



**BUILDING
DISCIPLES**

**Lutheran Schools Week
2012**



Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America
God's work. Our hands.



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During a recent visit to Lutheran schools in the western highlands of Papua New Guinea, I became very much aware of God's blessings upon the efforts of the missionaries who came in the 1950's and 60's. I tried to appreciate the circumstances of those who came from Germany, the USA and Australia with the 'Good News' - social isolation, cultural differences, deprived of life's niceties, taking risks. Yet, they came because of Jesus' empowerment and in response to his words, 'henceforth you will catch men' and build disciples. God has clearly blessed their work.

Today the mission frontiers are on the other side of the church sanctuary door with Lutheran schools and early childhood centers being very much the new mission field. Children and their families come to us with their aches, anxieties, questions and needs. We, as congregations who sponsor schools and centers are God's people in this situation with his love to share. In so doing we follow in the footsteps of the overseas missionaries - the people are different, the issues are different, the place is different. Yet Christ's love for people helps us understand that our mission is the same, the real needs of people are the same and the resources that God gives us are the same.

We will have our excuses - there is too much liability, we are not good enough, we are scared, we are struggling ourselves, or not everyone in the church understands the ministry. Nevertheless, as God's named, sent and empowered people, we push on at His command with His promises.

Written by Adrienne Jericho, Former Executive Director of Lutheran Education in Australia, a wonderful colleague and friend to ELCA schools who died suddenly in August of 2010. Thank you, Adrienne, for your words of wisdom.

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