

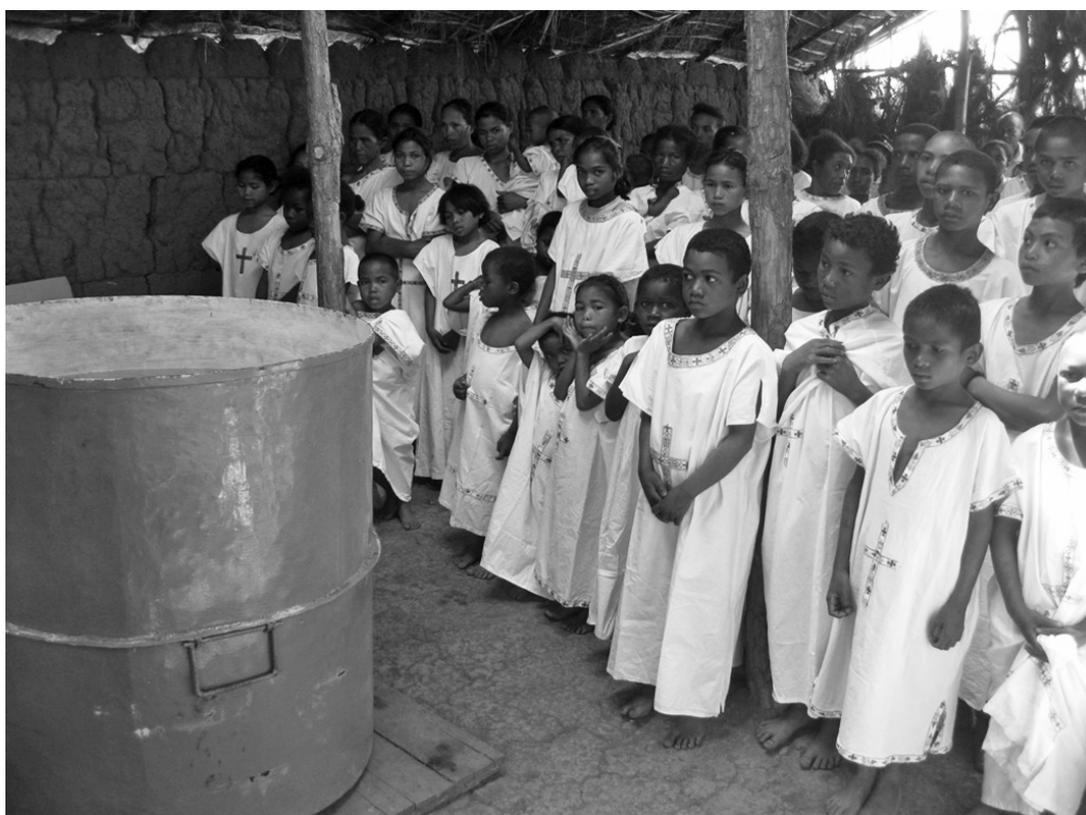
**Missionary Work in Madagascar, Kenya, Democratic Republic of Congo,
Sierra Leone and Indonesia**
Supported by the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia

The work of our Archdiocese to support the above Missions is one of the greatest expressions of acts of mercy and love for our fellow human beings.

Charity does begin at home but with the global financial crisis Australians have an increasing responsibility for other countries as well.

Our Archdiocese in supporting missionary work sees it as a great blessing to answer the Lord's calling: "I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink..." Matt 25:36

MADAGASCAR



The Orthodox Christian Mission to Madagascar is the child of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia. On July 6, 1995, the Very Reverend Archimandrite Nectarios Kellis from the Holy Monastery of Saint Nectarios Adelaide, South Australia, decided to commence the Orthodox Mission to Madagascar. Initially things were very difficult for him, however in time with God's help and the financial support of the Greek Orthodox faithful from Australia he succeeded. He preached to and baptised a great number of people in Madagascar and thus brought many to the Orthodox faith. In time churches and schools were built and other philanthropic projects such as feeding programs and health clinics were established.

Sadly on September 11, 2004 as a result of a fatal schnook helicopter crash, the Orthodox Christian Mission to Madagascar lost its founding missionary, Bishop Nectarios of blessed memory. Almost instantly he was replaced by another capable missionary, the experienced and soon to be Bishop Ignatius, who up until then was harvesting the missionary fields of India. From 2003, the Madagascan faithful have been served with a Medical Clinic. In 2008 an Aged Care Facility with 60 beds was inaugurated.

Every morning the mission offers milk and biscuits to approximately 1200 children. Since 2007 the mission has been giving staple food items and other essentials such as soap and other hygiene products to approximately 100 families on a weekly basis. The mission also boasts of housing a spiritual centre where seminars are held for the training and spiritual cultivation of Orthodox priests.

Knowing that in Africa and Madagascar tens of thousands of people die from Aids and other diseases every day and that orphan children suffer and are left to die on the streets, the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia Committee for Foreign Mission (Madagascar) decided to raise money to build an orphanage. In November 2008 fundraising efforts began, today a total of \$117 000 has been raised allowing for the 200 bed facility and its Church to start to be built.

The mission also has two schools which teachers young girls how to sow and make their own clothes. There is also a workshop in which boys learn how to be carpenters. In summary the mission is blessed to have 70 churches, 15 schools, an infant asylum centre with 20 orphan babies as well as to be served by 30 priests. *The above is a note from Mr Anthony Antoniou, The Secretary for the Committee for Foreign Mission (Madagascar) of our Archdiocese.*

A further note from their Treasurer Sotiri Arharidis: Fundraising continues through luncheons, teas, lotteries and through collections in our local Parish/Community Churches. We continue to organising containers with the help of the faithful in Melbourne (particularly the Parishes of Coburg and Brunswick ie Fathers Efstathios and Athanasios). Sponsorship money for baptisms and children continue from Sydney as well Melbourne and Adelaide.

Over the years the Committee for Foreign Mission has sent between \$90,000 – 120,000 for the mission in Madagascar each year! What an accomplishment!

When the Missionary worker Matina Kouvooussis comes home to Adelaide to rest we organise talks and functions to keep the faithful updated (more information available on request). We are only 5 committee members as some have passed on or are ill. With the guidance of Bishop Nikandros we meet once a month and program our forward looking function. Glory be to God for everything and blessing us to be able to help the Mission of Madagascar.

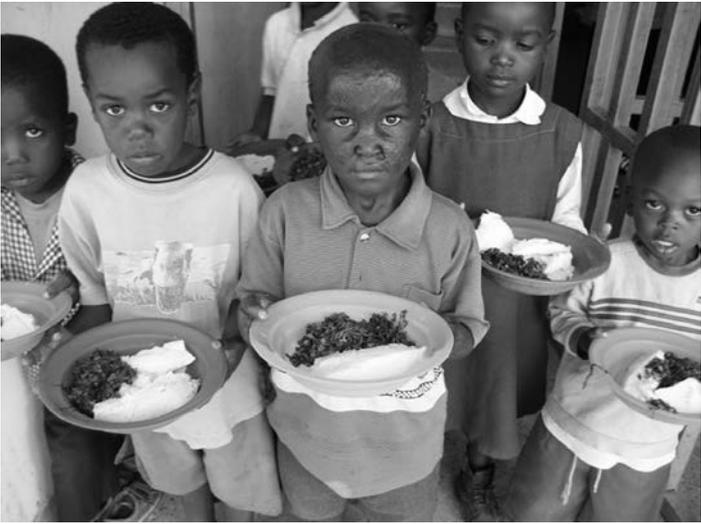
Again the Parish of St Catherine's Mascot needs to be acknowledged for their assistance to Madagascar over the years to poor, sick, schools, Churches, orphanage, nursing home and sending 4 by 20ft and 40ft containers full of needed items.

Also it should be acknowledged that Bishop Seraphim in conjunction with Central Philoptochos of Sydney organises a yearly fundraising Tea and donations for Madagascar totalling between \$25,000 and \$30,000 a year.

KENYA

The **Parish of Saint Stylianos, Gymea, Sydney** supports the running of **an Orthodox school in Nairobi, Kenya.**

The school, St Clement's Orthodox School for Orphans was founded in September 2002. **The aim of the school is to give Freedom from poverty through education.** St Clement's provides education to approximately 250 children who otherwise would not have been able to afford education in Kenya. The students of the school come from the surrounding villages of the Riruta-Satellite slum areas, on the outskirts of Nairobi. Some children walk up to 50 minutes to get to school each morning. The students within the school come from deprived backgrounds. Some are AIDS orphans, others are refugees from neighbouring war torn countries such as Burundi, Rwanda and the Congo. Others are children of single parent families who struggle to find work and survive.



St Clement's began with two classes, a Pre-School class and a Kindergarten class in 2002 and has now expanded into a Primary school, which currently goes up to Year 8. Each year St Clements continues to grow and take in an extra 20 students, and expand into the next grade. Last year we saw our first set of students graduate to go on to their local high schools.

In its early stages it became evident that teaching the children was a difficult task whilst they were hungry. After receiving the blessing from Archbishop Stylianos of Australia, the Parish of Saint Stylianos came to the call of this problem

and raised money for a 'Feeding Program' to begin at the school. A member of the Parish (Eleni Vlahos) was present in Nairobi to start and run the project in its initial stages and keep local donors in Australia updated in the projects progress.

The Feeding Program provides 2 freshly cooked meals every school day for the students at the school, breakfast and lunch. Each year the Parish organizes a Fundraising event. People from parishes all over Sydney attend to support St Clements and receive updates on the schools fruitful progress. Recently, St Euphemia School's boys and girls organised a breakfast club to donate. Also one of our Priests in Perth anonymously pays for a monthly contribution. Overall, St Stylianos Parish sends \$2500 AU a month.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (formerly Zaire and the Belgian Congo)



Thessaloniki!

This Greek Orthodox mission had been established by the late Fathers Chrysostomos Papsarandopoulos and Hariton Pnevmatikakis, followed by Athonite monk Kosmas of Gregoriou Monastery some 40 years ago. More recently, a collaboration between the Church in the Democratic Republic of Congo and our Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia has commenced, thanks to the friendship and mutual respect between its new Metropolitan Nikiforos and His Eminence Archbishop Stylianos. Indeed, our Archbishop had ordained the current head of the Congo Church to the Diaconate four decades ago, when both lived in

Orthodoxy in the Congo has done wonders, considering it is in one of the poorest nations on earth. It has 35 Clergymen, all Congolese. It has many Day Schools. It has 3 radio stations, broadcasting about Orthodoxy in the French language and just 5 years ago, it commenced an Orthodox University which is officially recognised by the Congolese government.

The University, based in the capital Kinshasa, has a Faculty of Theology, where last year 76 students studied, all living on campus, and whose services and classes start from 6:30am, 6 days a week. 2012 saw the graduation of its first students, who will go back to their home villages to become the new generation of priests and catechists. However, money has dried up from Greece and Europe with the GFC. This meant only a few weeks ago our Archdiocese came to the rescue to send money to help keep things running! This money came from our missionary monies collected by St Stylianos Parish in Sydney and the missionary committees in Melbourne and Adelaide.

The Church in Congo is officially titled the Metropolis of Central Africa, and is part of the Patriarchate of Alexandria. The Greek Orthodox faithful in Australia have expressed their interest in helping the spread of the Gospel in the heart of Africa. Recently, Dimitri and Eleni Kepreotes taught and worked there as volunteers for 2 months. Another Archdiocese' Parish-Community and one Day School have already expressed strong interest in helping materially and morally. St Catherine's Parish, Mascot has already sent money to assist and build a School (350 Students) and would like to send money to build a Church – St Nicholas and a Hospital! A little extra effort here can go a long way there in furthering the mission of our Church to "evangelise all nations". For anyone who would like to assist, there is a free DVD available upon request with relevant information.

SIERRA LEONE

In January 2008, with the blessing of His Beatitude Patriarch Theodoros of Alexandria and sponsored by the international charity 'Paradise Kids 4 Africa' (PK4A), Fr Themis moved from Kenya to Sierra Leone, where he involved himself in similar activities that he had initiated in Kenya. As of 2009, there are 9 building projects in progress, including a missionary residence and 3 places of worship (including the Cathedral of St Eleftherios), as well as providing many feeding programs for the hungry.



Negotiations with the Government in March 2008 led to Fr Themis having responsibility for two schools, with a total of 3500 students and 90 staff; and in May, grants were received from two Greek missionary societies, the Orthodox Missionary Fraternity and the Missionary Alliance of St. Cosmas the Aetolian - one grant to build infrastructure for one of the schools, and the other to begin construction of a Teachers' College. Work began on the Teachers' College before the end of that month, and construction has begun on housing for the disabled and victims of the war.

The charity Paradise Kids for Africa (PK4A) was first established in Australia to help Rev Themis and other missionaries in their calling from God; now with committees all around the world, made up of dedicated Christians in the Orthodox Church and in other Churches, PK4A have set themselves apart by being a total Voluntary organization with no one receiving any remuneration.

PK4A and all its supporters sponsor Rev Themis. Feeding Programmes, Educational programmes, Clothing programmes, Housing programmes, Building programmes and the list goes on and on.

INDONESIA

"With the blessing of His Eminence our Archbishop Stylianos, eight members of the Greek Orthodox Christian Society left Sydney on the 28th of November 2012, for missionary work in Indonesia. We went to Medan, the capital of Sumatra, an island of Indonesia.

The purpose of the trip had two phases, missionary as well as medical. The group consisted of 3 doctors, 2 dentists, a pharmacist and 2 university students.

Two amazing workers in the vineyard of Christ, Father Chrysostomos and his Presbytera care for the missionary work in Sumatra. In the 15 years they have been there along with their 2 daughters they have established: St Paul's Theological College and 2 schools: St Sophia, which had 400 students from kindergarten – year 12, and St Nikita's, which is a Primary school of around 200 students. The schools provide free education for all students regardless of religious background. There is also the hospital of

the Theotokos: an established clinic with regular services for check ups and screenings, as well as more complicated procedures, such as surgery. There are a number of Orthodox Churches, such as, St Demetrios, St Sophia, St Ephraim and St John the Baptist.



In the 10 days we had the blessing of God to be there, we spent speaking to the students of the Theological College a number of times about our Orthodox Faith.

With the medical background of our group, everyday we also offered free medical and dental clinics on a daily basis, as well as providing free medication to all that required it.

The feeling one gets there is that the work is much and the workers are few. Many are at the stage of catechism and are awaiting baptism. With the grace of God, Orthodoxy is vibrant and flourishing and will continue to grow. We pray

that God keep the workers there and give them more. It is also the wish of the 8 of our group to return and do more work in the near future with the help of God.”

The above recent account from Stelios Giakoumatos who was the Chemist on the Mission Deligation challenges more men and women to use their talents to help those in need and to get out of their comfort zone ?

Finally, it is worth noting again that St Catherine’s Church Mascot has sent assistance to Sumatra, Nias, Jakarta, and Bali to maintain or build numerous Schools and Churches, a Hospital, a Monastery, 2 parcels of land to cultivate crops, food for 400 people every day and assistance for 2 tertiary students.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, we can see that we have made a significant contribution as the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia to helping missionary work in the above countries. It is worthy of note that all the above missionary work comes under a different jurisdiction to our own Archdiocese. Given the sensitivity of different jurisdictions, our enthusiasm to help must come with the blessing of Archbishop Stylianos and with the blessing of the Head of the jurisdiction we are helping.

Also can we suggest, interested parties should be willing to report to the Archdiocese once a year to let the central offices know what they are doing and how much they have raised. Perhaps, eventually, we could have a central office to coordinate our efforts. This may mean that we need to do an audit to make sure our money is being used correctly. Also this audit should check that Missions are treating their staff and the people they serve respectfully. The last thing we want is paedophiles or abusive people involved. Finally, our Missions need to respect the culture and language of the local people.

Also we need to look into having a common fund that allows tax deductibility for our donors, and then, proper distribution of funds accordingly.

Today, we need to celebrate the great enthusiasm we have seen in our individual missionary support groups mentioned throughout this presentation under the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia.

**CONGRATULATIONS AND GOD BLESS
TO ALL THOSE TIRELESS WORKERS RAISING MONEY AND WORKING IN MISSIONS.**