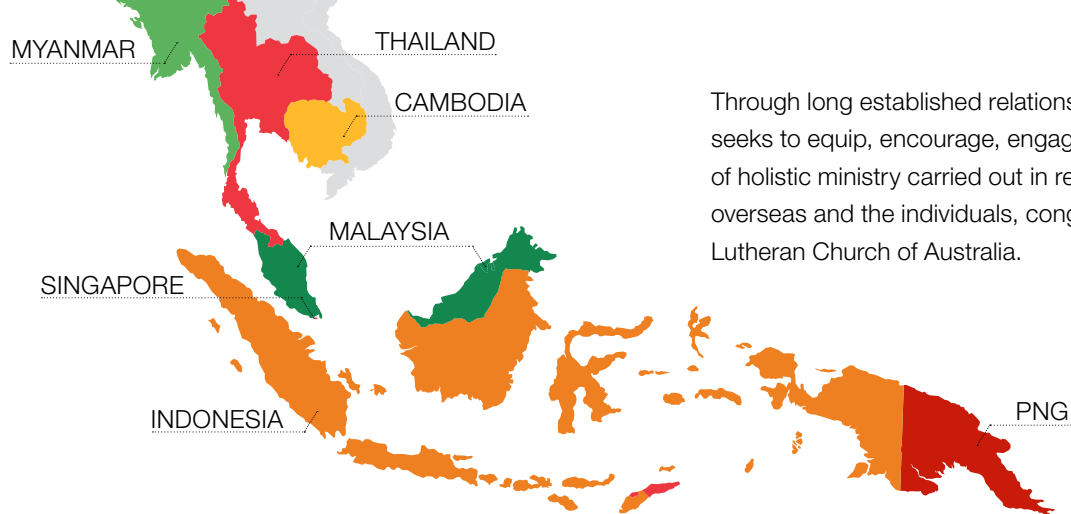
**LUTHERAN
CHURCH**
OF AUSTRALIA

**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

ONE TRUE SOURCE OF PEACE

If we were to believe everything Hollywood has to say about Buddhism, we could be excused for thinking it was a religion epitomising peace and tranquillity. Surrounded by lush gardens in idyllic settings, people practising Buddhism are depicted as having achieved a more enlightened, less burdened way of life.

But that is very different to the stories members of the LCA International Mission team often hear.

On a recent visit to Phum Krus in Cambodia I met an elderly lady who had lived as a devout Buddhist, desperate to achieve the Buddhist equivalent of salvation. Yet her description of life was one of fear, uncertainty and the need to perform never-ending acts of devotion in order to prove her worthiness.

The Buddhism she described was worlds apart from the one spruiked by the likes of actor Richard Gere and depicted by the Dalai Lama's words. Her description of the fear she lived with as a Buddhist revealed a devout woman, longing to be at peace with God but also aware of her own sinfulness and need for redemption.

What a contrast it was to hear her speak of her new-found faith in Jesus and of the peace she now knew because her sins were forgiven. She spoke of the freedom she had to smile, dance and express the happiness in her heart without fear of upsetting a fearsome deity. And as she spoke, her aging face shone with the inexpressible joy she now knows because she trusts Jesus and his promises of forgiveness, life and salvation.

Listening to this dear sister in the Lord reminded me that there are essentially two religions. One, which comes under many names, declares what you must do to be saved. Whereas Christianity declares that in Jesus everything is done and salvation is yours by faith. Sitting under her house on that hot Cambodian day, it was clear that this lady understood that difference better than most.

Ironically, her life is now filled with the peace and joy that westerners often claim Buddhism offers. No more spirits harassing her in the long hours of night, causing doubt and despair. No more power in the judgemental looks of fellow Buddhists who considered it inappropriate for a widow to ever be happy. No more uncertainty in this life or the next, all because she now knows that Jesus himself said, 'It is finished!'

GOD'S HEALING SPIRIT AT WORK

In the small village of Huai Pong, nestled in the mountains of northern Thailand, Khun Pim shares the story of her love for Jesus.

'I became Christian 18 years ago', Pim says. 'I was a very shy person but I received the teaching to be a leader at church and am very happy to be part of the team who share the gospel in my community.'

'When I became an evangelist, I could compare a Christian's life and the life of a non-believer who believes in and fears many kinds of spirits. I know well about believing in these nonsense things.'

Pim is one of eight local evangelists who serve their local communities by living and sharing the gospel.

'Jesus Christ is a healer, a mighty God! He has authority and he has love. When we go to service at church, we don't need to bring an expensive sacrifice. God's grace is free for everyone who seeks for him.'

Pim often talks about Jesus with the people she meets.

'Two years ago I talked with a spirit doctor at Ban Huai Pong. He said that he is able to do everything ... but he cannot forgive his sin himself.'

'One day, he had a grandchild who had a sickness. He tried to do his best to heal his own grandchild, but he was not able to. He called other spirit doctor friends to help him, but after trying many things they gave up.'

'He asked me to pray for his grandchild who by that time was in a coma. I went there several times to pray for him and his grandchild was healed. The spirit doctor became a Christian and was baptised. He asked me to put a cross in his house. The children also want to receive baptism but their mother forbids them.'

Pim asks us to pray for people who want to be a Christian but whose family won't allow them to be.

'My husband is someone who God placed in my life for a reason. He is very calm and he gives me good advice', she says. 'When the evangelists work far from the village, he helps me with our work at home and in taking care of our daughter.'

'I have a friend who shares everything with me. I am so sad when she has a problem and spends her money for nothing at the spirit doctors. I prayed for her for a long time. Jesus answered my prayer and she was baptised last Easter.'

Pim's trust in Jesus and love for her community has seen God's Spirit change lives.



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

The evangelists serving in the Nan province are financially supported by you, the members of the LCA/NZ, through LCA International Mission, to continue the spreading of the gospel to the Lua people.

How can you support the proclamation of the gospel?

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



TRANSFORMED
BY THE
GOSPEL

YOUNG AND ALIVE *in Jesus*

by Nevin Nitschke

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

LCA International Mission financially supports the youth ministry programs to the indigenous young people of Sabah through the Basel Christian Church of Malaysia (BCCM) Bahasa Malay (BM) church.

How can you support this work?

If you would like to support the ministry to the young indigenous people living in Sabah, please refer to the donation form on the back of this edition.

Each of us knows the importance of supporting and encouraging our youth in their walk with Jesus. Most of us also know the challenges this can bring.

Many have been touched by the disappointment of seeing a young person slide away from the church. I suspect the topic sits heavily in many of our hearts.

For a number of years now, LCA International Mission has sponsored the youth ministry of the Basel Christian Church of Malaysia (BCCM BM). Through this support, the young Christian leaders in East Malaysia plan ministry camps and seminars to train their youth to be Jesus in their communities.

Christian camping programs in Malaysia see high numbers of young people attend and provide wonderful opportunities for hearts to be warmed by the gospel and lives given purpose for being God's children.

The theme the youth have chosen for the next two years is 'Go and make disciples' (Matthew 28:19–20), in particular:

- emphasising discipleship to young adults in BCCM BM so that they will be active, creative and productive in doing their services
- emphasising deep discipleship so that young adults in BCCM BM can be present in the midst of society, especially in Sabah.

Encourage them to respond with faith in words and deeds to community issues regarding economic, political, cultural, educational and natural issues, so they are able to communicate with the world, outside the walls of the church.

- to prepare and challenge young adults to keep their faith so that they can be an influencer and a leader, creatively serving and using their potential in ministry.

As well as a dozen seminars planned over the next two years, for the first time a teenagers camp has been added to the other major youth camp held annually.

The youth leaders ask us to keep them in our prayers, particularly for the spiritual preparation and development of the mission and the spiritual wisdom and loving service of the mission.

They also asked us to pray for the spiritual development, strength and growth of the partner churches – and that includes us! May their wisdom give us hope and courage, and ears and hearts open to hearing God calling us to serve Jesus.

I pray that the hope and grace we have found in Jesus will be shared with our next generation. May we also have the grace to learn from our brothers and sisters in our partner churches.



A PLACE OF HOPE FOR ALL

by **Dwayne Todd**
Immanuel College
Year 9 Coordinator



How can
you partner?

If your school would like to know more about how to connect to the mission of God through an LCA International Mission partnership, please contact us.

At Bethany Home in Malaysia, the love of our Heavenly Father is on offer in abundance, regardless of ability, ethnicity, religious background or social status.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malaysia established Bethany Home more than 50 years ago to care for those living with disability and to reach out to all with the saving message of the gospel. In a culture that looks down on those who suffer, this is a place of refuge and hope inspired by the forgiveness and new life offered in Jesus' name.

Like all good partnerships, our partnership with Bethany Home is one of blessings flowing in both directions as you will read in the following story of a recent visit by students from Immanuel College, Novar Gardens, South Australia.

BETHANY 2019

After six months of preparation, fundraising and getting to know each other, we flew out of Adelaide to Kuala Lumpur, where we spent a couple of days. We headed to Bethany Home and attended the evening worship, where we were greeted by some of the staff and students.

We worked in a variety of classes including Level 1-6 academic classes, special needs, work skill, therapy and physio. We visited the Lighthouse Training Centre where older students work on putting handles together for pot lids, creating bookmarks and organising and selling second-hand clothes. They can earn an income from this in a workplace environment.

Activities included:

- helping the students during morning exercise, gardening, cleaning, sports activities, hydrotherapy, arts and craft
- assisting in setting up and running the sports day carnival
- creating activities to run with the classes
- eating at the Bethany Café
- painting murals after school hours
- running devotions with the staff in the mornings
- sponsoring and building a new herb garden
- visiting the group home for dinner and playing games with the students.

Our Immanuel students immersed themselves in the culture, formed bonds and supported each other. They demonstrated love, care and a genuine want to support and assist the Bethany students whenever possible. They formed some great connections with the students and staff in a short time.

Working at Bethany gives you a new perspective on life and an appreciation of the difficulties that people with disabilities face. Despite their challenges, the Bethany students turn up to school every day with a smile on their face, willing to do their best without complaint. We can learn a lot from their attitude to life.

How are we partnering?

LCA International Mission works in partnership with Lutheran Education Australia and our overseas partner churches to provide opportunities for Lutheran schools, teachers and students from Australia to develop long-term, sustainable relationships and transformative service partnerships, which are mutually beneficial to the Australian school and the school or ministry organisation of the overseas Lutheran church.



DWELLING
IN THE

• **GOSPEL** •

BLESS THOSE WHO HURT YOU

by Pastor Matt Anker


In the last edition of Border Crossings our study focused on the need to use the word of God in mission because 'faith comes by hearing'. The problem is that many of us have shared God's word with a friend and been accused of bible bashing!

Some of you may remember a situation in which a Christian celebrity tried to 'reach out' to non-believers by posting a passage of scripture on social media that focused on God's law – revealing the condemnation awaiting those who refuse to repent. Although his post included words of Scripture, do you think it was a good approach to evangelism?


Why or why not?

The reality is God's law has never been popular, not even in the church! None of us like to be told our actions deserve condemnation, even when we know it is true. So simply quoting God's law to unbelievers is not likely to be well received.

St Peter wrote his first letter to an early Christian community which knew a lot about surviving in a culture that was hostile to their message.

 **Read 1 Peter 1–3.** His letter contains deep wisdom when it comes to how to engage in mission today. So what is his approach?


Firstly, he makes sure the Christians truly know who they are.

 **Read 1 Peter 1:3–5, 18–19; and 2:9–10.**


According to these verses, what status do Christians have in the household of God? Where does Peter say their confidence lies? Why can we be confident of this regardless of life's circumstances?

The challenge for these Christians was that they were


despised by those around them. And while these Christians might have been tempted to proclaim God's wrath against the unbelievers who persecuted them, Peter calls them to act in a most unexpected way!

 **Read 1 Peter 2:1–5, 11–25; 3:1–2, and 7–9.**

What kind of behaviour does Peter encourage from these Christians who are being abused and despised?

 When they bless those who do them evil (**2:9**) and suffer for simply doing good (**2:17**), what kind of response would you expect from the non-believers around them?

While some might think the Christians are 'nuts', most would be intrigued and begin to ask, 'Why do you act this way?' 'Why don't you return evil for evil?' 'Why do you stick around when your slave master is so cruel?'

 To Peter, every one of these questions is the beginning of a mission conversation. He calls his readers to 'be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect' (**1 Peter 3:15**).

Peter encourages Christians to live in a manner consistent with our calling as God's holy people and to be prepared to suffer injustice quietly, knowing that our hope lies beyond this current age. When people eventually ask why we don't repay evil with evil, he says we should be ready to tell them the reason for the hope we have.

We should share with them the good news that, despite our sin, shame and the condemnation it deserves, we have the sure hope of life with God forever because, while we were still sinners, Jesus died for us. Give it a try. God might surprise you!



Reconciliation brings joy and hope

by Rev Shigeo Sueoka,

President of Kinki Evangelical Lutheran Church in Japan

Greetings from Kinki Evangelical Lutheran Church Japan in the name of Christ our Lord!

I am very grateful to the LCA for sending Pastor Paul Kerber to teach us Biblical Reconciliation. He gave us great joy and hope in Christ.

By God's grace, I was a participant in the first scholarship in 2017. During training, I started to understand the reconciliation we need to know is the reconciliation of faith, grounded on the biblical understanding of Lutheran theology.

I was stirred and excited by learning this basic and important teaching. After I returned to Japan, we started to study Biblical Reconciliation in our Theological Committee. Finally, we were able to welcome Pastor Paul as our lecturer for three days.

The first day was for the Theological Committee. We shared situations in our ministry and were blessed by gaining a better understanding of each other.

Day two was for our pastors and evangelists. We reflected on our own faith and attitude toward God and people. We received great encouragement in pastoral care, preaching God's word and proclaiming the gospel.

The third day was for church members. Participants learnt a clear understanding of law and gospel from Scripture and how this is lived out. We learnt that the basic meaning of the gospel is God's forgiveness of sin and that those who are forgiven can forward that forgiveness to their neighbours.

A mother had a deep feeling of guilt when she remembered her nasty words and strict attitude which hurt her daughter's heart. In the lecture, she felt God's guidance and, returning home, confessed her guilt to her daughter and asked for forgiveness. The mother and daughter came to true reconciliation in the peace of God.

One of the pastors was also set free to confess his boastful and hateful feelings against a fellow pastor. They made time to talk and proclaim forgiveness to each other.

In Japanese culture, people are bound by shame because of the strong influence of the fusion of Buddhism, Confucianism and Shintoism. Through the seminars, many people were released from the bondage of shame, focusing on Christ on the cross, who carried the sin of the world.

Our church stands on the Theology of the Cross, not on the theology of

prosperity. We face many difficulties in our church life and the centre of the gospel often becomes unclear.

Through the seminar, we could regain the joy of the gospel and we want to practise what we have learnt!

We thank our God who gives us great hope. 'Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ' (1 Corinthians 1:3).

How are we training in the gospel?

LCA International Mission has partnered with LCA Reconciliation Ministry to provide short-term scholarships and workshops for our partners in Biblical Reconciliation Ministry.

How can you support this training in the gospel?

If you would like to support Biblical Reconciliation Ministry scholarships in Australia for Indonesians and workshops in Japan and Indonesia, please refer to the donation form on the back of this edition



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

- the Lua evangelists serving in the Nan province in Northern Thailand, as they reach out with the love of Jesus to the locals who have a strong animist background
- Immanuel College SA and Good Shepherd Lutheran College NT which take teams of students and staff to Bethany Home in Malaysia each year. May these young Australians continue to be enriched in their interactions with those they meet and may the Holy Spirit work on their hearts, that they may experience God's love for them

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.

- continued blessing on the LCA's Biblical Reconciliation Ministry as an opportunity to share the gospel with Indonesian and Japanese people
- the youth who are being reached through the Basel Christian Church of Malaysia's Youth Bahasa Malay program and the leaders who are a witness through the way they are living out their faith
- the true beauty, peace and joy of the gospel to be made known both here at home and through the ministry of our partner churches internationally, so that those caught in darkness and fear may come to know the freedom and hope Jesus offers all who call on his name

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*

CAMBODIA

An eye surgery medical team is looking for people to help them with screening, surgery and post-operative care. The mission takes place in the first week of November 2019.

THAILAND

Schools in the Nan province in the mountains near Laos are looking for teachers of English for at least one school term. You would teach in two or three schools over two or three days.

MALAYSIA

Four schools for 'undocumented children' are looking for

You can experience firsthand how God's love is coming to life through the word-and-action gospel work of our partner churches.

Australian teachers of English. Based in Sabah in East Malaysia, the role would be for at least two months during 2019.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

A group of men will be travelling to Gaubin hospital on Karkar Island and to Ogelbeng Seminary in the PNG Highlands to do repair work for two weeks in 2020. Please contact us to register your interest.

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**.



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.)

- ☐ Lua evangelist salaries, **Thailand** \$ _____
- ☐ Medical support for the Malagasy Lutheran Church working with Lua people in **Thailand** \$ _____
- ☐ Biblical Reconciliation Ministry scholarships in Australia for **Indonesians** \$ _____
- ☐ Biblical Reconciliation Ministry workshops in **Japan** and **Indonesia** \$ _____
- ☐ Basel Christian Church of Malaysia (BCCM) Youth Bahasa Malay program, **Malaysia** \$ _____
- ☐ 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

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/ (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)

☐ 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 me a receipt

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