

IN PARTNERSHIP

November 2021



Dena Gower and Connie Clinch

The Great Gift of Future Leaders

For many young Indigenous Australians, beginning their faith journey is exciting. But to keep this fire burning they need opportunities to learn what Indigenous leadership looks like in their communities. Many have a desire to lead but need support from their Elders to become who God has chosen them to be.

Working together through the IMA Pathways Program, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal churches are able to create the safe, cultural, spiritual spaces emerging leaders need. The program is an Indigenous-led initiative, enabling young leaders to connect, provide support and friendship, and receive valuable mentoring from Christian Elders.

Connie Clinch is a proud Noongar woman who is an artist and manager of Moorditj Keila, an Aboriginal community organisation based in South Perth. Coen Pickett is a Christian Noongar/Yamatji man who has a desire to help young people from his community. Both are Ngaama Ministry young Indigenous leaders and are being disciplined and trained through Ngaama. They shared their thoughts on the launch of the IMA Pathways Program:

“The IMA Pathways Program is a real need for young Aboriginal leaders.

It’s important that once we choose to accept Jesus Christ, we have the doors open to lead us into God’s ministry. It’s crucial, once we become on fire for the Lord, that we have the opportunity to do God’s work, wherever He chooses for us to go.”

There are many unique demands on Indigenous Christian leaders. The program seeks to address these, to make further training and study a reality for those that want them.

The program offers participants relational, cultural, spiritual and learning support over one year. Participants can also apply for a further two years of support. Participants have opportunities to learn from the IMA Ministry Team members and their various program initiatives.

Noongar man and Indigenous pastoral outreach worker, Brendon Garlett, recognises that further ministry training would benefit his community-based work in Dareton (NSW) and beyond.

“The IMA Pathways Program is a good set up for me and our mob as it’s designed to give support for us to access the right kind of training,” Brendon says.

“I’ve got a big family, lots of community expectation and commitments as well as the reality of issues that our mob face daily. Any help and support for me to do more training is needed and that’s what the Pathways Program wants to do.”

For emerging Indigenous Christian leaders, the connections and training they receive can be vital to their journey as Christians. You can help to provide this Great Gift to them!



When you give a Great Gift of Indigenous Mission Training, you help support young leaders like Brendon to learn more.

Applications for 2022 are now open

If you’re a young Indigenous person interested in Christian leadership, or know somebody who is, go to www.gmp.org.au/pathwaysapply

Or for more information email

Colin Battersby colinb@gmp.org.au
(Western Australia) or
Nick Wight nick@gmp.org.au
(Central and Eastern Australia).

News & Events

2021 Great Gifts Catalogue

Your present can change someone's future. A practical gift in the present time can give a brighter future. Your Great Gift can change someone's 'present' and give them the resources to break the cycle of poverty. Your Great Gift can give hope and spiritual wellbeing found through a relationship with Jesus. Your Great Gift can stand with Indigenous Christian leaders and support their ministries. Now, that's real impact!
www.greatgifts.org.au

embody Interactive Podcasts

embody has just launched a new book club podcast, Reading Mission! In this interactive podcast, Mitch and Emily sit down to read and chat through some of their favourite books on mission, justice and social change together. Every episode is recorded live on Tuesday evenings in the embody Discord server, so you can listen in and contribute to the conversation in chat, if you want! Find out more and join in at embody.org.au/readingmission

World Toilet Day – 19 November

www.un.org/en/observances/toilet-day

World Children's Day – 20 November

www.un.org/en/observances/world-childrens-day

Great Gifts that support kids



A nutritional snack for kids IN INDIA

A school uniform for children IN ZIMBABWE

Acknowledging Redress

Size and outcome are not always connected. Jesus sums this up when he tells the parable of the mustard seed. I sense the same principle in the story of the feeding of the 5000; a small lunch feeding many. This faith dynamic reflects the ways that God works in and through us. What we have, and what we offer, is multiplied in the grace and goodness of God.

Our experience of God at work in this way builds our trust when there are other realities impacting on us. It is true that while we are not protected from pressurising matters, we do have a way of finding peace in the midst of turmoil.

Some time ago, and with the blessing of the company members of GMP, we became a Participating Institution in the National Redress Scheme. This is a step we took before the Australian Government made it a requirement for all institutions. This step was taken on behalf of the past activities of the Australian Churches of Christ Indigenous Ministries (ACCIM) and their historic care of Aboriginal children. We took this step willingly with the prayer that in doing so we would be part of healing past hurts. We also had no idea as to what might be brought to our attention.

What have we learned? Children (now adults), in greater numbers than we expected, have applied to the Redress Scheme as a result of having been abused. We deeply regret the hurt that was caused.

We accept that many were abused. GMP condemns such abuse and it is a cause of deep regret that is occurred in the context of the activities of ACCIM. It is clear that there are many that live with trauma stemming from their treatment in the past.

The individual payments that recognise this are not huge. However, together they are adding up to a large sum of money and are

making the future of Indigenous Ministries Australia (IMA) somewhat uncertain.

GMP is working with the Council of Churches of Christ in Australia and our Company members to find a way to enable both Redress to be paid and an important ministry to continue. COCOA (Churches of Christ Overseas Aid) and ICP (International Church Partnership) funds and programs are NOT at risk.

We need to be clear:

1. Some children were abused in the past.
2. While it was not the intent of those who led ACCIM that this occurred, it must be accepted that many were abused.
3. We accept that this was a tragic season in Australia's past that has left many Australian Indigenous people living with long-term trauma and pain, as well as also being part of the 'stolen generations'.
4. GMP is involved, not because of our own actions, but as the current holder of the assets of the past.
5. Not all children were abused and not all ACCIM staff were abusers.

Recently the GMP Board affirmed its 'zero tolerance' of any child abuse, sexual assault, harassment or abuse happening in its ministries. We intentionally invest in training partners in the safeguarding of vulnerable children and adults.

We look to the future – yes, with fewer resources but with a stronger confidence in God's call to follow.

If you want to talk about this matter please contact John Gilmore (jgilmore@gmp.org.au) or 0413 754 874 or the *National Redress Scheme*.

John Gilmore
Executive Officer



Left and Right - Recipients of food packages, Centre: David and Christy Reddy

SPOTLIGHT

Showing the Light in Lockdown

Fiji is often considered a holiday destination for Australian travellers. Some have even referred to it as a 'paradise'.

For a while during the COVID-19 pandemic, it seemed to live up to that status. With advance warning of the pandemic's advance, swift government action and the isolation that comes with being an island-nation, Fiji escaped the worst of the first wave. That all changed in April 2021, when the Delta strain swept through the nation, and resulted in most of Fiji's 52,000 cases and 673 lives lost.

Churches could not meet across Fiji, and many ministries experienced significant financial challenges without congregational giving. However, the churches that generous GMP supporters have supported in Lautoka, Vuci Rd and Lomowai (Sigatoka) did not experience that financial pressure. Their pastors, David, Raj and Muneshwar, focused on innovatively reaching the communities around them and comforting their own church members.

There were prayers conducted over the 'phone and sermons recorded

and sent to church members to view. Pastoral visits became pastoral calls. A few months back, through the funds provided through ICP's COVID-19 Ministry Appeal, 50 families were given substantial food packages from each of the churches. As part of their emphasis on outreach, half of those families did not attend the churches.

David Reddy, from Lautoka, told GMP that "the recipients of the food packages were very grateful for the support they received. Families who didn't have a source of income were emotional and thankful. They stated that God had used GMP to answer their prayers." Raj Deo (Vuci Rd) wrote, "People have seen the love of God being expressed through giving the food packages and have come closer by communicating with us and thanking the church for its great help in urgent need."

Despite their careful adherence to COVID-19 protocols, our Fijian team have not escaped it. Muneshwar and his family contracted COVID-19 last month. They were fortunate that he, Stella and their three children only had mild symptoms. Like so many Fijians, they had to spend two weeks in isolation. They were deeply

appreciative of the prayers of many and the practical support from GMP to purchase medicines that had increased in price during the pandemic. "We are very thankful for the speedy assistance the GMP team has been," he reflected.

Through your support, the gospel of light and compassion continues to reach the Indo-Fijian communities in Fiji.



Muneshwar Goundar

Would you like to partner with us to support the faithful work that Raj, David and Muneshwar have been doing in Fiji? Find out more at www.gmp.org.au/what-we-do/projects/fiji/pastors-in-fiji

You can also learn more about GMP's Covid-19 Ministry Appeal at www.gmp.org.au/what-we-do/projects/global/covid-19-appeal



When a Toilet Seems Too Good to be True

This year Safe Water September is supporting WaSH projects in Bangladesh, in addition to the projects we support in Vanuatu and Zimbabwe.

Our partners in Bangladesh, Community Advancement Forum (CAF) and the Bandarban Hills Churches of Christ (BHCOC), work together to help rural communities in Bangladesh install latrines, learn good hygiene practices, and have safe access to water.

One of these communities was Cramady Village. CAF undertook extensive preparations to begin installing latrines for communities who need better hygiene facilities.

However, many people in this community were unsure whether an aid organisation like CAF would follow through. One participant shared with us how they felt before the project began.

“Our data has been requested and collected many times by many people from many Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs),” they said. “Often our people refuse to provide the information, the reason being that they are not getting any programs in our village. All that happens is that people collect data.”

“We were finally approached by the CAF introducing the Community Sustainability Project (CSP) toilet installation. I personally had doubts again because of what we had experienced with other NGOs.”

Thankfully, the people in this community pushed past their doubts.

“Anyway, I agreed as did other members in our village. And the construction work began at our village, showing the reliability of the program.”

Latrines were installed in Cramady along with two other villages in the area. Later a further four villages receive latrines, as well as more being installed in Cramady. Between the villages, 100 latrines were installed in 2021!

The participant told us, “Formerly we practiced toileting in the open, under the bushes. From generation after generation this was a habit. People from outside adjusted to our practice.”

But with a latrine installed, open defecation can be left in the past! Proper facilities like latrines and hygiene training can reduce preventable sickness and even death.

“I think having a toilet is the most important factor of maintaining health in the family and our society,” a project participant says. “It means reducing disease infection in the family and community, and safety for young girls and women. It is very supportive for improving our living standards. I appreciate the donors for this program and thank CAF for the CSP toilet installation program.”

Cramady and the surrounding villages also received hygiene training, giving them vital knowledge to protect their health. The chief of one village expressed great thanks for the program. “Health is the most [important] factor [in] human development. When we are healthy everything becomes easier in life.”

Thanks to your generous support of Safe Water September, we’ve raised over \$160,000 which will help many more people in Bangladesh gain these vital facilities. In such a challenging year, this result is amazing. As many as 6400 people can now gain improved access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene!

Thank you so much for your support of Safe Water September in 2021. It’s because of people like you that we can keep making a difference, year after year.

Missed your chance to donate to Safe Water September? No worries! You can support the Community Sustainability Project, by purchasing Great Gift of a ‘Toilet.’



Installing in-ground toilets in the remote Bandarban Hills District provides increased hygiene and sanitation and reduces disease IN BANGLADESH

\$70