



life-changing partnerships



IN PARTNERSHIP

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GMP Partners sharing Morning Tea at the Partnering Together for Stronger Communities Conference in Chiang Mai.

We Know the Locals

More than 125 years ago Churches of Christ made a commitment to overseas mission. More than 60 years ago Churches of Christ began ministry with, and among, Australia's Indigenous people. This journey has been founded on a deep desire to have local churches engage in this wider ministry, not just financially, but prayerfully, personally and with an appreciation of the people being served.

The journey is not about building an institution or organisation; it is about serving our partners in mission. Identity flows into what we do from the name of Jesus Christ for the sake of the whole world.

All this means that our desire is to see people and churches engaged in mission, both locally and beyond. In other words we want to see people care about and invest in others. To achieve this purpose, all of us are called to be as creative as possible in inviting people to share

in this common mission. As we do this together, we find a depth of shared commitment that is unifying.

This shared work continues to be part of Churches of Christ's collective identity. The season we are in calls us to do this in new ways. Our focus might not be so much on sending people as missionaries (as it was in the past), but on intentionally investing in and supporting local people. The GMP phrase, "we know the locals", captures part of this and is our invitation to churches in Australia. We want you to know the locals, to support them in prayer, to give generously so their ministries are strong and, if you can, to visit or meet them.

We ask the same of our partners – to pray, give, and to care for each other. This is what happened when 20 of GMP's international partners were together in Thailand. It is also what happened when Indigenous partners were together at Surrender.

Our relationships grew, there was joy in being together, and strength in our commitment to pray and care.

The culture of today celebrates and affirms the new: that which seems new and innovative is better than heritage and tradition. The emotional investment in the so called 'new' and the so called 'traditional' is complex, and can sometimes result in conflict and division.

When such conflict occurs, the purpose that led to the two seemingly competing perspectives is lost. However, when we begin by focusing on the essential purpose of mission we find common ground that is the foundation of unity. This unity is precious and satisfying.

John Gilmore,
Executive Officer

This Month in InPartnership

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Together, we can bring change through livelihood initiatives. The Mid Year Appeal is a chance to contribute to life-changing livelihood initiatives, that offers people a chance to earn their own living and support their families. More information at www.gmp.org.au/mid-year-appeal-17

Thank You Volunteers



Many of you will have received mail from GMP for our Easter campaign "Let's Change Lives Through The Gospel". Here are the amazingly faithful volunteers who put that mailout together! Thank you! We appreciate you so much!

Find out more about our Easter Campaign and how you get involved www.gmp.org.au/easter-appeal

Welcome to the Team

David Gee joined our team in the Adelaide office as GMP's Assistant Accountant. David assists particularly with payroll, reporting on our investment portfolios and supporting Colin Scott and Suzanne Hayes with COCOA's DFAT requirements. Welcome to the team!

April Holmes joined our team in the Melbourne office as the new embody Relationships Manager for Vic-Tas. April has a passion for international development, is excited about meeting new, wonderful people, and having conversations about the way young people can live out Jesus' teachings through engaging in global mission and development.





SPOTLIGHT

Together, We Can Bring Change...

Together, we can bring change through livelihood initiatives.

In South Sudan, many communities still use hand tools to farm. This is a long and hard process, but there is no other choice for people who rely on farming to provide food and income. The ground only stays soft enough to plough by hand for three days after it has rained. Even though the soil is rich, much time and productivity is lost waiting for rain.

But thanks to your support, this is changing. In Mayen Tiit, an isolated community in South Sudan, one project is providing farmers with oxen, ploughs, and the training needed to use them. This can increase the productivity of their land tenfold, as farmers don't have to spend hours ploughing by hand.

Your support of livelihood initiatives, like the ploughs project, has an immediate impact and creates ongoing change. Livelihood initiatives provide a source of income so that people have the opportunity to pay for health care and education, rather than relying on organisations like GMP. These initiatives give people independence, dignity, and the power to make their own decisions.

This is only one example of how your support changes lives through livelihood initiatives.

In Vietnam, Bright Solutions employs vulnerable women. It provides practical training in handicrafts, and a community where the women are valued. The employment and training they

receive helps them move towards a more financially secure future.

The Church of Christ in Thailand is establishing chicken farms to create income for poor minority communities around Chiang Mai. Families receive support and training to set up their farm. The income from their farm means necessities like health and education become realities for their families.

Your generosity offers people a chance to earn their own living and support their families. Please give now, so that more lives can be changed.

Let's bring change together!

www.gmp.org.au/mid-year-appeal-17

YOUR GIFT CAN CHANGE SOMEONE'S LIFE!



\$50

Can provide a family with 10 chicks, and two bags of feed in Thailand.



\$100

Can provide a vulnerable woman with a sewing machine, in Vietnam.



\$160

Can provide an ox for a farmer in South Sudan, kick starting their farm.



Sharing a meal with the team in the village

Experiencing Village Life

The Tweed Heads Church of Christ team visited Indonesia at the end of 2016. Blessed greatly by our experiences, it was beneficial observing first hand the work of the Indonesian Church of Christ Theological School (CCTSI) in Salatiga. This gave us a better understanding of the challenges faced by these disciples, and to appreciate the obedience of God's calling on the faculty and students.

The hospitality that was shown to each one of us made our time there even more special. Hery Susanto (Academic Dean) and his family

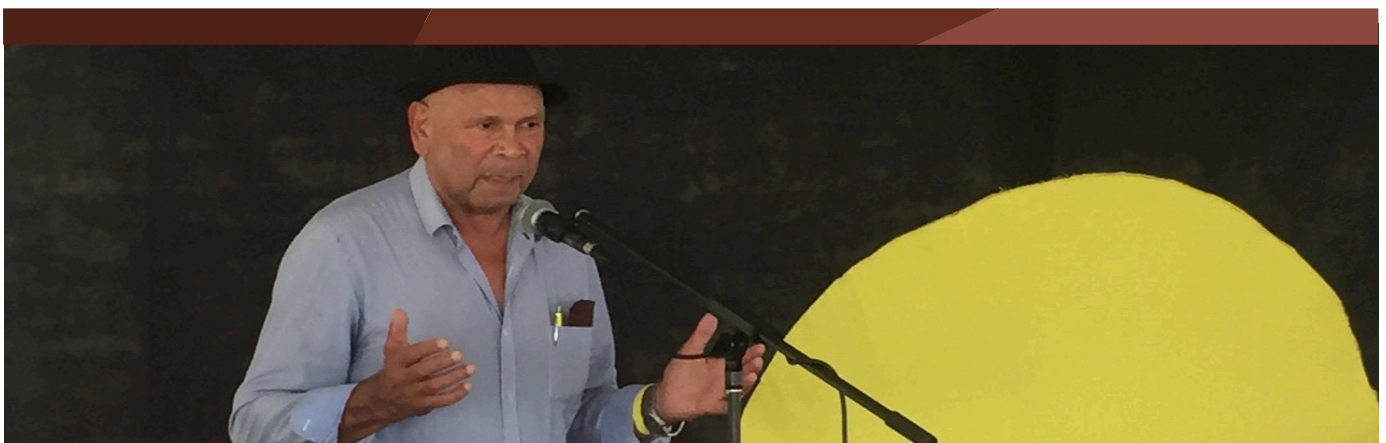
went above and beyond to ensure that our needs were met. We were encouraged to be part of the college activities and, in some cases, assist in the running of certain programs.

One highlight of mine was visiting villages in the hills surrounding Salatiga. Here we experienced village life. This meant that we slept, ate and attended worship and gatherings with the locals. Again, we were met warmly and were humbled by how we were looked after. It was here that we witnessed the harmony of village life. The communities were such a refreshing experience that

the impact of these experiences will continue to resonate.

In the planning for this trip, we prayed that our time spent away would bring a better understanding and tangible experience of God's love. These prayers became a reality as we moved about as a group, despite being unsure at times of why, what and when. I believe that we all left with a part of Indonesia stamped firmly upon our hearts.

Mick Suttons,
QLD



What a Wonderful Weekend

Experiencing the Surrender Conference in March was a blessing and encouragement. I know that Margaret and Rebecca really enjoyed it as well. I could not think of anything that I experienced at Surrender that I did not enjoy. A highlight was getting to know the people whom we had never met before, and it felt as if we had known each other for a lifetime. God is good

and truly understands our thinking – here we were in a foreign country and being made welcome. What a blessing that was for us. It was great to catch up with the GMP gang and especially Anita and Nick Wight. We praise God for the way He is using them in ministry and for His glory. The presentations at the weekend were of a high standard – we loved the times spent in the auditorium, getting

to the prayer meeting in the morning was a blessing for me, the yarning tent was special. Margaret enjoyed sharing her faith and was involved in some counseling to a few of the girls that she got to know. Rebecca found some new friends, and she certainly enjoyed the weekend.

Greg Little,
WA



Christmas Cards Reach South Sudan

The students at Emmanuel School, South Sudan, eagerly assembled at their school parade to receive their Christmas cards from their Australian partners. They were very happy to experience the love

and commitment through your greetings to them. Nyibol is a grade eight student, whose mother died in childbirth and her father in the war. Receiving a Christmas card encourages many boys and girls

with similar stories just like Nyibol. They are now feeling special.

Deng James,
South Sudan

Renovations Encourage Pastor Raj in Fiji

It has been encouraging to see the way the local church has embraced responsibility for the building project at Vuci Rd, Fiji. Stage one is almost complete, with a new bedroom, living room, and porch on the back of the pastor's residence. This is a huge encouragement to Pastor Raj Deo and the church, and they are looking forward to the benefits that this work will bring. The church has made some financial contribution already, and has also committed to fund and arrange the inclusion of a new toilet/washroom and storage space into the new church meeting space. Stage two of the project will commence shortly, and will involve extending and enclosing the front porch to create a dedicated meeting space for the church. We are appreciative of the support from GMP that has made this work possible.



Bruce Edwards,
Fiji

Meet Elson

Elson Ngazimbi is completing his final year at Zimbabwe Christian College. He will be graduating on June 3. The principal of the college says that Elson is an excellent student and will be a great asset to God's Kingdom. I recently asked Elson who had made the most impact in his life. I thought he would say his parents, but the answer was: "The Christians in Australia who have made it possible for me to fulfill my desire to be a minister of the gospel. I cannot find the most appropriate words to thank them." Elson is now looking forward to beginning his tour of duty as a pastor in one of our churches. Thank you to all who help us train pastors for the church. May God bless you all.

BJ Mpfu,
Zimbabwe





Mary Abuk Garang's class under the tree at Emmanuel School, South Sudan

Changing the World Without Leaving Home: Rights as the Basis for Development

As mentioned last month, people in the development sector are looking increasingly to human rights as the basis for development. Instead of thinking that people in developing countries have needs, which we have to fulfill, we think of people in developing countries as having rights, which we need to help them understand and claim. One of the reasons behind this is a subtle shift in the way we think about people who are poor. If we think of the poor as having great needs (and ourselves as having few unsatisfied needs), then we can make the mistake of thinking there is something wrong with them, that we are superior, and the only way to fix things is for us to meet their needs. We end up with a less than human view of our fellow humans and a way of helping them that makes them dependent on us. Of course, a biblical perspective would never consider anyone made in the image of God (Gen 1:23) as in any way less than another person.

Mary Abuk Garang teaches under a tree at Emmanuel School. This is not unusual, as 75% of schools in the state meet under trees. Mary has five more years education than her class three students do. In the photo above, there are both girls and boys in Mary's class sitting under the tree at Emmanuel School (though they have since moved into the buildings

in the background). Think about the girls in the class – which of their rights might be under threat? The government is not really ensuring that they survive and develop healthily (Convention on the Rights of the Child – Article 6). They may know other children who have been illegally smuggled to Sudan (Article 9). Now their food and education is dependent on COCOA (Articles 27 and 28), and their right to be at school is in tension with cultural pressures for teenagers to marry. The girls in Mary's class have a right to be at school, not a need to be at school – a right to lunch, not a need for it.

A second reason behind the rights-based approach is that it pushes our focus toward the underlying causes in a situation. A need might be food or education, but a rights-based approach pushes us to ask, "Why don't these people have food or education? That is, who is denying them their right to food or education?" For the girls in Mary's class the answer is mainly the government, though the community pressure to marry is a factor.

A rights-based approach also aims to emphasise our solidarity with the poor. We both have the same rights, the same God-given humanity. There is no reason to feel superior because we are able to address the needs

of someone else. Whatever help we bring is not a favour that the poor should be terribly grateful for, but a step in giving them what is due to them. It is loving our neighbour as ourselves (Mt 22:29). The girls will doubtless say thank you, but it is unnecessary.

Rights are not much use if there is no one to claim them from. In general, this is the government. Therefore, part of a rights-based approach is to increase the government's capacity to support rights, like education and healthy food. It also includes calling governments to account when they have the capacity, but don't use it to support the rights of citizens. GMP has done a bit of both in approaching the government to commit to funding the teacher's salaries, but also providing teacher training for the majority of the teachers whose education is incomplete.

Finally, thinking about rights steers us around to realise that we each own some responsibility for the situation of the poor. If we share the same rights as them, why are they not sharing the same enjoyment of those rights? Moreover, what can we do about it? This is what we will look at in the coming months.

Colin Scott,
COCOA Director



Mary's Story

South Sudan is now one of four countries where 20 million people are on the brink of famine – one of the world's worst humanitarian crises since the Second World War. GMP has partnered with ACT Alliance to provide support to those suffering famine in Northern Bahr el Ghazal in South Sudan. ACT Alliance told the following story of Mary Aluat and her daughter. This is a reality for many people suffering from the famine:

Mary's daughter Manut has had no food for two days and she does not stop crying. The four-year-old is highly malnourished and under developed for her age. The family has been struggling to find food for the last three months. They

currently eat one meager meal a day. Mary's husband is a fisherman. "For the last two weeks he has been unsuccessful in his fishing," she said. The river is almost fished out. Mary and her family come from northern Bahr el Ghazal, in northern South Sudan. The food situation in Bahr el Ghazal is classified at an emergency level. This classification means that many households are going for long periods without food, resulting in acute malnutrition and deaths.

There is good news for people in Northern Bahr el Ghazal. COCOA, through the ACT Alliance, is part of a global response to this crisis. People are being provided with immediate relief and will be

assisted with seeds, farming tools and other resources so that in time families can supply their own food. The key response sectors are food security, nutrition, emergency health, protection and psychosocial support, seeds and tools.

Thank you for your generosity towards the GMP South Sudan Famine appeal. You can continue to help and still make a contribution to the appeal online www.gmp.org.au/south-sudan-famine or Freecall 1800 467 222.

John Gilmore,
Executive Officer

Miracle Baby at Ashwood

Emmanuel and Silvia were desperate to have a baby. They were married five years ago and Silvia has suffered four miscarriages. The couple came to our hospital with faith in God and the doctors that He would bless them with a baby. Silvia fell pregnant and was kept in bed, taking rest for six months in the hospital. At last – via a caesarian operation – she delivered a baby girl weighing 3.3 kg, a gift from God. Both parents were overwhelmed and gave a thank you lunch to the staff. This is really a miracle and testimony in their lives! We also give thanks and praise to our Almighty God. We pray and hope this will increase the popularity of our hospital in the society.

Philemon Pawar,
India



Dr Philemon Pawar (far left) and Dr Lawanya (Gynecologist) (far right) with the family who were blessed with a lovely baby girl at Ashwood Hospital



Oakleigh Church of Christ members holding handwritten cards to be sent as encouragement to GMP partners.

Hands and Feet

When David and Sue Brownless began in their role as Ministers of Oakleigh Church of Christ seven years ago, they wanted to encourage the older members to find their own unique place in global mission. Their congregation might not be able to run a youth program or children's ministry or even physically go on mission trips, but they can certainly pray and pay for those who do! Through a church-to-church partnership with GMP, Oakleigh has experienced what it means to feel personally connected to the projects and people they are supporting in

Zimbabwe, Fiji, and Indigenous ministry here in Australia. Sue says, "We refer to the various people we support as our hands and feet."

Recently, the church as a whole and a few specific individuals decided to support 12 students at the Indonesian Church of Christ Theological School (CCTSI). Sue says, "We are inspired by the students who have a call to reach the unreached." Individuals at Oakleigh take the time to write encouraging cards to people in the projects they support in various

countries, pray for them regularly in the church service, and include current information in their weekly church newsletter. The church maintains a genuine interest in the people they financially support through GMP. Sue says that supporting GMP has brought life to their congregation!

If you would like to start a church-to-church partnership please contact us and we will connect you with a GMP Partnership Coordinator in your state.



What does it mean to pray together as Australians?

As First and following peoples, how can we pray together for God's Mission in our country?

embody Prayer Matters is this week. Join us as we learn and pray together for issues facing Indigenous Australians.

Find out more at www.embody.org.au or on facebook @embodyau



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