

border crossings

issue
07

Stories from the Board for Mission of the Lutheran Church of Australia

Amazing Grace

Minh's story

Jesus defeats evil spirits

Nan Province, Thailand

Make your own

Tangy Thai Salad

Something to
pray
about

April 2010

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Border Crossings
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welcome

A pain!

What do you pray for?

My prayer for all of us who call ourselves Australian Lutheran Christians is that we will all have 'a pain in the gut'!



Let me explain... I'm no great theological scholar... so when a pastor challenged me about my understanding of the word 'compassion', I answered with words such as 'empathy', 'feeling sad for people and their situations'. He went on to explain that the word 'compassion' literally means 'to have a pain in the gut'.

When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Matthew 9:36 NIV

I've probably had one or two occasions when I've had a pain in the stomach, which has caused me to double up in tears, with an ache so bad that nothing seemed to take the pain away (most probably because of something I'd eaten!).

But God had a different kind of 'pain in the gut' for me. He had 'compassion' on me. He died for me so that I can know Him and life in all its amazing fullness.

Mission is about having 'a pain in the gut' for others – a pain that cries out for them in prayer, a pain that causes us to want to abandon our own desires so that others will know Him - to be people who touch others with the healing love of Jesus, who feed the hungry, who go to the lost and show them the 'Way'.

In Australia we need people who will have 'a pain in the gut' for the lost generation of young people who struggle with loss of purpose, drug and alcohol addiction...we need those who will have a 'pain in the gut' for people who work endlessly to establish their identity and security by gathering wealth and lifestyles that are empty. We need people with 'a pain in the gut' for the marginalized, homeless, refugees and those people of all ages who see no reason to live. And we need people who have such 'a pain in the gut' that they will do everything to meet the needs of those who live outside the borders of our blessed country of Australia - who have no home, no food, no water, no way to hear the life saving message of the love of our living Lord Jesus Christ.

God give us the gift of compassion. 🙏

Glenice Hartwich

Project Officer **Board for Mission** Lutheran Church of Australia

Faith **in** action



Rev Neville Otto Board for Mission director



*“Wokabaut wantaim
bilong ol bilip manmeri
insait long pasin bilong
laikim” was the theme
of the 27th Synod of
the Evangelical Lutheran
Church of Papua
New Guinea*

(January 10 and 15, 2010).

My understanding
of Pidgin is
limited but it
didn't take long
to work out the
aforementioned
theme once
I knew it was
based on
Ephesians
5:1,2. When I
saw the amazing
attendance, heard
the passionate

speaking and singing, and experienced the outpouring
of faith of the delegates and many, many visitors, the
theme's meaning became clearer.

My NIV Bible reads: “Be imitators of God, therefore, as
dearly loved children and live a life of love just as Christ
loved us...” (Eph 5:1, 2a). This life of love was very
evident during Synod.

God's children in the ELC-PNG showed the joy of their
faith. In large number, all seventeen church districts
gathered in Lae, where the Synod was held at Martin
Luther Seminary (MLS).

The opening service occurred at Lae's major sports
stadium. Among the estimated 7000 was PNG Prime
Minister Michael Somare. Beforehand, people had
gathered in the city centre before parading to the
stadium in a wonderful and colourful witness.

The Synod itself was conducted in a specially built
structure on the playing field at MLS. The open building
seated about 1000 and, during each session, there were
many more people observing from the building's edges.
As Synod business was conducted, the MLS grounds
were full of people bustling at the busy stalls, as well
as singing and dancing.

What a vibrant
gathering of
Christians showing
the importance of
their faith!

New Bishop elected

A major item before the 350 delegates was the
election of a new Bishop, following the death in 2008
of much loved Wesley Kigasang. Delegates also voted
on Assistant Bishop and General Secretary. Media
representatives joined delegates and visitors to await
the outcome. The result would be broadcast live - on
national radio.

Finally, MLS Principal Rev Giegere Wenge was elected
Head Bishop of the ELC-PNG. Rev Zau Rapa was
returned as Assistant Bishop and Albert Tokave elected
General Secretary.

Please pray for these leaders, that they may be imitators
of God and live the life of love that was so evident at
Synod.

Bishop Wenge will oversee the implementation of a
new constitution. He will also focus upon delivering the
church's policy on HIV/Aids, a terrible social problem in
PNG. Please pray for the people of PNG – especially
ELC-PNG's one million sisters and brothers - that the
gospel of Jesus Christ will shine for all.

Even though my Pidgin is poor, I saw the gospel clearly
at work. I was also helped by my faithful translator
Pastor Greg Schiller who teaches at MLS. Please pray
for Greg and his ministry.

The ELC-PNG and the LCA have walked together for
124 years. Let us continue our walk as partners in
the gospel. 🙏

Rev Neville Otto



In a remote, treacherous mountain region of Northern Thailand, the word of God is breaking through the lifestyle of fear which villagers have been trapped in by traditional animist beliefs and “spirit doctors”.



Jesus Defeats

Crouched in the doorway of a tiny hut, I'm praying for the health of the former “spirit doctor” of Hoey Torn village. I'm overcome and amazed by the power of God at work in the life of this man, his wife, and so many villagers in the remote Nan province in Northern Thailand (about 20 kilometres from the Laos border).

God is moving among the Lua people. Lives of fear and disquiet are being transformed with peace and hope. And it's to these people, living in these difficult situations, that God has called Australian missionary Pastor Simon Mackenzie, his wife Oiy, and their son Nopakorn (“Aussie”, for short). The Mackenzie family is working together with Thai Pastor Amnouy and evangelist Tawee.

Our visit to the exciting but challenging mission in the Nan Province involves a one and a half hour flight from Bangkok to Chiang Rai, a four-hour road trip from Chiang Rai to Nan, a two and a half hour road trip from Nan to Bo Klua - and a further half hour journey to Baan Den, where Rev Amnouy and wife Yai have been living and working for three years among the Lua. Evangelist Tawee lives in Bo Klua and works with people forced to walk long distances to seek medical help at a health centre. He also ministers to people in Hoey Mei village, and two distant mountain-top villages.

From Baan Den to nearby villages (Baan Napong and Hoey Pong) or those further afield (Hoey Torn, Hoey Mei), roads are mostly unsurfaced, often bone-jarring, and hug the edges of steeply sloping mountains which drop away to valleys below. During wet season, access by vehicle frequently is limited to motorcycle. Commonly, by foot can be the only way to access from certain levels.

Geographical and socio-economic difficulties aren't the only enormous challenge for Christian missionaries. The traditional animistic beliefs of the Lua people have meant they have lived in fear of “spirits” and “spirit doctors” who have used their influence to control all aspects of life.

This also means people can be forced to give offerings, such as sacrificing blood to maintain their existence. Living in this climate of fear has led to people experiencing sickness, loss of privileges, and payment of various types of sacrifice to the “spirit doctors” and “spirits”. People have been seriously afraid of this spiritual darkness.





Getting to know the

Lua people

The Lua people are a marginalised group who, over time, migrated from neighbouring Laos and settled in very difficult terrain on the Thai /Laos border. They are not Thais and do not speak their language (Lua dialect has not yet been officially recorded). These are animistic people, controlled by spirit worship and resultant fear.

More than 140,000 people are estimated to live in this remote region. Only about 20 per cent can read and write.

Most Lua live in villages on the sides of the steeply sloping mountains that divide the region into a series of sharp valleys. The reddish soil appears to be of poor quality. The main crop is dry rice, with some maize grown. A significant amount of native vegetation has been cleared.

Many villages are situated at more than 2000 metres above sea level. The days can be hot but nights and mornings cold, damp and harsh. Leeches are often present on the ground, where people sit.

People generally live in small thatched buildings perched on stilts. The section below the house provides a dry place to store firewood and shelter the chooks and dogs that freely roam. In some cases, timbers have been stored until they can be built into more permanent housing.

These homes are dark and filled with smoke from fires used for warmth and to cook meagre meals. Cramped and sparse, houses also provide storage for bags of rice and a few implements used for cooking and harvesting.

Village life is communal. Alcohol and drug problems abound. Combined with issues of repressed anger, alcoholism is among the causes of serious fighting. Children start drinking as young as 10. Girls can be married off at the same age.

Because of insufficient rainfall recently, rice harvests have been affected – forcing many of the younger people and parents to leave villages and head to cities to find limited manual work (with poor pay and conditions). This can affect the elderly left behind, who are forced to look after younger children. Many older villagers are often neglected and live on very limited food supplies, in cold and difficult circumstances.

The health of the people is poor due to various factors – diet (they mainly eat vegetables; not much protein); soil deficiency; substance abuse; physical ailments due to manual labour; and “spirit doctors”, who often impose rules that limit a villager’s consumption of certain foods (restricting them to rice or certain vegetables, for example).

Women do most of the work. In order to provide their thatched homes with heating and cooking fuel, they are forced to cut timber from distant regions and carry it - in heavy bundles, on their backs - up sheer paths to their villages.

Evil Spirits

As such, it isn’t easy for Lua to be Christians, as many experience serious opposition to following Jesus. Work can be made difficult by local leaders who want Christians to leave. Also, when “spirit doctors” lose their power over Christian converts, they work hard to destroy what God is doing.

Pastor Amnuoy and evangelist Tawee have been threatened and asked to leave. Understandably, prayer is vital to their ministry.

Christian evangelists came to this region about 12 year ago, and locals are now coming to know and share the amazing power of God and the release from fear which Jesus Christ provides. When asked what has changed for him since he came to faith, one man says: “once I had to sacrifice blood – now, no more”.

The faces of new followers of Jesus mirror the peace that only he can bring. There are more than 800 Christians in these villages. In the past year, about 370 people have been baptised, with more coming to faith each week. In Baan Den alone, where 500 people live, there are 370 baptised children of God. Stories abound of the amazing growth of God’s kingdom.

Two years ago, in the village of Hoey Torn (population of 491, comprised of 91 families), only seven people followed Jesus Christ. Since then, more than 100 people have been set free by Jesus’ love and power.

The work of evangelising the Lua people is growing at a remarkable rate. Remote villagers are asking for workers to visit and tell them about Jesus! The pastoral care needed to support this rapidly expanding ministry - situated in often relatively inaccessible areas - is beyond the team’s capacity, as it strives to effectively teach and build strong foundations for the people’s faith.

As villagers come to faith, they meet in the home of one of the followers for Sunday worship if there is no sala (basic church structure) to gather together in. Language is an issue. Since there is no written Lua language, no Scriptures or songs exist in their native tongue. Amnuoy and Tawee have become more proficient in understanding and speaking the Lua language.

This also means another new language for Simon! The Thai language itself is difficult to master and Simon is greatly helped by Oiy, who does much of the worship leading in Thai (then translated into Lua).

Amnuoy started working in the region three years ago and Tawee commenced five years ago. Both men have a passion to see Jesus’ love taught and lived out among the marginalised and fearful Lua people.

Amnuoy has such a heart for the people, as evidenced by the self-



In January this year, the second St Mark's team built structures (salas) for two churches, as well as a home for the former "spirit doctor" of Hoey Torn village - now a new child of God.



sacrificing way he and Yai live among the Lua people. Amnuoy has had no rest or holiday, and his home is always open. He has a desire to not only serve local Christians but, by his actions and service, share the love of Jesus with all people.

As we sit cross-legged on the floor of the church building in Baan Den, Amnuoy shares his vision for the next five years, including a plan to establish one congregation in every village and to open one preaching place each year (to be recognised as a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Thailand, they need to have at least 30 members. Twenty must be above 18 years of age).

Six evangelists from the Nan province are studying at Luther Seminary of Thailand (LST), until April 2010. Thanks to the amazing provision of God through the financial support of the St Mark's Epping congregation, six younger people – mostly new Christians - have been able to spend 12 months in Bangkok, being trained as evangelists for a life of service in God's mission field in Nan. Upon returning to the province, they will help to expand ministry in the area. However they will require support and on-going training for their long-term sustainability.

Simon, Oiy and Aussie have been living in the regional city of Nan since August, 2009. Each week, they make the journey from Nan to Baan Den on a Saturday, where they stay/sleep in the church building, often until Monday or Tuesday (if there are patients who need to be taken to the hospital). While in Baan Den, they use very basic facilities - a squat toilet and "splash" wash facility attached to Amnuoy's house.

In consultation with Amnuoy, Simon has assumed responsibility for the preaching place of Hoey Pong (a small group worshipping in a new Christian's home) and Baan Naping, where there is a sala and regular congregation of up to 100 people.

Beyond LCA financial support given for Simon and Oiy to serve as our Thailand missionaries, it's exciting to see real evidence of support from several LCA congregations.

The St Mark's Epping congregation, under the leadership of Pastor Mark Schultz, has already had two team visits to the region (in January 2009 and 2010).

Subsequent to their first visit, St Mark's has provided finances for the aforementioned young evangelists' theological education.

In January this year, the second St Mark's team built structures (salas) for two churches, as well as a home for the former "spirit doctor" of Hoey Torn village - now a new child of God.

The Noosa congregation has also donated funds to buy seeds for agricultural projects, while the Tarrington, Robertstown and Eudunda congregations provided funding for Bibles and hymnbooks in the Thai language. Two blue motorcycles, purchased with funds given by the St Paul's Box Hill congregation, enable Amnuoy and Tawee easier access to the villages – when the roads aren't too wet for motor bikes!

God has shown us where he is working – the Nan province. He has opened the door and invited Australian Lutherans to join him. What an amazing and humbling privilege! 🙏

Glenice Hartwich

When an Australian ministry group travels to Thailand's Lua region, they encounter an incredible personal story of family tragedy rescued by Jesus' saving love.

amazing grace

"My name is Minh and I am 38-years-old," said the man sitting opposite.

He smiled a broad and bright grin, teeth white against the deep darkness of night in the mountain village of Baan Den. Three girls and I sat on the cold concrete floor listening intently as Aa-jaan (teacher) Amnouy, the village's Thai Lutheran Pastor, translated Minh's story. The only light was candlelight and, in the shadows, villagers sat listening. It was very cold yet Minh seemed unaffected. He wore a bright green t-shirt with Luther's rose printed on the breast pocket. He was excited to share his story. He was proud to be a Christian.

Minh's story was full of evil spirits, heart-break, persecution and persistence; quite simply, it was incredible and deeply moving.

Born in the neighbouring village of Hoey Ka, Minh's childhood involved his family moving to several nearby villages, seeking better land to work. Settling in the high mountain village of Hoey Pako, his family worked hard to prepare steep slopes for mountain rice. Minh's older sister began developing strange behaviour and the family blamed bad spirits.

Minh's sister hanged herself and, not long after, "evil spirits" possessed his older brother. Minh's brother visited a "spirit doctor", but his condition worsened.

His brother shot himself just before Minh's father became seriously ill. Despite hospital visits, his condition quickly worsened. Soon afterwards, he passed away. A few weeks later, Minh's older brother was killed in an accident.

Within months Minh, was left the oldest of three younger siblings.

"We all were crazy. My sister could not control herself; she began experiencing severe fits. And my brother, he ripped up the floor of our house with his feet... My brother's job was to carry heavy bags of rice and put them onto a truck. One day he took the bags and threw them in the nearby river. This meant he owed his boss a lot of money. My mother had to work for three years to pay back the damage my brother caused."



Minh and his brother found jobs as labourers. One day, among the leaves of a tree he was foraging, a snake appeared, frightening Minh and causing him to fall. But there was no snake. Living in fear and unable to sleep, Minh was haunted by snakes.

Minh's family was relatively wealthy but it suffered terribly due to the children's

disturbing behaviour. Out of desperation, he went to Laos to visit an expensive "spirit doctor", spending all he had. The "spirit doctor" said their "house spirit", who they gave daily offerings to, was evil. They removed it, as the doctor instructed.

"We all became very, very crazy. My brother destroyed our house again. Nuon, a Christian man from another village, heard about what my brother had done. Nuon prayed for my brother and he got better."

Minh's brother returned to work. His boss gave celebratory offerings to his "house spirit", encouraging Minh's brother to do the same. He obeyed but his crazy behaviour returned. When he went to visit Nuon again, but Nuon wasn't home, Minh's brother destroyed both of his houses singlehandedly. But Nuon prayed for him and he recovered.

Minh's condition deteriorated rapidly and he ran away into the jungle for a few weeks. A "spirit doctor" cast "magic spells" over Minh and his body "became very cold like I was dead. I wanted to kill everyone and then kill myself." Other "spirit doctors" told him to make offerings, or get a new "house spirit". But Minh's mother did not want one - she wanted a new spirit. "She knew God had healed my brother and that he could heal the rest of my family."

Minh's family discovered the most powerful being, God. When the first pastor came to the area, their family was baptised. When Christ's love and healing entered their lives, they realised their sufferings had been defeated by the most powerful good spirit imaginable.

Minh moved to Baan Den, with his wife and children. As the only Christian in the village, he was scorned. Children threw rocks at him and neighbours tried to force him out, as they were worried his presence would anger the "spirits".

continued next page...

The village "spirit doctor" spread word that Christians would be dead in three years. But following an intense period of persecution and faith testing, Minh remained alive. When people realised that being a Christian was not fatal, they started asking questions about what Christ could do in their life. Over time, individuals realised Minh received blessings yet their "spirits" gave nothing. "The people who once threw rocks and told me to leave are now Christians," said Minh, smiling, as he knew the pure joy of making disciples.

In the 13 years that Minh has lived in Baan Den, nearly all of the families have come to Christ. Each Saturday, Minh travelled to Hoey Pako and Hoey Mei to conduct church services. He is called Khun Minh ("Mr Minh"), a title for only the most highly respected.

Fifteen years ago, Christianity was virtually unheard of in the region. People feared this religion. Now, there are more than 800 church members in the six small villages around Baan Den. On the day we worshipped at Hoey Torn, there were 14 baptisms, including a "spirit

doctor". It was incredibly powerful to see the joy of Christ spreading rapidly in Northern Thailand.

Many villages do not have their own church plant. However, they are desperate for permanent ministry. The small team of Simon and Oiy Mackenzie, Amnouy and Tawee look after 800 members in a treacherous environment. The exciting news is Minh and 5 others are training as evangelists at Bangkok's Lutheran seminary. Praise God.

We learned a lot from Minh and the people of Baan Den, particularly the way they showed Christ's love through everyday service and simple acts.

This community served out of love and with joy and generosity. We all felt Christ's love in Baan Den and realised that shining with Christ's love is as simple as joyfully preparing food or cleaning up for others. We too can demonstrate Christ's love in a powerful way that will touch the lives of others; we just need to remember how much Christ loved us. 🌱

Sara Ironside *member of the 2009 St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Epping ministry team*



After several months of prayer and preparation, eight members from St Mark's Epping found ourselves worshipping and praying for five days in the hill-tribe village of Baan Den, Thailand. We aimed to live out our church's mission statement by actively following Jesus' command to make disciples of all nations.

Located in the Nan Province of North Eastern Thailand, Baan Den is one of many villages in the region which are ethnically Thai Lua (among the country's poorest people).

Traditionally, Lua people are animist in faith, believing in spiritual beings that must be worshipped and placated. For eight Westerners, their deep spirituality was, initially, confronting and confusing. After five days, we had learned a lot about the immense difference God makes in people's lives.

Getting involved...

Volunteer opportunities

The opportunities and places are many and the experience — life-changing!

Thailand

- Practical service and teaching English at Home of Grace for unwed mothers and Home of Praise for children in the slums of Bangkok
- Teachers of English at Laksi Lutheran Church

Indonesia

- Teaching English in the schools
- Lecturer of Mathematics (Nommensen University)
- Teaching English (in the seminaries)
- Practical service at Yapentra, School for blind students in Medan
- Teaching English for the pastors' and leaders' courses
- Teaching English and practical help in various orphanages

Malaysia

- Rumah Chrestus (home for abused children)
- Rumah Love and Care (home for aged people)
- Bethany Home - 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

Have you considered volunteering in mission with one of our overseas partner churches?

Sabah

- Practical service at Jireh Foster Home for neglected, underprivileged and abused children
- Teachers of English, music and computing at the Grace Centre (school for the "undocumented" children in Sabah)

Papua New Guinea

- Librarian to catalogue donated books in the seminary libraries

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

Thailand

- Congregations willing to pray for, support and partner with Pastor Simon Mackenzie and his wife Oiy as they serve in the Nan province in northern Thailand

Malaysia

- Youth partnership
- Congregation to congregation
- Supporting a scholarship recipient

Singapore

- Partnership with Lutheran Church Singapore working in teams in Cambodia
- Supporting a scholarship recipient

Indonesia

- Partnership with Lutheran schools
- Regional partnership

- Partnership with an orphanage
- Support for Indonesian scholarship recipients studying at Australian Lutheran College (ALC)

Sabah

- Youth group participation in youth camp ministry
- Supporting students studying for pastoral and lay ministry
- Supporting lecturers at the seminary (Sabah Theological Seminary)

Papua New Guinea

- Congregation willing to pray for, support and partner with Pastor Greg Schiller as he serves at Martin Luther Seminary in Lae
- Support for scholarship recipient, Pastor Timothy Kising studying at ALC
- Youth group exchange and youth music/ministry teams
- Maintenance teams in various locations
- Teachers for youth ministry leaders' and pastors' courses
- Partnership with schools

If you would like to know how you can volunteer 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 or Ph (08) 8267 7334

Two nations united

Goroka, Papua New Guinea



Through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, 13 women (including myself) from the St Johns Lutheran Church, Goroka, Papua New Guinea, went on an outreach journey to South Australia's Golden Grove Lutheran Church and Primary School in November, 2008.

Three from our group had been to Australia before. For the rest, it was their first encounter and they came across many cultural changes, such as flying in the big Air Nuigini Jet, getting up and down the escalators, and hopping on the airport train. They were all new experiences.

In Adelaide we had a lot of surprises. Each day was organised by generous people. We experienced the boat ride to see the dolphins, a visit to the Adelaide Zoo, a ride out to the beautiful Barossa Valley to see the green vineyards and wineries. It was really amazing. And not to forget Adelaide's skyscrapers. They were magnificent.

These were the generous people who received us warmly one year earlier and looked after us with very good hospitality when we were in Adelaide.

We also worshipped and prayed with the Golden Grove Lutheran community.

Why am I writing this? In September 2009 we welcomed visitors from Adelaide to Goroka. These were the generous people who received us warmly one year earlier and looked after us with very good hospitality when we were in Adelaide. The group from Golden Grove Lutheran Fellowship and school came

to Goroka to work with the Asoraka Secondary and Primary School.

I want to acknowledge these special people. They are Rev Len Tscharke and his wife Claire, their two sons Terry and Ken; Graeme, Rosalie and Skye Hoklas (who looked after SixPenny and myself); Daryl Trigg, Golden Grove Lutheran Primary School principal (who let us have coffee and biscuits in the staff room); and Judith Whaites, who took care of PNG Judith, Riu and Dorothy.

For those families who looked after us during our stay in Adelaide, but didn't make it to Goroka, we still think of you.

For those who came, we hope you enjoyed your stay and the diverse culture of PNG.

Thank you.

Paula Pottony

Goroka hospital worker who helps to train nurses



Expect the unexpected

Before venturing to Papua New Guinea, I expected a few things. I'd heard about the high crime rate and poverty. I was prepared to spend 14 days virtually "slumming" it, with none of the luxuries that I take for granted.

What I didn't expect was an incredibly rich country. Not in a financial or material sense but, rather, the fact PNG is rich in culture and generosity. I definitely didn't anticipate how warm and friendly the people would be, or imagine we would receive huge welcomes, with hundreds genuinely happy to see our group. It was an experience I will never forget.

Papua New Guinea is a beautiful country. The scenery is breathtaking, weather is always hot, and the people are proud to celebrate their heritage, even as Western influences take over. Upon arriving in Goroka, our group of 10 was inundated with smiles, handshakes and hugs. Lei were placed around our necks and we were given traditional spears as Asaroka Mudmen danced around us. It was a surreal experience and, looking back, this generous greeting set the scene for what was to come.

The focus of our trip was the Asaroka Lutheran High School, established by Pastor Len Tscharke and his wife Claire, affectionately referred to as Papa and Mama Sarki.

On our first day at the school, we were guided by a "Sing Sing" group through a guard-of-honour made by hundreds of smiling students. Flower petals were thrown at our feet, making us feel like royalty.

After a church service, the congregation was invited to shake our hands. It was amazing how many of the students and teachers approached us; the line-up was never-ending.

For the next few days we trekked out to the school to mingle with students and teachers. We toured the grounds and sat in on some classes. Obviously the school was not up to Australian standards; however, the dedication of teachers and commitment of students revealed they made the most of what little they had.

Other highlights included visiting villages to witness the traditional way of living; feasting on a mumu (food cooked in the ground); worshipping with locals; seeing the Goroka ladies who visited us in Australia, and meeting their families; eating the freshest of fruits for breakfast; the Goroka Show; experiencing the culture; visiting Asaroka Elementary School; purchasing a rainwater tank, pump and roofing paint for the schools; visiting Ialibu, where Pastor Len and Claire established a primary school; and getting to know the people.

They say that when visiting PNG, you should expect the unexpected. I tend to agree.

Skye Hoklas youngest team member from Golden Grove





Stitching a colourful community

Inside a tiny church hall in Adelaide's western suburbs is a palette of colours - fabrics, threads, clothes. The colours of God's love are splashed over the diverse

group of people who gather at Albert Park Lutheran Church each Friday morning for the busy, organised activities of the African sewing group.

Joined by 14 volunteer sewing teachers, eight creche volunteers, ten volunteer drivers, four volunteers preparing food, one pastor (doubling as a sewing machine repairman), and the local pastor Roger Russ, Helen Semmler with the support of husband Ken coordinates the activities and volunteers who drive buses and cars filled with women and children, teach sewing and care for kids.

The volunteer force prepares and serves trays of sandwiches and fresh fruit, repairs sewing machines, and pours the healing power of God's love over the broken and tortured lives of these women from war torn African countries (including Sudan, Congo, Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Eritrea, Liberia) as well as from India, Iraq and Malaysia - many from situations too horrific for most to comprehend.

The women are organised into different groups, according to their sewing abilities. With caring tuition, they gain new skills - and complete useful items and garments. There's a long waiting list for women wanting to join the classes, which began eight years ago. In order to meet the needs of women who have employment, Helen has also begun a Wednesday evening class.

Albert Park has become the ideal setting - providing a caring Christian community, abundant facilities, and a fully supportive

and active pastor. He shares a short devotional message each week, and also serves sandwiches in the noisy hall.

As the enthusiastic volunteers of all ages - from 14 Lutheran congregations and other Christian churches - build relationships through sewing, and care for active children in the crèche and playground, they become trusted mentors to these families.

The diverse volunteers all share a willingness to serve and make a difference to others, but the work is tiring and not without struggles.

The colours of God's love are splashed over the diverse group of people who gather at Albert Park Lutheran Church each Friday morning for the busy, organised activities of the African sewing group.

Even though sewing classes finish at 1.30pm and the women and children reluctantly leave, the volunteering continues beyond pack-up time. Frequently, the Semmlers help in relation to visas, healthcare, Centrelink, Medicare, moving house, as well as family issues and crises.

Women are also gently instructed in how to look after a sewing machine. With a deposit of \$50, they can purchase a machine from the group's supply. Through a simple loan repayment scheme, the women can pay for their own machine. Once paid off, a certificate is

issued, reflecting their faithful repayment. This certificate supports their credit rating for future purchases.

Asked what support they could use, Helen and Ken suggest fabrics, threads, sewing teachers, drivers, crèche helpers and a 14-seater bus to transport the thankful women and children from ten different council areas and to take the young people and children to a range of church activities which up until now they are not able to attend.

When you enter the doors of Albert Park Lutheran Church hall, you see and experience the love of Jesus crossing borders - multi coloured and cultural.

Glenice Hartwich



Tangy Thai Salad

Serves
4-6

Ingredients

- 1 Lebanese cucumber (finely cubed)
- 1 small red capsicum (sliced finely)
- 2 cups of red cabbage (sliced finely)
- 1 ½ cups of white cabbage (sliced finely)
- 1 cup of grated carrots
- 1-2 small red chillis (chopped finely)
- 1 cup of unsalted cashew or peanuts
- 1 red onion (sliced finely)
- 2 tbs lime juice

Dressing

- 4 tbs fish sauce
- 4 tbs white vinegar
- 4 tbs brown sugar
- 1/3 cup water
- 4 stalks coriander (chopped)

Method

1. Boil water in small saucepan
2. Add sugar, fish sauce, vinegar and boil on low heat for 10 min (stirring occasionally)
3. Remove from heat and allow to cool
4. In separate bowl squeeze lime juice over sliced onion
5. Place all vegetables (except for nuts and coriander) in large serving bowl
6. Add onion and lime juice
7. When ready to serve add nuts and coriander and pour sauce over
8. Mix well and serve immediately

Get involved in
God's mission Through
Prayer

Pray for...

- Pastor Simon, Oiy and Nopakorn Mackenzie, our missionary family serving in the Nan Province, Thailand
- For Anmouy and Tawee as they share the good news of Jesus Christ with the Lua people in the Nan Province, Thailand
- Pastor Greg Schiller, our missionary lecturing at Martin Luther Seminary, Lae, PNG
- Nick Schwarz, serving as a volunteer research assistant with the Melanesian Institute in Goroka, PNG for two years
- Stan Dudgeon and his wife Gwen serving on Karkar Island, PNG for two years to manage the reconstruction and restoration of Gaubin hospital
- Rev Roger Whittall serving as volunteer for 2 months cataloguing books in the library and as a guest lecturer at Martin Luther Seminary, Lae PNG
- The newly installed Bishop Giegere Wenge and other new leaders of ELC-PNG
- LCA Scholarship recipients
 - Rev Timothy Kising, Papua New Guinea (Australian Lutheran College, Adelaide)
 - Rev Maurids Simamora, Indonesia (Australian Lutheran College, Adelaide)
 - Rev Albert Purba, Indonesia
 - Kristiani Sipahutar, (training in education for blind students), Indonesia
 - Various students from Mentawi Islands, Indonesia
 - Javentus Pasaribu, Indonesia (Abdi Sabda seminary)
 - Julfri Simorangkir, Indonesia
 - Bishop Philip Lok, Malaysia (Distance Education through ALC, Adelaide)
 - Pastors and evangelists at Lutheran Seminary of Thailand (LST), Thailand
- For the members of the Prison Ministry team of Abdi Sabda seminary in Medan, Indonesia as they go into the prisons
- each week to take the love of Jesus to inmates with words and actions
- Congregations developing mission partnerships with overseas partner churches
- The Lutheran Church of Singapore and Dr William Chang as they continue to establish a holistic mission and ministry in Kampong Chhnang, Cambodia
- Australian Lutheran World Service as they seek to be the "hands and feet of Jesus" while building the capacity of people groups and churches to respond to the needs of people in their region
- Lutheran Education Australia as it seeks to support and build the capacity of Lutheran schools in Indonesia and Papua New Guinea to deliver quality, Christ-centered education to the young people in their care
- The Lutheran Laypeople's League as they join together with the Board for Mission in various programs to support the mission and ministry of our overseas partner churches
- For God to open our eyes to see the "fields that are ripe for the harvest" (John 4:35)
- For workers for the harvest that is all around us – in our homes, in Australia and overseas (Matthew 9:38)
- 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
- "Lord, renew your church, begin with me"

Mission Response form



You are invited to join in God's mission in the world by supporting the LCA's Board for Mission work through our partner churches.

(Please tick the people and projects you would like to support and write the amount of your gifts in the spaces provided)

I would like to support the following

- | | |
|--|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bethany Home for disabled young people in Malaysia | \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yapentra, school for blind students in Indonesia | \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Homes for neglected and abused children in Malaysia | \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Singapore International Seafarers' Mission | \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Singapore Thai Good News Centre | \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Singapore Giraffe course | \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mission work carried out by Simon & Oiy Mackenzie in Thailand | \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mission work carried out by Greg Schiller in PNG | \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Publication of tracts and other Christian literature for PNG | \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Scholarships (for church partners in Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, PNG, Sabah and Thailand) | \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Youth work programs in Sabah and PNG | \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mission outreach to Kubu tribal people in Indonesia | \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Orphanages in Indonesia | \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> LCA/LLL projects in Indonesia | \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bible translation (LBTA) | \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mission outreach to indigenous people (Orang Asli) in Malaysia | \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Scholarships for children of pastors in PNG | \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Training of evangelists and church leaders in China (partnership program with BCCM, Sabah) | \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Seminaries in Sabah, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia and PNG | \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Medical mission work in PNG | \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Books for the seminary libraries of our overseas partner churches | \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prison ministry team of Abdi Sabda Seminary, Indonesia | \$ _____ |

Payment Options

If you would like to sponsor one or more of the above mission projects, you can do it in one of the following ways:

- **Electronic Funds Transfer** (please contact BfM on 08 8267 7334 for more details)
- **Credit card or cheque** (please fill out the form below)

Your Payment

☐ Enclosed is my cheque for \$ _____ (cheques payable to *Board for Mission*)

Please debit my ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard

Card no. _____

Expiry ____/____ Amount \$ _____ ☐ Please send me a receipt

Your details ☐ Please send me a receipt

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Signature _____

Please send completed form to: BfM, 197 Archer St, North Adelaide SA 5006

Take Note

Crossing language barriers



By means of support through LBTA (Lutheran Bible Translators Australia), I am able to help other Bible translators in Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu by working as a translation consultant. I also work with a team of Sudanese people here in Australia whose aim is to re-translate the Ma'di Bible.

Questions I am frequently asked when talking to people about these tasks are: *"Don't you have to know the language of the translation you're consulting?"* or *"When did you learn to speak the Ma'di language?"* Thankfully, the consulting I do with translators working in other languages, and the Ma'di work, is made possible by means of a "Back Translation" which is a very literal rendering of the actual translation back into English. I am able to then access the content and "flavor" of the translation, which enables me to check it for accuracy, and to offer any suggestions or advice.

Over the past 4 or 5 years I helped translation teams working in Vanuatu, by visiting them and serving as their translation consultant. Leaving family and the comforts of home is not always easy. But it does have some fringe benefits too, such as meeting people travelling along similar paths to the one taken by my wife Di and I and our children when worked we with the Bukawa people in PNG for thirteen years. Hand in hand with this work are opportunities to travel, and to get a taste of other languages and cultures.

Unfortunately, I will never be able to have the amount of contact with the Ma'di men which would be required to gain even a basic competency in their language. The same applies to other languages being translated, and for which consultancy and checking is required. However, the avenue of the "Back Translation" enables me (and other consultants) to cross the language borders effectively and continue to help with the task of bringing God's Word to people in the language that they know and understand the best.

Bill Eckermann

part time Bible Translation Consultant (LBTA)