



From the National Director

Thanks!

On behalf of Christian World Service, I would like to express my most sincere appreciation to churches, schools, groups, and you, for your gifts to the 2003 Christmas Bowl program. As I have said before, the work with partner churches and communities is your work, as you make it possible.

Thanks, again!!

Last year, we tried to reconnect with supporters we hadn't heard from for a while. Following a wonderful response, with gifts to 31 March of \$87,230 for the Christmas Bowl, we have also been able to update and correct database information, and save costs. My thanks for your feedback. I apologise to some of you who were surprised at receiving my letter.

A peace-building focus

The Commission for Christian World Service has adopted a "peace-building" focus for CWS work. This is natural as CWS is committed to eliminating causes of violence such as global poverty and inequality, oppression and refugee situations.

Pacific in Focus

In the light of recent events and developments in the Pacific, questions arise for Australian foreign policy as well for Australian churches. The NCCA Forum in Adelaide this year provides us with an opportunity to feature prominent speakers from the Pacific (details on page 9).

Keep our work in your prayers. If you were unable to give a gift at Christmas, or feel called to do so again, or just want to get in touch with us, we would love to hear from you.

Caesar D'Mello
National Director, Christian
World Service/NCCA

The long road back

Reflections from Charlie Ocampo, Manager CWS International Programs, following a visit to Mae La Oon and Mae Rama Luang refugee camps on the Thai-Burma Border in March

In January 11,500 Karen refugees were moved to the Mae La Oon camp on the Thai-Burma border. Only 2,500 thatch houses had been built for them, and more than 500 houses are still needed to house almost 2,000 families.



Photo: Charlie Ocampo

Lee Htoo, Prasit and Karen with Camp Committee colleagues

Access to medical and health services becomes impossible during the wet months, sometimes making it difficult to transport patients from the camps.

The Camp Committee reported that only 50 of the 150 classrooms were ready for the primary, high and vocational classes.

In 2003, the Burma Border Consortium spent close to US\$17.2 million dollars to provide food, clothing, bedding, cooking, fuel, shelter, medical, education, and other forms of emergency assistance for more than 152,000 refugees who have crossed the border into Thailand. Due to a policy of "no new arrivals" by the Thai Government, there is an unknown

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The Timor Sea: whose oil is it?

Australia and East Timor are currently in negotiations over oil in the Timor Sea.

In March 2002 Senator Bob Brown stated that Australia was "involved in a grand theft of the resources of our small neighbour, East Timor" and Australia gave formal notice that it was withdrawing from the international legal mechanisms to resolve boundary issues that could not be settled by negotiation – the International Court of Justice and the United Nations' Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). This was not surprising as under UNCLOS the oil fields that have given Australia more than US\$ 1,000 million revenue between 1999 and today would more than likely be within East Timor's territory.



Photo: Kirsty Robertson

The quality of life for East Timor's present and future generations depends on a fair boundary agreement with Australia.

Today, many of the oil and gas fields Australia has exploited and intends to

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