



THE GARUNA FOUNDATION

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

THE GARUNA FOUNDATION | 2924 East Cholla Street, Phoenix, AZ 85028 | www.garuna.org | info@garuna.org | Volume 20, Issue 2 | Fall 2020

From the Chairman:

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials."

1 Peter 1:3-6



Dear Friends in Christ:

May the LORD be with you. Amen. This brief salutation and blessing contain the reassurance we need as His children. During this difficult and challenging time, we need to know of His love, grace, protection, care, and presence with and among us. We find this needed assurance throughout the pages of God's Word.

One such passage from God's Word that strengthens us is noted here from 1 Peter. Peter, who was suffering severely along with God's people in the early Church, encourages us because he certainly



Principal San Ran shares Jesus with the children. The Gospel keeps moving forward; it does not stop.

knows of what he speaks. He reminds us that hope comes from the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. That is the inheritance Jesus promises to all who trust in Him. By His grace, we will live forever in His Kingdom. That promise and truth enables us to endure much.

every corner of His world. So many people around the world are looking for meaning in life. These promises serve to strengthen and encourage us, no matter our situation. May God use this difficult time to bring many more to Him as we find creative and meaningful ways to share this Good News with a world that is hurting.

Not only does Jesus earn eternal life for us, but He also works a 'new birth' in our lives. Our lives are changed by the Gospel. Peter reminds us that Jesus is returning and will be bringing eternal life to all believers from

Thank you for your prayers and partnership with Garuna as we seek to share this grace, mercy, and compassion in Southeast Asia.

Sincerely in Christ,

**Rev. Dr. Jeff Ehlers, Chairman
The Garuna Foundation**



We pray that God's Word continues to move throughout His world.



There May Be A Pandemic, BUT...

Look What God Is Doing An Amazing Opportunity for Theological Training

During this time of quarantine, a new partnership between Garuna's Luther Institute Southeast Asia (LISA) program and Grand Canyon University (GCU) in Phoenix has been developing. For many years, the very capable and dedicated Asian graduates of the LISA program have been asking for an online MA in Theology. They have been serving as country leaders in ministry and wanted to be better prepared for their roles.

It's happening! GCU has very graciously agreed to undertake a Pilot Project with Garuna to offer an MA degree in Christian Ministry through GCU's College of Theology. It is an accredited degree with the 10 classes



LISA students shown on a Zoom call as they prepare for their English exam.

taught by qualified Lutheran professors recommended by Garuna. Our Asian leaders will be able to apply this education and field experiences to benefit their ministries and in their teaching for LISA. Garuna will be inviting 12-15 Lutheran leaders from countries in Asia to participate, with classes starting in January 2021. Currently, the Asian students in this pilot project are working on preparing for their English language proficiency test which is a prerequisite for acceptance into GCU.

Please keep GCU, Garuna, and our students in your prayers as this opportunity has tremendous potential for the spreading of the Gospel in Asia through our Lutheran partners there. We are very grateful for the wonderful and cordial working relationship with GCU's leadership in helping make this dream a reality.

Look What God Is Doing Indigenous Leaders are Leading!

Does a pandemic stop the sharing of God's Word and the work of His people? By NO MEANS! Some might worry about the ongoing ministry of Garuna's programs without visits from the USA team during this pandemic. However, our leaders throughout Asia have demonstrated a wonderful dedication to



Pastor Channdet, the Garuna Christian School Coordinator, leads his team in the sharing of Bible lessons to small groups of students.

Jesus and His ministry during this challenging time. Many Zoom calls, emails, and FB messages later, we have seen much accomplished during these last months. By God's grace, Garuna's model is working.

WHAT IS THAT MODEL? Provide Biblical, Lutheran training and opportunities to indigenous staff so that they can carry out the work in their own communities. The pandemic reminds us that this strategy is essential.

Look What God Is Doing Home Visits by Garuna Teachers!

The Cambodian government closed schools during the pandemic, but they allow teachers to "go out" and visit students and families in smaller groups. Since April, that has been how the Garuna teachers are spending their teaching time. They are on the road, visiting students each day. The best part of that is that parents and non-Garuna Kid siblings are hearing the Gospel each day, too. This is a blessing in disguise. Our team tells us that these visits have further solidified the positive school-home relationships in this Buddhist culture.



Pastor Heng Kimhai meets his students and families to study the Bible and pray at GCS #4.



Studying in the shade of the trees makes learning fun in Siem Reap (GCS #6).



Look What God Is Doing!

Look What God Is Doing Parent-Teacher Conferences!

As our teams visit student homes, they are also finding time to get parent impressions about the Garuna Christian School ministry. Parents commonly share feedback, such as *"I am really glad that my children are in Garuna Christian School where they learn a lot and are safe."* Another wrote, *"They are learning how to respect parents very much. I am happy to see this attitude taught to my kids."* One parent shared, *"I am very pleased to have my child in school because the staff is gentle and friendly with students and parents."*

The Garuna students are taught about Jesus. Even in a society that is 98% Buddhist, the majority of the families agreed with this comment, *"I know that this school is a Christian school. Even though I do not yet believe in Jesus, but I do not forbid my children to believe in Jesus Christ."* They expressed their appreciation for the recent home visits, too:

"During this time, I am really happy when the teachers came down to help and give extra help to the my children during this Covid-19. I want both of my children to attend and finish their study in the Garuna Christian School."

thankful
AND
blessed



GCS teacher Sreynit is visiting with a mother in Siem Reap (GCS #6) who shares of her happiness with the ministry of the Garuna Christian Schools.

In summary, it is a blessing to know they are happy and have a positive impression of the Garuna Christian Schools.



Pastor Bun Sary listens to parents at Kampot (GCS #3). He offers encouragement and prayers.

"Last but not least, my family would like to thank the organization and teachers at the Garuna Christian School for providing educational support to underprivileged children, for taking care of my children at school, and for their academic growth."

(Comments were translated from Khmer)

Look What God Is Doing God is Building Garuna Christian School #7!

The 7th Garuna Christian School is taking shape on the outskirts of the capital city of Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Its projected completion is November 2020, with approximately 200-300 students expected to enroll in the coming year. These students will come from families who have not yet heard of the love of Christ but will hear about Jesus during the daily Bible classes at the school.

Would you or your congregation like to help build the next Garuna Christian School? Contact us for details!!



The Phnom Penh school site as of August 10, 2020. To God be the glory.

This site also provides space for Garuna's Cambodia home office site, with additional land available for further expansion. We also pray that this will eventually be a new congregation in the Cambodia Lutheran Church (CLC). We trust that our Cambodian leadership will continue to direct the sharing of Jesus' love through the GCS system and the teaching of God's Word through LISA. Thanks to all who so generously donated to make this dream a reality. May God use this site to bring many to know Christ.



Look What God Is Doing Using This Time for Repair and Upgrades!

All of the Garuna Christian School teachers spent time during these past months cleaning and decorating their classrooms. In addition, 3 schools received tile flooring, all are in the process of building new handwashing facilities, trees and flowers were planted, repairs were made, gravel was added where needed, new restrooms were added, and a classroom expansion was completed. It was a real spring housecleaning time. In addition to home visits and cleaning, the faculty spent time in Bible study and prayer each week, as well.



Garuna teachers at GCS #1 are cleaning their new tile floors, but also making time for faculty group meetings, bible study, and student visits each week.



New restrooms were built at GCS #5. The handwashing sinks are coming, too!

“Isn’t it awesome how when we are hit with a pandemic, God has already set forth solutions for us to continue His work, via media and using the teachers already on the field!”

(Garuna friends from AZ)

“Absolutely amazing how God is working on the midst of the Covid crisis in bigger ways than could be imagined!!!!”

(A Garuna friend from CA)

“...the great pictures from Phnom Penh show how all is going on without us there...truly a national mission that is learning self-governance and direction.”

(Garuna partners from CA)

Ways To Financially Support Garuna’s Ministries

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 Leadership Seminar: \$4,000/each seminar

Garuna Schools & Garuna Kids Projects

- A. Garuna Kid scholarship: \$30/month or \$360/year
- B. Garuna Teacher sponsorship: \$100/month or \$1200/year
- C. Construction cost for one new classroom: \$20,000

Have you considered these ways to give to the Garuna Ministries?

- **Thrivent Choice** – Are you a member of Thrivent Financial and eligible to direct Thrivent Choice Dollars? If so, you might consider sharing them with the Garuna ministries.
- **IRA Charitable 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.
- **Estate Planning** – Have you considered leaving a legacy gift for Garuna as a part of your estate planning? We have an expert who is willing to visit more with you if helpful.
- **AmazonSmiles** – Garuna is registered with Amazon. Please consider making Garuna the charity of your choice when visiting Amazon. (smile.amazon.com)



LISA students study God’s Word.

If you are led to make a donation to Garuna, your check may be made payable to The Garuna Foundation. Gifts may be mailed to 2924 E. Cholla Street, Phoenix, Arizona 85028. You may also donate online by visiting our secure online giving page at 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.

