I’m not a big fan of small change. Coins, I mean. The silver ones. You never seem to get just one silver coin, there’s always a dozen of them. And that means they make a big bulge in your wallet. So big that when you put your wallet in your back pocket and sit down, you sit on a slope. Like a Leaning Tower of (10 cent) Pieces.

Any chance I get, I try to get rid of my silver coins. That’s easier said than done. I used to palm them off on the kids for icecreams and lollies, but that doesn’t work any more. ‘Dad, that’s junk money. Give me real money.’ That is, notes.

So these days I gather up a handful of coins when I want to buy a newspaper or hire a DVD and try to get rid of them that way. The trouble is, no matter what price the item I buy or how carefully I count the coins, I always end up 5 cents short. Which means I have to break into a note. Which of course means another handful of coins as change.

Small change. It hardly seems worth the bother for all the good it does(n’t). What messes up my thinking about small change is the fact that what a coin is worth may not be what a coin is worth, as Jesus points out to his disciples when he directs them to watch the poor widow dropping a few coins in the offering box at the temple (Luke 21:1–4).

Jesus tells us that this widow gave more than everyone else because she gave all she had. Her small change was an example to the whole world for the next 2000 years, her few coins the inspiration to change the lives of thousands.

It’s amazing how small change can change someone’s world. A few years ago I was in Bangladesh and I met a lady called Kalaboli. She was more than 70 years old, a widow, and she survived by begging from her neighbours.

She’s a beggar widow from Bangladesh, but she touched the lives of thousands.
Rice — you can bank on it!

Rice is the main component of diets for families in rural Cambodia. People eat rice morning, noon and evening.

That's why the rice harvest is the most important event of the year.

A successful harvest, and poor families will have enough food to eat, and perhaps even excess to sell. If the harvest fails — and if there is a drought that's always a possibility — families will not have enough to eat; they can lose everything.

Through the support of Australian Lutherans, a new idea is helping poor farming families achieve security and independence. The idea? Rice banks.

Farmers who have a good harvest simply deposit their surplus rice in the rice bank. Farmers who have a poor harvest can then borrow rice. The loans are paid back the following harvest, with interest in rice.

According to the village chief of Krang Dong Village, 'the rice banks are an important part of the villages' and farmers' path to self-sustainability. They give the farmers security so that a bad harvest year doesn't destroy the whole family economy.'
woman has put in more than all the others. Everyone else
gave what they didn’t need. But she is very poor and gave
everything she had’ (Luke 21:3,4).

No-one likes to feel ‘guilted’ into helping others. That’s
not what Jesus is talking about here. Nor is it what the Bible
is talking about in its other 2000 verses about poverty and
injustice. It’s simply that, as we learn from James (2:14–17),
one of the ways an authentic faith is evidenced is in the ac-
tions it inspires us to take to help others.

It can be scary to change. Remember the reaction of the
rich young man when Jesus told him to give all his money
to the poor (Matt 19:16–22)? Perhaps where each of us
can start is with small change. A few coins each day, given
every day, can in a year add up to enough to provide seeds,
seedlings, farm tools and training for a family in Cambodia
to help them become self-sufficient. Our small change can
become life change for that family.

You might look at the silver coins jangling around in your
pocket or wallet or purse and, like me, wonder what good
such small change can do. Stop wondering, just try it. You’ll
find a pack inside this issue of The Lutheran that shows a
very practical place to start — and it does not mean sending
stacks of silver coins to Australian Lutheran World Service
(ALWS) in Albury!

Start today. The life change you give by using your small
change for others might just turn out to be a life change for
you, too.

Discover how you can use your small change to change
the lives of others through ALWS. Call Jenny Pfitzner on
08 8360 7220, email jennyp@alws.org.au or visit www.lca.
org.au/alws

Jonathan Krause is ALWS Fundraising and
Communications Manager.

School’s in — for life!

if you’re a child in a poor family in Cambodia, there’s
a real risk that you may never go to school. If your
parents are poor and illiterate, they may see it as more
important that you stay home and help with the farming
or other ways to provide food for the family. Even if they
know that an education is your best chance of breaking
free from poverty, they may be too poor to afford your
school fees, uniforms, books and transport.

Through Australian Lutheran World Service (ALWS)
and with support from the Australian government
through AusAID, Australian Lutherans last year helped
to provide school supplies and uniforms to 2310 of
the poorest students in Cambodia. A hundred bicycles
were provided for children who live far from schools.

Most exciting of all, through our partnership with
villagers in Oral District a new school building is being
built for grades 7 and 8, as well as three primary-
school classrooms. St Andrews Lutheran College in
Queensland and Immanuel Lutheran Primary School
in Adelaide are generous supporters of Cambodian
schools through ALWS, too.

What’s interesting is that the children who
previously could never attend school now never want
to leave. When you ask them what they want to be
when they grow up, the answer’s always the same:
‘I want to be a teacher!’ Which is great, because
rural Cambodia needs all the teachers it can get!
The 2004 Boxing Day Tsunami killed more than 200,000 people and left millions homeless. People around the world responded with a huge outpouring of generosity, and Australian Lutherans were no exception. Three years on, the work of rebuilding homes, schools, farms and lives continues. This summary report shows some of the things Australians helped to achieve through Australian Lutheran World Service and our partners.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What you did</th>
<th>Who you helped</th>
<th>The difference you made</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>India</strong> — partner with Lutheran World Service and United Evangelical Lutheran Church of India</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-food relief</td>
<td>16,100 people</td>
<td>Relief kits: family kit, hygiene kit, utensil kit and student kit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fishing assistance</td>
<td>236 boats (4,720 people — one boat shared by 20 people)</td>
<td>Fibreglass boats, 10 HP engines, 2 sets of nets and other accessories such as ropes, leads, floats</td>
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<tr>
<td>Temporary shelters</td>
<td>204 families (1,168 people)</td>
<td>Constructed out of coconut leaves, bamboo</td>
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<td>Permanent houses</td>
<td>762 families</td>
<td>Construction completed (a further 118 houses in progress)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education and training</td>
<td>1,578 families (6,312 people)</td>
<td>Awareness on water and sanitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First-aid</td>
<td>10 schools (6,000 people)</td>
<td>First-aid kits to schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community and homestead development</td>
<td>2,089 families</td>
<td>10,423 saplings planted around the homesteads of these families</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-help groups</td>
<td>413 families (1,652 people)</td>
<td>Training for women in fund management and bookkeeping</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health assistance</td>
<td>252 children</td>
<td>Free eye-glasses to children aged 10-16 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health assistance</td>
<td>30,000 people</td>
<td>Post-tsunami trauma counselling</td>
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<tr>
<td>Games and sports</td>
<td>1,484 people</td>
<td>Activities for children</td>
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<td><strong>Indonesia</strong> — partner with YTBI and Ya PEKA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Life support — food</td>
<td>2,206 people</td>
<td>Rice, instant noodles, dried and canned fish, baby food, mineral water, spices, vegetable oils, beans, coffee and tea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life support — other</td>
<td>582 households</td>
<td>Small microfinance groups that help families start a livelihood: motorcycle repair shops, and vegetable vendors, barber shops, tailoring</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>52 children</td>
<td>Pre-school for children, including meals and toys</td>
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<td><strong>Sri Lanka</strong> — partner with National Christian Council of Sri Lanka</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shelter</td>
<td>948 households</td>
<td>123 houses completed in 2007, plus large housing scheme planned, plus community centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>Water and sanitation</td>
<td>3,282 households and support for 600 school children</td>
<td>Latrines, tube wells and water tanks constructed for homes, villages and schools</td>
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