



life-changing
partnerships



IN PARTNERSHIP

www.gmp.org.au | November 2017



The congregation of Lomawi church, Fiji

Our Journey

Any journey, particularly a complex one such as when travelling to an unfamiliar place while on holidays, needs a direction and an imagined destination. Such a sense of where to go provides, even the most uncertain traveller, with a moment of satisfaction. We have made it – we are at our destination! This imagined destination, explored by research in books or on the web, once imagined, is at the moment of arrival made real. Along the way there are signs or marker points of progress. Such moments of clarification enable the ‘child within us’ to know we are almost there, and to experience the relief (joy) of having made it.

God calls the church on a journey. It is a journey of being part of the coming of the kingdom. This hope and expectation is captured in the statement in the Lord’s Prayer ‘your kingdom come, on earth as it is in heaven’. This is a vision of a new reality (destination and goal) and

the elements of the kingdom are found in the coming together of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Romans 14:17).

Jesus proclaims this kingdom – where those in need are cared for and where both practical needs and spiritual needs are met. This kingdom is one we work for, and hope for. It leads us to tell the story of God’s love revealed in Jesus Christ. It leads us to live out the compassion of Jesus in action.

This vision of new life led to the establishment of Global Mission Partners and affirms the balance in our work – developing and growing churches, compassion for those living in poverty and a desire to challenge the forces that marginalise people and exploit the earth.

Wherever we work in relief and development GMP has active church partnerships. Our work with Indigenous Australians invites us

to be in solidarity with local church ministries and to take seriously the marginalisation of Australia’s first peoples.

We are called to name and address the forces of injustice and to point to the signs of the presence of God’s kingdom, the marker points of progress in mission.

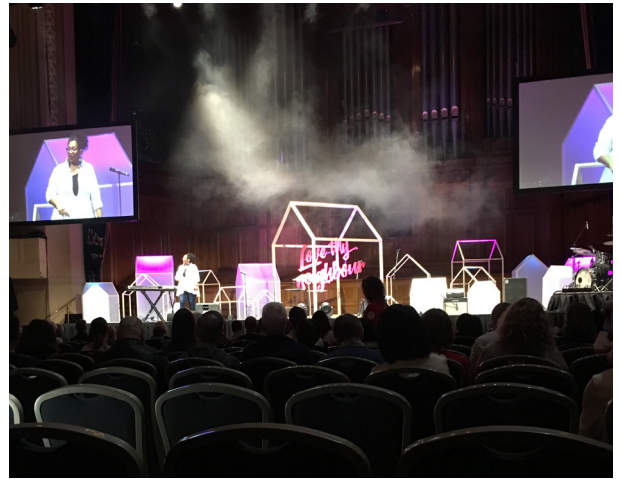
GMP does not do this work on our own or in isolation. We work in partnership with people in Australia and overseas. We undertake what we do in the confident trust in the grace, provision and strength of God’s goodness. This partnership is practical and spiritual. Both these dimensions are vital to the integrity of our work and strengthen our Christian witness in the world and we are fully committed to both!

John Gilmore,
Executive Officer

This Month in InPartnership

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The Justice Conference

Members of both the GMP and embody team were at The Justice Conference, on the 27th and 28th October. See more on page 6.

Farewell Mitch Varcoe

It has been wonderful to have Mitch Varcoe as part of the embody team! Mitch joined embody in 2015 as a volunteer and 6 months later transitioned onto staff! Mitch has worked very hard as our Campaigns and Resources Manager. He has been heavily involved with the ongoing success of the Safe Water September campaign. This year the campaign raised over \$100,000! Mitch has also helped to implement

the content for Prayer Matters and Christmas Choices. It's been great to work alongside Mitch during his time at embody. I'm grateful for Mitch's hard work and dedication to help our embody community grow. Thank you Mitch, we will miss you and pray that your next job will be great!

Natalie Oakes,
embody National Coordinator



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Bringing Change in Bangladesh

Vana Bawm, General Secretary of the Bardarban Hills Churches of Christ, is a visionary leader, keen to express God's love in practical ways. Vana visited Australia during October to share his story and what God is doing through the ministry in Bangladesh. Here is some of the good news:



Singing into the Night

Evangelist Menpoi is a man with a mission, sharing the gospel, travelling and visiting villages among the Mru and Bawm communities. His primary aim and focus includes teaching songs and leading worship services. He leads many Mru songs as well as Bible teaching studies with both children and adults. He loves to share the story of Jesus and his salvation with them. He also leads worship services at his village. He shares individually with many people and has seen them become Christians through his teaching. Menpoi is also empowering the youth through leadership training. New Christians come from different religious backgrounds. Through the literature ministry, we provide a songbook and a Bible for new converts and start to teach them Christian songs, as well as studying the Bible



together. We encourage them in reading and singing themselves so that they may establish boldness in public. These people work in the field in the daytime and offer their time at night to learn gospel songs. The songbooks and Bibles in their language are limited. We would like to have enough to provide one to each person.

Pigs in Bangladesh

We would like to bring good news about the pig farming. Out of the four pig mothers, two have produced piglets. One pig produced nine piglets, and another produced eight piglets. The total number of piglets at the moment is 17 piglets! This is very good for helping ministry become more sustainable. Pigs are very reliable income and can be sold at the market.



Mru Pharmacy

It's been a battle but thanks to Aldgate Church of Christ, South Australia, the Mru now have a pharmacy! Until now the Mru villagers had to walk about 30 kilometres for primary health care. The new pharmacy can cover 2,500 people in the surrounding villages! The construction work began in February 2016, but was discontinued due to limited resources before Aldgate took up the cause to raise funds for the completion of the project. It is wonderful to see the photos of the pharmacy in action. When people attend the pharmacy, they get physical help, but it also gives people opportunity to have conversations, build relationships and learn about Jesus.



Would you like to support Vana and the ministry in Bangladesh? Why not purchase a gift from the Great Gift Catalogue!



Bibles and Songbooks

Children eagerly learn to read and write in their own Mru dialect using teaching materials like Bibles and songbooks
IN BANGLADESH



Pig

Income from raising pigs assists in developing sanitation projects and providing community access to hostel accommodation and education
IN BANGLADESH



SPOTLIGHT

Community gathering on the grounds of Churches of Christ Conference. Photo courtesy of Santo Ambae Disaster Support Community

Vanuatu Emergency Appeal

GMP launched a Churches of Christ Overseas Aid (COCO) Vanuatu Emergency Appeal during October to raise critical support for the thousands of people displaced from their homes, families and communities due to the volcanic activity on Ambae Island. An initial \$10,000 was made available by GMP to assist the emergency and once the appeal was launched, generous donations have come in from individuals and churches at this stage with more than \$30,000 given.

When the volcano, Manaro, threatened to erupt, the Vanuatu Government ordered the entire population (approximately 11,000 people) to immediately evacuate the Island. As of October 4, people from Ambae had been moved to other

areas including Pentecost, Maewo, Santo and Port Vila. The Churches of Christ Conference office in Santo became the disaster response centre, processing the evacuees, documenting their names and villages, and providing emergency accommodation.

Esline Toamavute, General Secretary of Churches of Christ Conference in Vanuatu (CCCV) says: "Our CCCV church work within Vanuatu has been supported by the people from Ambae. If this tragedy or displacement of this tribe continues, it will greatly affect the future of our work nationally. The total number of people displaced from around 30 churches on Ambae is a big number. Everyone from Ambae is affected, including all religions. Relatives not

living on the island are also affected, as they must now support families who have been evacuated."

Now in November, people from Ambae have returned to their homes to find devastating effects for their water sources, gardens and livestock. Please continue to pray and support the people of Vanuatu during this time of emergency and beyond, as people look to the future and begin re-building their lives. GMP is also working with other agencies so that we can be part of a coordinated support program as people resettle on Ambae.

John Gilmore,
Executive Officer

Acid Rain Over Londua Technical College



September 14 saw a two-hour output of 'acid rain' over Londua Technical College from the Manaro Volcano on Ambae Island. Several days later, on Saturday, for the entire morning, there was a fall-out of ash from the volcano over the college, coating all the leaves and all surfaces. During this time, the level of smoke and sound from the volcano increased. The activity of

the volcano was raised to Level 4, so students, staff and many families from local churches were evacuated to Santo Island. The evacuation was a great achievement, with ships and planes transferring more than 7,000 people to Santo in the space of three to four days. Lolowai Hospital (Ambae) also evacuated patients, including the disabled and elderly, who arrived on

Santo safely but feeling very tired. Despite the unsettling situation of the evacuation, Londua students have continued their studies and are temporarily residing at the local school of Lycée de Luganville.

Peter Bryant,
Principal
Londua Technical College

Strengthening Partnerships in East Ambae



Churches of Christ Conference Secretary General, Esline Toa, with Elder Nigel Potticary, Toowoomba North Church of Christ, signing the partnership agreement

In September, a team from Toowoomba North Church of Christ travelled to East Ambae, Vanuatu, with the purpose of strengthening their relationship and formalising their partnership with the Lansbulu Area Council. This has been a dream come true for the Lansbulu Area. The excitement and gratitude of the partnership celebration and signing was a once in a lifetime experience. We participated in a symbolic re-enactment demonstrating what traditional customs were like before Christianity. We were 'captured' by warriors and taken to the chiefs with the intent of being killed. Instead the chiefs gave us right of passage as we came to bless

them, and to bring the word of God. The signing of this partnership had the enormous impact of reminding us of our shared history between the Churches of Christ Queensland and Churches of Christ Vanuatu. We were privileged to be able to spend time with Daniel Bueseresere, a descendant of the first Kanaka to return to Ambae who brought the gospel from the cane fields around the Bundaberg and Childers area. To hear from him about his family's history of how his grandfather returned with no Bible, and just one verse (John 3:16) was extraordinary. The gospel has impacted this community over the past 100 years, and with the introduction of formal



The Warriors

education and health care, the local church is growing with 30 Churches of Christ now established on Ambae.

Vicki Marney,
Partnership Coordinator QLD

First Rumbblings of Volcano Manaro

When the team from Toowoomba North visited East Ambae, they experienced the first rumbblings of the erupting volcano, Manaro. Vicki Marney, GMP Partnership Coordinator QLD, was with the team on the ground and reported the following:

accommodation had become an evacuation centre for over 500 people from South Ambae, one of the closest points to the erupting volcano. Water supplies had also been compromised from ash and acid rain, and crops had been destroyed. On returning home, the team experienced incredible sadness for our friends uprooted from their homes, facing an uncertain future. In particular, we felt for the elderly people who may never see their homes again.

Toowoomba North will continue to prayerfully support the people of the Lansbulu Area, as partnership is about sharing in both the challenges and successes of life. Our prayers are with the people of Ambae for strength and a peaceful heart as they face the uncertainty of the future.

GMP will continue to support the people of Ambae, and an emergency appeal has been established. The priority will be on safe water, re-establishing gardens and providing



education and health services. Donations over \$2 to the COCOA Ambae Emergency Appeal are tax deductible. You can give online through the GMP website www.gmp.org.au/what-we-do/projects/vanuatu/vanuatu-emergency-appeal

Vicki Marney,
Partnership Coordinator QLD

"The visit was in God's timing and with the agenda determined by Him. On our last morning, we were woken by the ground shaking and rumbblings in the distance from the erupting volcano Manaro, which sits on a small island in a lake at the top of Mt Lombenben. On arriving at the airport, we could see the plumes of smoke and ash billowing from the volcano. We could see the glow of red from the lava erupting into the clouds of steam, and rumbblings like thunder could be heard in the distance. Our hosts explained that this was an unprecedented occurrence. Concern was etched on their faces. Our flight to Santo was the last scheduled one before the evacuations started. Within four hours of departing, our

Use Your Voice: Australia's Modern Slavery Act

History is made up of many decisions and adjustments to the way things are. At critical times, our voices can be highly significant in influencing and bringing about changes that have impacted the lives of others.

Now is a time when our voices really do matter. There is a Parliamentary inquiry afoot, with proposals being developed for a Modern Slavery Act in Australia. There are presently 21 million people in slavery throughout the world (Baptist World Aid, Modern Slavery Act Explainer 2017) and there are 168 million children trapped in child labour around the world (United Nations 2017).

It has been shown that there are many goods imported into Australia which may have involved forced or trafficked labour, such as cocoa, bricks, pavers, cotton, clothing, carpets, rice, palm oil and textiles. For example, forced child labour is used to pick cotton in Uzbekistan, 99.5% of which is exported to Asia. That cotton is then used in the production of clothing for export to countries like Australia (Unshackling Laws Against Slavery, Stop the Traffik, 2011). Baptist World Aid reports that only 7% of Australian clothing companies they reviewed know where their cotton comes from (Ethical Fashion Report, 2017). In Assam, India, families living in desperate poverty sell their children, thinking they will have a better future.

But the children are passed into forced labour, picking tea without a wage (Truth About Tea Plantations, Stop the Traffik).

Understanding that we have a shared responsibility to address these problems, proposals for a Modern Slavery Act for Australia seek to create greater transparency, requiring large companies to take proactive measures ensuring that slavery plays no part in the production of their goods.

But we are concerned that the design of this Act be robust enough to deal with the breadth of the problem of modern slavery. We should be insisting that a strong and effective Act be developed on our behalf. This Act is currently being explored by our parliament, so the time to do this is now.

One important issue concerns the reporting threshold. The income threshold for mandatory reporting should match the Australian Government's definition of a large company (earning \$25 million or more). Current proposals set the mandatory reporting threshold at \$100 million. Many companies of this size are already addressing the issues. In the UK, a threshold of £36 million was set (\$60 million Australian). Smaller but high-risk industries should also be required to report.

Another issue is the appointment of a commissioner to oversee the implementation of the Act and the reporting process. A commissioner is needed to bridge departments, such as human services and law enforcement, as well as engaging with states, NGOs, unions, businesses and the legal profession.

Alongside Stop the Traffik, GMP holds numerous concerns for the design of this Act. GMP is calling on individuals and churches to contact their local parliamentary representative and request that a robust Modern Slavery Act be developed. This might involve writing a letter (templates are available at www.beslavelfree.org) or phoning the MP's office to register your concern. The more this happens, the more likely the issues will be put on the agenda.

Further information on issues that should be raised with your local MP can be obtained at www.beslavelfree.org

Please contact me if you would like any further support sam@gmp.org.au

Let's make the most of the democratic process.

Sam Curkpatrick,
Partnership Coordinator VIC/TAS

The Justice Conference 2017



Natalie Oakes and April Holmes
at the embody stall

On October 27 and 28, the embody team, along with some members of the GMP Melbourne team, attended The Justice Conference. It was an excellent time of connecting, refocusing and learning, as speakers, artists and musicians explored the theme *Love Thy Neighbour*. The sessions and workshops were excellent, and embody hosted a stall in the market place which helped them meet and connect with attendees. We're always so inspired to meet so many people engaging with faith and justice, both in theory and practice! A big thank you to The Justice Conference for having us!

You can find out more at www.thejusticeconference.com.au – and get your tickets for next years conference!



The Welcome to Country Ceremony where people were invited to respond around the fire

SURRENDER Adelaide October 13–15

Around 200 people attended the SURRENDER17 Conference in Adelaide. The speakers were excellent – a great balance between social justice and effectively sharing our faith. This year's theme was 'Embodying the Way'. Mick Duncan (NZ) encouraged us to live expansive lives – "The adventure of extreme discipleship is what we are created for." He talked about the quality of life before we die being important, but there is a quality of life after we die that we need to focus on as well. "We rightly focus on quality of life on earth (social justice); but there is a quality of life after this life that is

equally important. We need to focus on preparing people for this reality as well."

Steve McKinnon, TEAR WA, posed the challenge: "Do we put the least, the last and the lost first? If we did we'd turn the world upside down." Karina Kreminski noted that the lepers and outcasts were especially attracted to Jesus. His holiness didn't turn people away. People were drawn to him. Her challenge was that we don't judge people by their lifestyle choices and noted that Romans 2:4 highlights that the kindness of God leads to

repentance. She used the imagery of a bubbling fountain of life where people are laughing, playing and enjoying splashing in the water – but it's just in the church. "Mission is to leave our own Christian geographical world to search out the most unchristian, vulnerable and marginalised; it's costly and uncomfortable. All of us are 'sent' on mission in our neighbourhood. Our witness is what we embody."

Val Zerna,
Partnership Coordinator SA

One Community Mission Celebration Service

In late October, Natalie Oakes and I represented GMP at the One Community Church Mission Celebration Service in Blackburn, Victoria. One Community support an impressive variety of mission activities, from overseas to local, right down the road to the neighbouring primary school. You may have read their reflections from a recent trip to the Juraki Indigenous surf and culture event at Fingal Head. Healthy mission always begins in

friendship, sitting beside others to listen, grow and love. Carly Cassidy, the Missions Administrator at One Community Church, said the following:

"A huge thank you to everyone involved with our Mission Celebration Service. We are so grateful for all of the mission partners connected to One Community, and we look forward to seeing the ongoing impact that this day

will have in strengthening those relationships. We are now praying that the conversations had on the Sunday will stir the hearts of our congregation and that they will be encouraged and challenged to find their place in God's Mission in the world."

Sam Curkpatrick,
Partnership Coordinator VIC/TAS

Teaching Leaders of Tomorrow

Butros, Mary and Jonah are committed and caring teachers at Emmanuel School in South Sudan. Emmanuel School provides a daily meal and primary education for over 400 children. Children at Emmanuel School are living with their relatives or others allocated by the community committee, because their parents have died. Butros is passionate about the opportunity he receives to teach children everyday: "Since I was in school I have wanted to serve the community. It has been my dream to teach children. Education is the key to success." Mary wants more girls to receive an education: "Girls do not usually have access to education because they are expected to help at home with the chores. The rate of pregnancy is high and girls often don't complete their education." Jonah is thankful for the opportunity to help others. "There is a need for more teachers in South Sudan. GMP helps me have that chance, I enjoy teaching the children and putting in lots of effort." Butros says, "Our teaching

here is very strong. We challenge students and ask them: What is the problem? Do you not understand or is it the teacher? We solve problems together."

Some of the hopes that Emmanuel School teachers have for the future include the introduction of vocational studies, such as carpentry, electrics, computers and tailoring. Butros says, "I wish to teach in this school to show the kids there is life and that they will be helped and become better people in their future. I'd like the children that I am teaching to be different – to know that life is good and that they can help other people because they have been helped; to change their thinking from "I am lacking this and that" and help them to not be depressed." Mary holds a strong conviction that when a girl is at school she is in a safe place as she has teachers looking out for her. "It is good that I am here teaching at this school! I want to teach other girls to know they can be teachers, too."



Jonah has been teaching at Emmanuel School since 2014



TD

\$90

Teacher Training

When teachers at Emmanuel School complete their training, children in their classes receive improved care, education and opportunities **IN SOUTH SUDAN**

Colin Scott,
COCOA Director

Petra's Story

My name is Petra. I was born in Chungribu Village, on the Ramu, in 1985. The gospel came to my village when our elders invited Pastor Frank Beale from Tung to come and tell them about Jesus. Alan Fletcher taught my father, and then he was taught by Miss Dorothy Howden, so my parents were Christians. When I was seven years of age I went to our village school and completed Years 1-5, but later had to move to Gokto to finish Year 6. After that I went back to my home village in Chungribu where Pastor Bonija, a child evangelist, led me to see my need of Jesus and so I was baptised by him. By 15 years of age, in 2000, I was married and at 16 I had my first daughter. I then had three more beautiful daughters but in 2010, a terrible accident happened in our village and my



husband died. I went to live with my parents, but I wanted to know more about Jesus and His holy Bible, so I asked my parents if I could go to Gandep College while they looked after my children. I couldn't get into the college until 2013. I am very interested in teaching in the children's ministry. I want to serve by teaching in my village of Chungribu.

GMP partners with HumeRidge Church of Christ. Petra's story is courtesy of HumeRidge The Gandep Project in PNG
www.gandeproject.org



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