

IN PARTNERSHIP

FEBRUARY 2018



We have an obsession with the concept of 'new'. The focus on the best by date on food seems to impact perspectives that are held in other areas of life, including fashion, appliances, cars, songs in church and so on. Recently I discovered that a 2003 car is old and not worth fixing!

Mission and participation in the reign of God in the world is not new! It is as old as creation. As Christians we affirm that the God who was in the beginning became flesh in Jesus, and that as a gift of the resurrection Jesus is alive and with us today. When the word 'new' is used in the context of our faith, the focus is on the living experience of God's presence now – something that is new every morning and built on the foundations of the past.

In Partnership now has a new (fresh) feel to it with briefer articles and a change in style. The electronic version is linked to the website and the paper version is much more economical to produce and send.

We are keen for people to know more about what our partners are doing and how GMP goes about its work. This is why we produce In Partnership. Our focus is still on our partners and their work and on the many ways that they express their faith.

The feedback we received, following a survey, indicates that readers prefer a briefer and more tightly focused In Partnership. We trust that you enjoy it.

John Gilmore,
GMP Executive Officer

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News & Events



SURRENDER:18 Saints & Citizens

23-25 March 2018

Belgrave Heights Convention
Centre, Belgrave, VIC

Consumerism and conflict, politics and power, fear and injustice mark the narrative of our world and our streets. Humanity was created from the dust of the land, yet God breathed His life into us - but have we lost connection to both? As we follow Jesus how do we understand and balance our call to seek His kingdom coming in the now of our neighbourhoods and world, yet have faith and find hope in the promise of a creation made whole. Can we embody the way of Jesus now as citizens in our places and world, yet hold an eternal identity as saints?

www.surrender.org.au



Be Our Mission Intern!

Are you, or do you know, a young person based in Sydney who's passionate about mission and wants to volunteer to gain some awesome experience as a Mission Intern a day a week? If so, check out the opportunity here at www.gmp.org.au/about-us/employment



Agor (right) and some of the 12 children in her care.

Cash Vouchers Sustain a Family in Famine

Agor Jonekor has a total of six children and had her last-born, Majok, 18 months ago. Her husband, Mr. Majok, left to join the army when Majok was born. In addition to raising her children, Agor also has the responsibility of taking care of the children of Adut Woi, Mr. Majok's second wife who has another six children. Adut left her husband and children one day without a word. The responsibility of raising 12 children is no easy task. Agor believes that the situation at home of limited food was too much for Adut to handle, and therefore she went to Sudan in search of work opportunities. With Northern Bahr el Ghazal being classified as Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) 3 and IPC 4 for the past year, the food security situation has been grave with the people needing urgent humanitarian assistance. Agor and her children were in dire need of food aid before Christian Aid intervened. When possible, Agor would go to the nearby market and look for odd jobs to do. She would gather wild grass and knit them together to form panels that could be used to make fences. "Before Christian Aid

supported us, we used to eat wild leaves," she said. Fortunately, she was selected to receive three cash vouchers, which enabled her to access food at the local market at an agreed price. The selection criteria targeted the most remote and most vulnerable people with a specific focus on women and children. The community leaders were involved in the selection process. "The food acquired through the cash vouchers helped us and restored our health significantly". Agor would like to extend her sincere gratitude and appreciation to the people that made the cash vouchers possible. Without it she and her family would surely have faced starvation.

GMP partners with ACT Alliance (Christian Aid) to ensure our response in emergency situations is fast, effective and well coordinated to work together for the best outcome for those affected by disasters. Your support of the GMP South Sudan Famine Appeal in 2017 helped ACT Alliance assist people like Agor and her children. Thank you so much for your generosity.

Wongutha Students visit Thailand

A team of fantastic young people from Wongutha CAPS (Christian Aboriginal Parent Directed School) in Western Australia, visited GMP partners in Thailand. Prasit Tongtuswattana hosted the young people and the team enjoyed sharing their Indigenous culture and learning another in return. What a life changing experience!





The Canadian International NGO School Fair (left) Bright Solutions Products (right)

Challenging Poverty and Empowering Women in Vietnam

Many women have travelled to mission fields in distant places, bringing the good news, health and education to local communities. Our history makers must have had buckets of courage, passion, grit and determination. Today's women working in mission must also be gifted with these same qualities. One such woman is working for God in Vietnam. "It was a call on my heart to come to Vietnam," Fiona Briers, founding director of Bright Solutions said. "Vietnam is progressing rapidly, and giving many young people brighter futures. Through access to higher levels of education, English language, international studies and better business prospects, Vietnam is advancing. However, the majority of the population cannot access these options due to incomplete schooling, limited skills and an inability to train or retrain, and missing gaps in their childhoods." Fiona believes Bright Solutions

can positively impact the lives of underprivileged women in Vietnam. Her passion for Vietnam and improving the lives of marginalised women in Ho Chi Minh City is evident upon meeting her. "My heart and passion is to serve and empower the poor and to do what I can with the skills and experiences I have to enrich the lives of others. My belief is that the poverty cycle is often generational due to tragic or difficult circumstances and a lack of education."

Bright Solutions helps women to successfully manage their own futures and finances by training them in practical skills, including sewing and handicrafts, alongside management and life skills education. The women are put through programs that help them to increase their skills and expertise, and include a strong emphasis on managing finances. Bright Solutions offers vulnerable women an

opportunity to lift themselves out of poverty. The women make vibrant, exquisite and intricate handcrafts made with fabrics unique to Vietnam, along with activity books, toys and decorations. They are made with attention to detail and quality in an atmosphere of hope and affirmation—a sharp contrast to the past experiences of the women involved. "The light of Christ shines bright in our local churches for mission. I am looking forward to continuing to work with teams from our local churches, partnering with others overseas, sharing the light of Christ in their communities." If you would like to receive regular news updates from Bright Solutions please contact GMP.

Vicki Marney
Partnership Coordinator QLD

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Meet Daniel Bawm

Daniel's father was the first ordained pastor among the Bawm community in Bangladesh. He was born in 1974, and brought up in a Christian family. It was on 26 January 2002 – moments before his father's last breath – that he was asked to follow his father's footsteps and serve the Lord. He does this by taking various Bible classes and leadership training to build his capacity to serve the Lord. He joined with the Bandarban Hills Churches of Christ (BHCOC) in

March 2015 to work among the Mru people. And now Daniel, his wife and three children have shifted to Kangku Village. There are 25 families in the village, with a total of 235 people. The BHCOC have assigned Evangelist Daniel and his family to stay permanently in the village, and BHCOC have constructed a house for the family. There are five families in Kangku (out of 25) that have become Christian.





Embody Mission Conversation – meeting with other young people to eat pizza and talk mission!

Mission, Activity and the Character of God

Our thinking about mission often starts in the activity of mission—mission as a project. We think of getting up and going out on an edge. Pushing out in a new way, out of our comfort zone. This is not wrong. Christian faith is something active and courageous. To believe in Jesus is to move after him – not just to believe in the right things or sit on the spot and seek enlightenment. We only come to know Jesus as we follow him. So Christian faith is active. Mission, too, is active

But there is a problem.

If Christian faith were just the activity of making the world a better place, we would burn out. We can't do everything. If you were to try to do everything that you thought was good, you could be working for hundreds of years to make the world a better place, and you would barely scratch the surface. We are severely limited in our ability to change things.

And when we are at our busiest, doing all sorts of good things, we get that hollow feeling; we wonder what it is all about. A lot of the time our efforts to make things better just cause more problems. Christian mission is not just an activity. We get a different picture of mission in 1 Thessalonians. Mission is something bigger than our activities. Mission begins in who we are. It is a quality. It is a character. Martha was busy in the kitchen, in a flurry of activity, getting things ready for her guests, doing the dishes, sprinkling icing sugar on the sponge cake. But Mary was calm and unflustered. She sat at the feet of Jesus, her long black hair slipping gently around his ankle, the aroma of expensive perfume filling the air. Mission is all about who we are before God. Mission is understanding that God's character, animated in the person of Jesus Christ, fills life in a new way. Life is renewed through faith, hope and love – those three words from the

start of 1 Thessalonians. And this does not just happen through our activity. Mission is sharing in the character of God – intimately, like Mary. If we start here, the activities of mission flow. Activities of care, concern, speaking, encouraging, serving – these all overflow from our love of God and his love of us. This will never wear out, because it is the very character of God. Paul said to the Thessalonians: “We were gentle among you, like a nurse tenderly caring for her own children. So deeply do we care for you that we are determined to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you have become very dear to us.” Jesus was not just an activity of God – he is the character of God sharing life with us. Mission starts with God's character that overflows in love.

Samuel Curkpatrick,
Partnership Coordinator VIC/TAS

Helping Can Be Tricky: “Voluntourism”

Orphanage Voluntourism is the practice of combining an international holiday with some volunteer work in an orphanage or children's centre. In the worst cases the orphanages are lucrative businesses where children are induced to leave their families to fill the 'orphanage', at least while the tourists are there. They can also create opportunities for paedophiles to access vulnerable children, and be involved in trafficking and exploitation. Even in the genuine orphanages, the constant stream of strangers who become close and then leave can distress the

children. While the idea of visiting a children's home sounds good, at best it teaches children that attachments are short term.

Global Mission Partners does not facilitate voluntourism and is working hard to ensure that the needs of children are prioritised above those of any visitors. Partner Visit teams are briefed about voluntourism and are shown appropriate ways to interact with children. GMP has long-standing relationships with a number of children's facilities: Khayelihle Childrens Village (KCV) in Zimbabwe, Rwangchary and Bandarban hostels

in Bangladesh, and Hosanna, Baramati and Shrigonda homes in India. We have worked with each of these to develop appropriate child protection policies. We are currently working with KCV, shifting their focus to reconnecting children with relatives, and supporting those families.

You can read the full article and download the voluntourism fact sheet on our website www.gmp.org.au/about-us/news/volunteer-tourism-voluntourism

Colin Scott,
COCOA Director