



# THE GARUNA FOUNDATION

*A ministry of sharing the "grace, mercy and compassion" (Garuna) of Jesus in Thailand, Cambodia and surrounding countries.*



*Pastor Sopheab is baptizing several Garuna Kids at his church in Kampot.*

*From the Chairman*

**"WE WANT TO HEAR YOU AGAIN ON THIS SUBJECT."**

*Dear Friends in Christ,*

He is risen! He is risen, indeed. Hallelujah!

Easter is everything. Jesus' victory over the grave and promise of eternal life gives us what we need — love, joy, peace, assurance, and hope. Now, we can live a full and abundant life knowing that He, by His grace (*garuna*), is preparing a place for us in our permanent home (heaven). May this wonderful truth of life without end motivate us to share this Good News.

Paul shares this Good News in the passage noted from Acts chapter 17. He is sharing the message of Jesus' resurrection from the dead with the leaders of Athens. It is no surprise that Paul had a reaction to this message like we do when we share it today. Some people sneered. Some wanted to hear more about the meaning and impact of what Paul was sharing.

In our mission outreach we see these two types of reactions to the Easter message. For those who sneer, we continue to pray and lovingly share Christ with them in ways that are loving and non-judgmental. For those who want to hear more, we are happy to meet with them and patiently connect them to where the life-changing Spirit is at work. That is, to His means of grace — the Gospel, God's Word, and the Sacraments.

We are so thankful to report to you that the powerful Easter message is often being met with the comment, "We want to hear you again on this subject." And, in fact, many in Southeast Asia are being brought to faith and are sharing their faith with others.

One such leader I would like to introduce to you is Pastor Bun Sopheab. This newsletter highlights how Pastor Sopheab is involved with Garuna in our three-tier mission strategy to bring the Easter message to his people. He reports that this message is changing many lives.

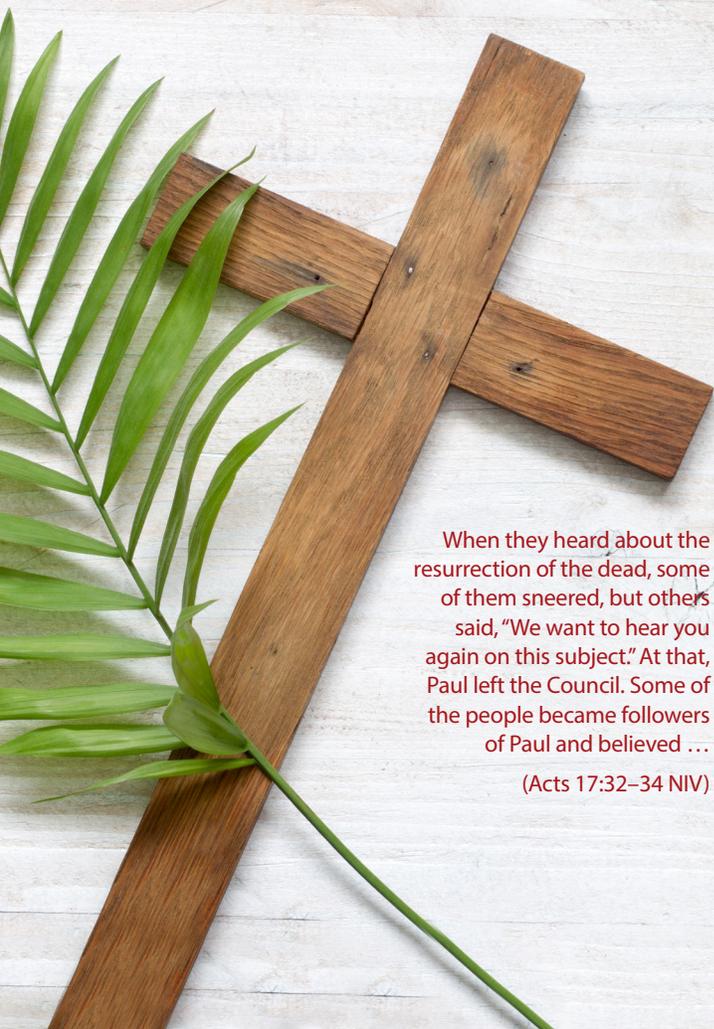
Your prayers, help, and support make this ministry possible. Thanks so much for your generosity.



***Sincerely in the Risen Savior,  
Rev. Dr. Jeff Ehlers, Chairman  
The Garuna Foundation***

**When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some of them sneered, but others said, "We want to hear you again on this subject." At that, Paul left the Council. Some of the people became followers of Paul and believed ...**

**(Acts 17:32–34 NIV)**



# Meet Pastor Bun Sopheab

Garuna's ministry strategy in Southeast Asia targets three main areas. The first is to provide Bible training and mentorship for indigenous (national) believers through the Luther Institute Southeast Asia (LISA) and its training events. The second priority is to do all we can to help these national leaders develop vibrant national Lutheran Church bodies in their own countries. And the third priority is to focus on ministry to children and families as an outreach and church planting emphasis of the Cambodia Lutheran Church (CLC) through the Garuna Kids and Garuna Christian School ministries. Pastor Sopheab, who is a leader in the Cambodian Lutheran Church (CLC), is involved in each level of this outreach and leadership training strategy. Garuna thanks God for Pastor Sopheab and for so many other brothers and sisters in Southeast Asia who are dedicated to serving Jesus in some challenging and difficult circumstances. Please keep them and their ministry in your prayers.

## Luther Institute Southeast Asia (LISA)

The Luther Institute Southeast Asia (LISA) continues to be a critical ministry of Garuna to help with the training of leaders for the local national Churches of the region. Here is a sampling of some of the recent LISA training events and planning activities. Garuna/LISA is so thankful for the many professors, pastors, and teachers who have devoted so much time and effort to helping LISA prepare the future leaders of the region.



The Rev. Dr. Thomas Zelt, Prince of Peace Lutheran Church & School in Fremont, CA, is shown teaching for LISA. He taught a LISA special event on "Archaeology and the Bible". The students reported that this was a first for Cambodian Bible students.

# 1

## LISA Bible Training

Mission Emphasis:



Pastor Sopheab, who is a LISA graduate, is shown holding the LISA continuing education booklet for the recent seminar he attended in Phnom Penh: "Vocation: Called by Grace".

# 2

## National Lutheran Church Planting

Mission Emphasis:



Pastor Sopheab, who is the Chairman of the Cambodia Lutheran Church, is shown proudly displaying the new registration document the CLC recently received from the Cambodian government.

# 3

## Garuna Christian Schools & Kids

Mission Emphasis:



Pastor Sopheab teaches Bible class to the children at the Garuna Christian School located next to his church in Kampot, Cambodia. Pastor Sopheab recently happily reported that having the Garuna Christian School now gives him 'a platform' for the sharing the Good News in his village in a region where less than 2% are believers.

## FROM THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATIONAL MINISTRIES MRS. CHERYL EHLERS

### Enrollment Exceeding Expectations!

God has provided a way for more students to hear of His grace at the Garuna Christian Schools in Cambodia. In the past three years, enrollment has grown from 310 students (4/17) to 594 students (4/18) to a new total of 1,039 students (4/19).

Recent growth is due to the opening of a new school in Siem Reap. While we had hoped to open with 100 students, we were amazed to see the enrollment at 283 after just one month of classes. Even better, we have seen growth in all 6 of our schools.



### GCS #6, Siem Reap, Dedication

The newest Garuna Christian School was dedicated on January 16 with over 400 parents, students, and community members in attendance. The local government officials gave their blessing, as well. In fact, they felt that we might need larger facilities to accommodate the children in the community. Several parents asked if there could be a Bible study or worship community on site. It was a joyful occasion and a blessing to see their gratitude and interest in further ministry at this site.



### Faculty Bible Studies

The Garuna School faculty members gather for weekly Bible study which is led by their pastor or principal. They have a growing interest in learning more through their personal and team Bible studies. Many are also enrolled in Garuna's LISA classes for more in-depth Bible study. They are able to return to their work and churches and immediately apply what they've learned.



### Land Purchased For GCS #7 in Phnom Penh

In January, land was purchased for the site of Garuna Christian School #7 on the outskirts of the capital city of Phnom Penh. This area is developing rapidly, so we were very excited to be able to secure a site for future growth. A slightly larger plot was purchased to provide expansion opportunities for training and events, in addition to a Garuna School. Architects are drawing up a plan for a 2-story school complex to save space for additional ministry on the site.



*Prince of Peace leaders present the GCS cross to Siem Reap teachers*

### Teachers Witness to Teachers

Recently, we learned that a new GCS teacher asked to be baptized after hearing the Bible being taught to his students by the Garuna Bible teacher. He started to pray and attend church. He asked his fellow Christian teachers to transform his Buddhist altar at his home into a place of honor for God, the Father. It may seem odd to learn that a Garuna teacher is learning about Jesus, but in a country where only 2% of the population is Christian, it is difficult to find Christian teachers. The Garuna Christian Schools are no exception. Key leaders and Bible teachers are Christian; the remaining faculty members are very open to Christianity.

### Summer Mission Trip

The Summer 2019 Mission Trip participants will travel to Cambodia from June 25–July 6. They will be spending time at the schools and will help lead a training and worship retreat for all 50 of the GCS teachers and administrators. Four teachers from Prince of Peace (POP) Lutheran School in Fremont, CA were a part of a previous mission trip. When they returned to the States, they presented the idea of building their own GCS to their congregation and school family. The result? Their congregation is now sponsoring a new school with 283 students enrolled and a teacher asking to be baptized! They are also supporting "their" GCS by promoting the Garuna Kids sponsorship ministry at POP, and it has gone extremely well. **Thanks, Prince of Peace!**



16 happy Garuna Kids arrive at the GCS in Kampong Chhnang.

## Reaching More and More Children

Our GCS in Kampong Chhnang has recently attracted a new group of 16 students. They came from a village by the Tonle Sap River, located about 6-7 km. from our school. The parents had wanted to send their children to our school for quite some time, but it was too far for the children to walk or ride their bikes. The parents work hard but have limited resources. Recently, they found a tuk tuk driver who agreed to transport all 16 children at a total cost of \$7.50 a month for the round trip. They pooled their money and are sending the children to Garuna's school during the dry season. What a wonderful way to attain an enrollment of more than 1,000 students.



## EASTER Giving Opportunities

### Where Needed Most

Any amount is greatly appreciated!

### LISA Theological/Bible Training Projects

- A. LISA Student Sponsorship: \$50 per month/\$600 per year
- B. LISA Theological Material Expenses: \$1,000/per year

### National Lutheran Church Projects

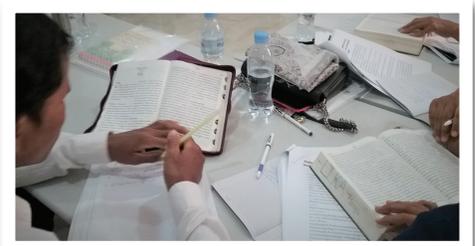
- A. Evangelistic and Outreach Events: \$500
- B. Strategy and Planning Meetings: \$1,000

### Garuna Schools & Garuna Kids Projects

- A. Garuna Kid sponsorship: \$30/month or \$360/year
- B. Garuna Teacher sponsorship: \$100/month or \$1,200/year
- C. Construction cost for one new classroom: \$20,000

### Easy ways to support Garuna Ministries

- **Thrivent Matching Gifts.** - Are you a member of Thrivent Financial and eligible to direct Thrivent Choice Dollars? If so, you might consider sharing them with the Garuna Foundation ministries.
- **IRA Charitable Rollovers** Rollovers or IRA RMD's can provide an opportunity for stewards over 70½ to make gifts to Garuna from their IRAs directly no income taxes due on rolled over or donated funds.



LISA students studying God's Word at a recent seminar.



Garuna Kids are excited to receive their backpacks.

"Thanks again for your heart for these children. I was one of these little girls living in poverty after the Vietnam War. I am so thankful that God saved me, too, as He is doing now with these kids!"

A new GK sponsor

If you are led to make a donation, your check may be made payable to The Garuna Foundation. Mail gifts to Garuna at 2924 E. Cholla Street, Phoenix, Arizona 85028 or donate online by visiting our secure online giving page at [www.garuna.org](http://www.garuna.org). Your gift is tax-deductible as allowable by law. The Garuna Foundation is a 501(c)3 nonprofit. Garuna will mail a gift receipt to the address you provide. Thank you in advance for your generosity.