

IN PARTNERSHIP

November 2019



Moses and ground well, Lovumkatabola

In September we told you about the people who had evacuated Ambae and started rebuilding their lives on nearby Santo. But many people are returning to the volcanic island, and are facing unique challenges...

Since the eruption of Manaro Voui volcano, the Government of Vanuatu has encouraged people from Ambae to find places to live on other islands. But people don't want to permanently leave the land that is part of their identity. So, despite the risks, many have returned to Ambae.

Moses is the Area Administrator for East Ambae. He is one of the people who returned. He is living in Lovumkatabola community and helping the returnees settle and adjust to living with an active volcano. Their greatest need is safe water in their community.

"Evacuees returned to Ambae a couple of months ago," Moses explains.

"At the moment there's enough water, as some of our community is still on Santo. If more come back we will have a problem."

"In my community, there are six water wells (in-ground open tanks), but after the ash fall, when we came back, we are using only two. The other four were..." He pauses and thinks for a moment..."were unfit for human consumption."

The people climbed down into the wells with buckets and rags. They emptied out all the ash gathered at the bottom. They scrubbed the walls clean. They built new gutters to collect the rainwater. Even with all this hard work they still have to rely on the rain for their clean water.

"Before we had wells, when we were kids, we used to collect water from the river, the creek," Moses says.

"After school, we took our containers and went to collect water for tomorrow, for tomorrow's breakfast.

"It was a hard walk – we're talking about little kids, pregnant women, elderly people. It's really hard to walk for two kilometres to collect water for tomorrow. It's very challenging because we depend on heavy rainfall, so we have water running. If we have a long sunny season we have problems, because water dries up. It's the same with the wells.

"If there's no rain," he said. "We have nothing."

The uncertainty around the volcano adds greater difficulty. Last time it erupted they were able to host people from affected villages. Because of the lack of water they can't do that again.

"If a new eruption takes place next year, we want to host those people again," Moses says. "If we have

water tanks, they can come and use them. At the moment, if we don't have any water tank, we have to say we can't host them, we don't have enough water."

The people of Lovumkatabola have a great need for more water.

"If there's no water, we use the sea for bathing. We have to collect water from nearby communities, using 20 litre containers," Moses explains.

"We need two water tanks – 6000 litres each – and that would improve our living standard. Kids will be happy. Pregnant women can collect water from short distances. Elderly people can collect water from short distances. Kids will drink clean water, in order to excel in education."

Together this year, we have raised over \$160,000 for people like Moses and his community. Thanks to supporters like you, communities like Lovumkatabola will be able access safe, clean water close to home!

You can still help even more people! It costs just \$20 to give one person access to safe water. And donations are open until 6 November!

"Thank you tumas."

News & Events



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Kingdom Power Reversal

Uluru at sunset, glowing red and looking majestic, creates a mystery all of its own. It is a symbol of Australia and a sacred place for Indigenous Australians. It is now protected and closed for climbing.

This important decision is made out of respect for the local Anangu people. It has not been welcomed by everyone. At times the discussion has descended into harsh words about rights. This has been unsettling. The dominant culture (European) does not enjoy being limited by another culture (Indigenous).

Tensions between cultures often complicate the work of mission. Cultural differences are brought into focus whenever one culture attempts to dominate another. In such moments of tension the purpose, appreciation and comprehension of the other is lost, and relationships are limited. There are other ways of handling these moments.

One is to listen with the sole intent of understanding the other. A deep listening that grows relationships and compassion. The person in the dominant cultural position can learn so much through listening to the other, who may have felt silenced or marginalised. Out of such compassion and understanding relationships grow, and so does grace.

People surrounded Jesus and were bringing their children to him. The disciples rebuked them,

because they felt the children were not important enough to warrant his attention. Jesus is not happy about this, and affirms that those who respond to Jesus like the children will enter the kingdom (Mark 10:13-16). Power is reversed. The vulnerable are protected and a new reality is proclaimed. In this story, the adult culture of who matters most is transformed. Such reversals of power and status in the kingdom are described throughout the gospel narratives.

Mission initiatives that challenge the ways power works and how people are treated may not always be understood, or even appreciated by everyone. But they are important to open the pathway for people to grow in their appreciation of the grace and love of God. Deep listening leads to deeper sharing.

John Gilmore,
Executive Officer



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Lomowai Church, Sigatoka

Maturing Churches in Fiji

For the past year, GMP's partner churches in Fiji have been without a Field Director. Bruce Edwards departed the role, and returned to Australia after a fruitful six years. There was apprehension — how would the small and sometimes fragile Fijian churches adapt?

During this transition, I visited Fiji five times. So what did I find?

I discovered that the churches were doing more than just 'surviving'. Maybe I wouldn't say that they were 'thriving' — not yet! But they are all taking steps to be less dependent on GMP. This is exactly what we want to see! Our support through International Church Partnerships (ICP) always aims to build communities up to be self-sustaining.

After approximately a quarter of a century of partnership we are seeing our churches in Fiji becoming self-governing, self-supporting and taking initiatives to grow. Each of our churches operates in a different context, so these initiatives look different for each of them.

In coastal Sigatoka, the Lomowai Church partners with Korean missionary Pastor Lim. Their church mixes various traditions together. Pastor Lim also provides important support to the Lomowai Church pastor, Muneshwar.

The congregation had been meeting on a plot of land donated by a church member. They held services under a basic shelter, exposed to the heat and the rain. Recently, the church sourced funds and labour, and built a new building! This is an important step towards Lomowai Church's maturity.

In Suva we partner with the Vuci Rd Church of Christ. This congregation meets in Pastor Raj's family home in a residential area in Nausori, on Suva's outskirts. This church is also taking more responsibility for its finances, and setting its own direction. They reach out to a predominantly Hindi population, and Raj's ministry focuses on prayer and healing and is seeing good results.



Nirmala and Pastor Raj, Suva

In the sugar cane city of Lautoka the church gathers in an unsuitable space at the Cathay Hotel. From 1 to 3pm every Sunday they meet and worship in song, prayer, communion and the Word. During the week, Pastor David builds up the church leaders and makes pastoral visits. He has also initiated outreach to survivors of domestic violence! The church is in a healthy state, with baptisms occurring regularly. Their next step will be locating a permanent place for the church to call 'home' in this growing city.

GMP also has an MOU with the Nakasi Church, and is observing the growth of a house church in Nausori to see if it can join the GMP family.

The goal with all our work is to one day no longer be needed. We're not there yet, but these churches are adapting well to significant changes. We look forward to seeing them grow further into maturity.

Craig Brown
ICP Director and Deputy EO



Left: Christy Reddy, Peter Berry and Pastor David Reddy
Right: Congregation at Lautoka Church

A Fantastic Fiji Visit

It's always a great experience to visit Pastor David Reddy, his family and the church at Lautoka. The culture, the fellowship, the food and church life are all very stimulating.

Pastor David continues to reach out and bring more people into his church, although some move on to other churches because there are so many to choose from.

We start by participating in his church service at 1pm in the beer garden of a local hotel, where two different church services have already met that morning. Worship

is vibrant and heartfelt. I then do some teaching, after which Pastor David gets up and interprets in Hindi. Prayer time is stimulating – everyone stands to pray all at once, and loud! Prayers for individuals are offered at the end of the service.

During the week we visit church members and pray for their needs; we hold a Bible study one night where more ministry is offered to those in need; and David and I spend time fellowshiping together when we have free time. One day it rained all day to end the dry season and so Pastor David and I spent

the time sharing and praying and building one another up in the Lord.

The last Sunday is spent in church again with a greater degree of bonding and fellowship than at the beginning of the week. Prayer is offered at the end of the service for those wanting to be filled with the love of God, the Word of God and the Spirit of God. Everyone goes home blessed.

Peter Berry,
NSW

The Ripple Effect in Bangkok

Recently Naomi Giles, a pastor of NationsHeart Christian Community in Canberra, had the opportunity to visit with the Second Chance Community in Bangkok. This social enterprise in the largest slum of this sprawling city, seeded by Chris and Jodie MacCartney a decade ago, has become much more than a money-making venture. It has grown into an authentic Christian community with an influence that is widening across the neighbourhood and the world.

Drop an Australian family into the heart of Bangkok's largest slum. What effect will there be? How can a few people, "furung" (foreigners) at that, possibly scratch the surface of the very real financial, social and health challenges of this poor community?

But anyone that's watched a stone hit the surface of water and send ever-widening circles out, knows that even something seemingly small can have a great effect.

Some 12 years after stepping out into the adventure of relocating their family from Melbourne to the

crowded slums of Bangkok, Chris and Jodie MacCartney and their daughters Grace, Ruby and Millie, are starting to see some of the ripple effects widening across the community. And changes are not just outward from this family, but inward as they have been deeply changed by a life of letting go.

Naomi Giles,
NationsHeart Christian Community

Read the rest of this story on our blog: <https://www.gmp.org.au/news/2019-news/the-ripple-effect-in-bangkok>



Top: At Second Chance, Bangkok Bottom: Jodie and Chris MacCartney