

Bethézer

annual report



The Christadelphian
Bethézer
Fund

SPREADING THE GOOD NEWS
OF AID TO THE NEEDY

08



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Tanna School Vanuatu



message from the Chairman

Bethézer is taken from 2 Hebrew words and means House of Help. Bethézer's founders chose these words because they aptly express the organisation's underlying purpose of providing welfare, relief and developmental aid to the poor and needy in Southeast Asia and Oceania.

With the start up of Bethézer in January 2008 that has begun to happen.

But to understand Bethézer's real beginning you have to go back another year, to January 2007, when two young families arrived in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, as ACBM fieldworkers to organise a home and a centre from which the gospel message could go out to all who would hear it.

It was here the stirrings that would lead to Bethézer really began, as these young missionaries went about proclaiming the saving gospel and as they came face to face with real, palpable, urgent need. It was here that they began to meet and to come to know and love people, mostly young people, who were impoverished, who were hungry and thirsty, who needed a roof over their head, who required medical attention and who had few if any means of attending to those needs. You couldn't just sit on your hands when faced with those hardships. In the hearts and minds of Mike and Miriam Hewitt and James and Miranda Rasmussen, it was in this kind of experience that Bethézer was conceived.

Since January, 2008, Bethézer has drawn up or accepted several projects. Two key initiatives are the Boys Dorm and the Girls Dorm. The Boys Dorm, the first to be completed, provides a free home and some food assistance to up to 20 university students – all males – who also have an interest in learning about the true God. Not accidentally, the program at the dormitories, overseen by a Khmer married couple, both Christadelphian, is suffused with Bible reading, Bible study and discussion. Both material and spiritual needs are being met at the dorms. (This has led to the wonderful occasion of several of the dormers being baptised recently.)

The success of the Boys Dorm has been duplicated with a dorm for 20 young women in similar circumstances to the young men.

Bethézer has also become involved in Vanuatu, where the early education of up to 100-plus village children will be enhanced by the construction of a new school building and the operation of a private, Christadelphian primary school. Work on the new building, which will cater for grades 3 to 6, is set to begin in October 2008. The new Christadelphian school will include in its curriculum an agricultural program with the goal of eventually improving diet. And it will have a slot of time for instruction in Bible lessons and principles.

So within the first six or so months, Bethézer has already begun making a difference in people's lives. All of the projects mentioned above and the other projects already on Bethézer's books exemplify the desire to help and the spirit of kindness which provides the basis for this House of Help.

But none of this would be possible without Bethézer's donors. Bethézer is entirely dependent on the unselfish generosity of these supporters to be able to materially fulfil the needs of others less fortunate than ourselves. The Management Committee wishes to extend a hearty Thank You! to all who have contributed to this work. May our Heavenly Father bless each of you and may He continue to bless the activities of this young organisation.



Terry Nutter
Chairman



Chairman: Terry Nutter

“Beginnings”

2008 was a year of learning for Bethézer. A management committee was formed to guide Bethézer through the early stages of formation.

This committee consists of:

Terry and Karen Nutter
Michael and Miriam Hewitt
James and Miranda Rasmussen
Steve and Lynne Armes
Raju and Ruth Devis

Woodford Ecclesia, QLD, Australia
South Brisbane Ecclesia, QLD, Australia
Ipswich Ecclesia, QLD, Australia
Gold Coast Ecclesia, NSW, Australia
Moorebank Ecclesia, NSW, Australia

Currently, additional members include Jon and Melinda Saxon and Sara-Rose Pogson who contribute to management decisions in an advisory capacity. All the members of Bethézer have significant involvement in preaching work or have been in the field as long term missionaries.

These Brothers and Sisters have a commitment to serving God through preaching of the Word and an outworking of his commandment of Love. This commitment is based in a belief in the truth of his Word as understood by the Christadelphian community. The dual motivation of caring for the physical while attending to the spiritual means that Bethézer is providing a Christadelphian alternative to the political agenda of the secular aid organisations and a doctrinal alternative to the teachings of the various religious aid agencies.

The management committee has endeavoured to ensure that the Bethézer Fund was constituted in such a way as to ensure accountability of the organisation both to Government and to the Brotherhood in Australia. Further, we endeavour to develop a close working relationship with the ACBM in the interests of co-ordination and co-operation. We hold ourselves responsible to our various home ecclesias and donors for our own personal involvement in Bethézer. We believe that this transparency is important for the credibility of the organisation and the credibility of the wider body of Christ.

“The dual motivation of caring for the physical, while attending to the spiritual means...”



Achievements

God has blessed the work of Bethézer, providing funding and supportive Brothers and Sisters to assist in the laying of the initial foundations. Moved by God's grace and love, we have set ourselves to the task of

"provide[ing] welfare, relief and developmental aid programs to the poor and needy of Southeast Asia and Oceania expressed by the values and ideals of the Christadelphian community."

To that end, we have sought to initiate projects that would capture the spirit of love and the love of the Word that the Christadelphian community seeks to manifest. To date, we have initiated projects in Cambodia, Vanuatu and East Timor. Projects are considered on the merit of how they fit within the objectives outlined in the Bethézer Fund's constitution.

1. To give the members of the Christadelphian community an opportunity to contribute, and participate in a humanitarian aid organisation which matches their values and ideals

Bethézer projects attempt to provide members of the Christadelphian community, not just the option of contributing financially to a humanitarian alternative to popular aid funds, but also provide an opportunity to be involved in the actual project's themselves. For example, the 'Tanna School Project' in Vanuatu has been funded, designed and will be built and manned by Christadelphians. The building process is scheduled to take a month during which time Christadelphian tradespeople will be involved in the construction. Other projects in Cambodia allow for Brothers and Sisters to be involved in pastoral care and support work.

2. To complement the activities of the Australasian Christadelphian Bible Mission

Bethézer projects are designed to facilitate preaching opportunities and it is our desire to support the work undertaken by mission organisations such as the ACBM (Australasian Christadelphian Bible Mission) and CBM (Christadelphian Bible Mission). The 'Phnom Penh Dormitory projects' operating in Phnom Penh, Cambodia are linked closely with the ACBM manned 'Bible Education Centre' (BEC). ACBM missionaries attend the dormitories daily for teaching support. Students from the dormitories also study at the BEC regularly and have significant contact with BEC teaching. To date, six of the dormitory students have been baptised. Dormers in the girl's dormitory bring regular attendances to Saturday night seminars to nearly forty.

3. To provide welfare, relief and developmental assistance to the poor and needy of Southeast Asia and Oceania

Bethézer shows the love of the Christadelphian community by providing a means by which needy people meet basic needs such as food, shelter, and medical aid. Bethézer has particularly focussed on educational projects, working on the principle that education leads to better opportunities and improved quality of life, both for individuals and their communities. Those who have learned to read can discover God, themselves, through the Bible. The 'English for East Timor Project' (EFET) will provide an opportunity for East Timorese students to study English with the right tools and support. With skills in English, they have many more options to find employment and support their families.

The Bethézer Fund Inc. has just begun developing its capacity to assist people in need and to provide opportunities within our own community to become more involved with needs outside our own immediate locality. In the short time we have been operating, we have established the organisational structure to support such a venture and laid the first stones in a path that connects Christadelphians everywhere to the day to day struggles faced by people in distant communities.

Relationships

Bethézer has initiated connections and relationships with various organisations. First has been our registration with the Queensland Government as an incorporated non-profit organisation. This permits Bethézer to open a fee-free bank account and requires us to submit financial records and our constitution to audit and review. It may be possible for Bethézer donors to receive tax rebates for donations made in the future.

Bethézer began to build a relationship with the ACBM and co-ordinate projects and activities with the relevant regional committees tasked with mission activities in Vanuatu, Cambodia and East Timor. As a matter of principle, Bethézer has sought to obtain the support and agreement of the South Australian, New Zealand and Tasmanian regional committees for the new projects.

“Bethézer began to build a relationship with the ACBM and co-ordinate projects and activities with the relevant regional committees”



Project Summaries

There are currently four projects being supported or administered by the Christadelphian Bethézer Fund.

- Tanna School Project Vanuatu
- Phnom Penh Boys Dormitory Project Cambodia
- Phnom Penh Girls Dormitory Project Cambodia
- English for East Timor Project East Timor

Of these commitments, the dormitory projects require the greatest ongoing financial support.

Tanna School Project

Vanuatu

Work on the building to house a school, ecclesial hall and community hall commences in October 2008. The building site is located among remote villages on the island of Tanna in Vanuatu. The existing school, housed in run-down thatch huts caters for about 80 children. The new intake group is expected to include another 20+ children. A Cargo Cult village nearby has also said that they will also be sending children next year. Grades 1 and 2 will be staying in the 'old' school while grades 3 through 6 will be in the new, Christadelphian school.

We hope to have the building completed in November 2008. Eleven brethren with construction skills will put the building up. The building is a large but simple structure designed to withstand cyclones and earthquakes. It will have a wooden frame covered with 'colourbond' roof and walls. The floor will be of 'yellowtongue' compressed board. The building will be on metal stumps. It will be 25 metres long and 7.2 metres wide. It will include a room for visiting teachers/fieldworkers from Australia. An advance party is to arrive in Vanuatu mid September to facilitate the shipment of materials from Port Vila to Tanna. This is a major task in Vanuatu where there are no schedules for any transport except planes. By boat Tanna is 12 hours south of Efate, the main island.

Phnom Penh Boys and Girls Dormitory Projects

Cambodia

The dormitory projects house up to forty students in two large houses a short distance from the city centre. They provide shelter, company and support for students, most of whom come from outlying provinces, while they study away from home. The twenty male and twenty female students are interviewed and accepted on the basis that they are in need of shelter while in Phnom Penh and are interested in studying about God. Brother Meng Him is employed by Bethézer to act as a full time manager for the two dormitories, with responsibility for caring for the needs of the students. Brother Him, a full time teacher in his previous employment, is very capable and well respected by the dormers.



The dormitories provide free accommodation, filtered drinking water, various amenities and study support for the students. Students are expected to finance their own living expenses, study materials and school fees. They are also expected to attend morning and evening Bible study sessions, and attendance at the BEC for further lessons is encouraged. The students also are invited as observers to the Sunday meeting at the Bible Education Centre.

The dormitory projects aim to give young Cambodians the opportunity to improve their education, widen their future options and give them a solid and supportive base while away from home. It also seeks to provide an opportunity for young Cambodians to learn Christian values and sound teaching about God and his son, Jesus the Christ.

English for East Timor Project (EFET)

East Timor

Lack of English speaking skills among the general population has been the greatest impediment to preaching in East Timor. At the time this report was compiled, two Australian fieldworkers were in East Timor negotiating with the English faculty of the National University of East Timor for the provision of source materials for lecturers of English. EFET is committed to providing materials for semesters 1 and 2. Working with the university gives EFET project staff ready access to young people with some English language skills who are eager to learn from us.

The immediate goal is to establish a library and learning centre in the university for the use of university students who are taking English language courses.

However there is a possibility that an Australian and New Zealand government aid organization may establish a similar facility in the near future. In that event, we would re-direct our energies into developing our own facility. It would have its own library of helpful English books, would be equipped for English language instruction and for Bible seminars and it would have facilities to house fieldworkers.

“Lack of English speaking skills among the general population has been the greatest impediment to preaching in East Timor”



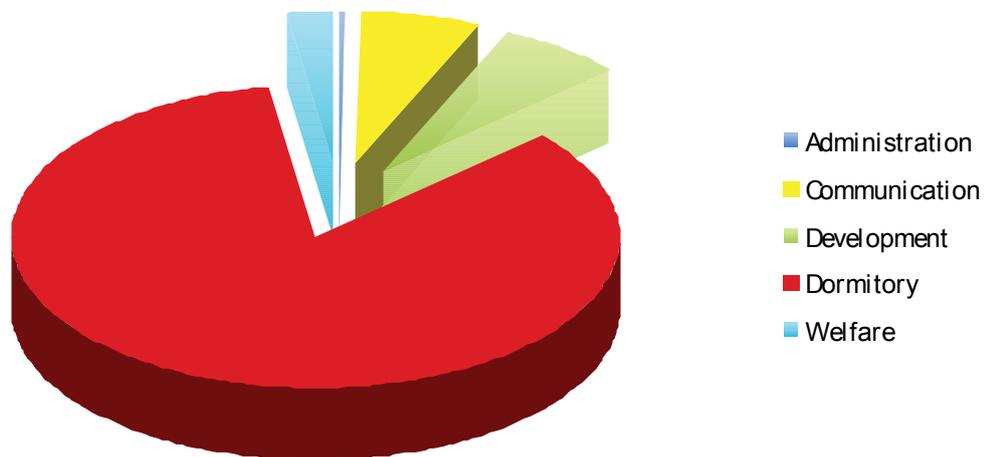
Accounts

The Christadelphian Bethézer Fund keeps comprehensive financial records of income and expenditure. Below is an income and expenditure statement up to June 30, 2008.

	General	Administration	Phnom Penh Dormitories	Vanuatu Tanna School	English For East Timor	Total
Donations	\$2,889.10	\$0.00	\$3,760.00	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$7,649.10
Expenses	\$0.00	\$0.00	-\$2,032.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	-\$2,032.00
Balance	\$2,889.10	\$0.00	\$1,728.00	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$5,617.10

Donations are divided into a general fund for donations that have no project specification, fund administration costs and the three current projects being sponsored by The Christadelphian Bethézer Fund.

Expenditures for the Phnom Penh Dormitories



The majority of dormitory costs were for rental of the premises and purchase of furniture. Administration costs were limited to bank fees. Other administration costs such as moto fuel, telephone and internet costs are included under communication. Development costs are for special programs for preaching such as the 'Saturday night seminars'. Welfare has mostly been limited to acute illnesses requiring immediate medical treatment.



“we appeal to Brothers and Sisters to consider volunteering for long term missionary work”

Next year

Should the Lord Jesus remain away, it is clear to see that there will always be those in need of support and assistance. This coming year, God willing, will see the completion of the school building in Vanuatu, and commencement of the new, Christadelphian school. The EFET project should be completed as well. Bethézer intends to consolidate the projects that began in the past 8 months by developing a stronger base of ongoing funds. We will also look to expand funding for dormitory preaching activities and consider new projects in other areas.

How can you help?

In the coming year, we are in need of donors who can contribute a regular amount to sponsor or support students in the dormitory. Further, we appeal to Brothers and Sisters to consider volunteering for long term missionary work with the ACBM. Without teachers, the Word of God cannot be preached and Bethézer projects cannot contribute to that preaching. For those who feel unable to teach, there is plenty of pastoral work that needs to be done in ACBM areas and in Bethézer projects.

If you wish to visit Bethézer projects, do pastoral work or become an ACBM fieldworker, please contact bethezerfund@gmail.com and we can provide you with the relevant information.

The Christadelphian Bethézer Fund cannot operate projects without the generous donations of the ecclesias and Brothers and Sisters of the Christadelphian Community. For your generosity and good will, we thank all of you who have already assisted financially, and encourage you to continue to do so. Finally, we ask that you keep the work of Bethézer in your thoughts and prayers.

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