

# IN PARTNERSHIP

MAY 2018



Esline Toa, Vanuatu, & Suzanne Hayes, COCOA, conducting a community consultation, Ambae, Vanuatu



## OUR SENSE OF MISSION

Mission is a people centred activity. We may focus our attention on our local setting, or somewhere further away or even somewhere farther away still. It is people and their situations that shape and sharpen our sense of mission. It may be that we identify a felt need to be met, or a structural block to people's well-being that needs removal or an issue that limits and divides people. Our intent in mission is to see individuals and communities thrive.

Such thriving has physical, spiritual and relational elements to it. Advocacy, generous giving and taking action in solidarity are ways that support personal and community well-being and transformation. Spiritual change comes as people find joy and meaning in a fresh appreciation of the ways that God is at work in their midst.

If our actions are going to be constructive and helpful, then these actions will be based on values drawn out of conversation and shared insights. There are various ways in which we can support change. We can bring skills in

planning, listen to others, share new perspectives and as we do so affirm and strengthen what people are seeking to do for themselves.

Implementing initiatives intended to resource people and communities with new life is dependent on a high level of trust. Such trust is not achieved in an instant or by an announcement. Dynamic trusting relationships take time and need time. Several of GMP's partners are very long-term relationships. We know our partners and they know us! We trust our partners and they trust us!

Our experience teaches us that two-way trust takes time to be established. It may begin with listening and include a variety of people taking initiatives and risks with others. New possibilities are seen in action when we take a risk together and as we all trust in the grace and guiding presence of God.

Whether we think 'local' or 'global' our engagement in mission is a product of our trust in each other and God's actions with us. Mission in this sense is an expression of God's

gracious Kingdom – where there is space and justice for all.

*John Gilmore,*  
Executive Officer

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For even more of the latest news, check out our website or follow us on facebook.

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## News & Events



### Discovery Trips 2018

Indigenous Ministries Australia will again run a Juraki Discovery trip in August, as well as partnering with embody to run a Discovery trip to Dareton later this year. Drop us a line and email [nick@gmp.org.au](mailto:nick@gmp.org.au) for more information.



### Melbourne Songlines

Melbourne Songlines is an Indigenous history and culture walking tour of inner city sites in Melbourne. It's designed to be part history tour, part prayer walk and part cross-cultural learning experience. Contact Nick [nick@gmp.org.au](mailto:nick@gmp.org.au) to book a tour!



### State Youth Games (SYG) Victoria

One massive weekend of sport, art, music, and community in Warragul, Victoria. June 8-11, 2018. [stateyouthgames.com/vic](http://stateyouthgames.com/vic) #SYGINSPIRE

embody will be heading to SYG again this year in June! If you're aged 13-30, or know of someone who is and loves sports, art, camping and Jesus – check it out!



## Giving Till It Hurts – Welfare

The inhabitants of a certain island were great lovers of fish. They were poor, so they cried out to their neighbours across the sea for help. The first thing they received was a pallet of canned tuna, the second was a pallet of canned tuna, and the third was a pallet of canned tuna.

The neighbours worked hard to raise money to send the pallet each month. The fish lovers loved the tuna. They soon learned what time the next pallet was due to arrive. The neighbours came and visited the island and the two communities enjoyed each other's company immensely, sharing tuna served in every conceivable way. It was a great relationship for both of them. Both sides felt good about it and wanted it to go on forever.

As time went on they both needed it to go on forever – the fish lovers because they knew no other way to get the fish they needed, and

their neighbours because they understood the dependency and it was good to feel needed.

The help that their neighbours are providing to the fish-loving folk is often called welfare. It responds to an obvious need by filling the gap, but it doesn't have a long-term strategy to fix the problem. The more a welfare program continues, the more dependent the community becomes.

The neighbours did not want to unsettle the great relationship, but some of them had a niggling feeling that they could be doing better for their friends on the island. Perhaps a sustainable project was not just one they could keep up the payments for, but one which helped the islanders do more for themselves – that made their life more sustainable.

Colin Scott,  
COCOA Director



### Courage Summit

Join with leaders from across the movement of Churches of Christ in Victoria and Tasmania for the annual CCVT Summit, exploring what it looks like to be communities of COURAGE. [churchesofchrist.org.au/summit](http://churchesofchrist.org.au/summit)

GMP will be at Courage summit, volunteering our time, as well as facilitating some workshops and Indigenous contributions. See you there!



### Walk for Hope Update

Thank you so much to everyone who participated in Walk for Hope this Easter. Together we've raised \$11,883 – Over 10k! Your support will bring people hope all around the world, by making Christian ministries more accessible.

It's not too late to give! Bring hope by giving at [WalkforHope.com.au](http://WalkforHope.com.au). **Donations close May 11!**



Recent graduates of Yamen Bible College, PNG

## Yamen Missionaries and Ministry

Students at Yamen Bible College in Papua New Guinea (PNG) learn to read the Bible in their own language, and train for ministry in local churches. Some of the students have reflected on how the college has helped them learn about life and how to better live with one another. They have a growing confidence in their faith, and have learnt to share their faith with others. Raphael says, “Studying is about the mindset, true worship and character building.” Students complete practical and biblical training and assist pastors, helping to establish new churches. Jane shared, “They trained us to be leaders in the church, faithful to God, to be - evangelists, and to preach the Word. We appreciate the training. We are ready to share the gospel.”

The Bible College is the centre point of the Yamen community and students from the region make big sacrifices to attend. It was started by faith in a small home! Students spent their first year at the college constructing the buildings! Then

they studied for two years after that. Yamen Bible College is an achievement, locally established, managed and supported. Tony Waluk, the Chairman of the Melanesian Evangelical Churches of Christ, explains how God spoke to the hearts of the Yamen church to support the students in a unique way. “The Yamen church supports each Bible College student, whatever their needs, be it finance, clothes, or food. The local family looks after the student like a stepparent. If there are 18 students, then there are 18 families helping them.”

Yamen Bible College students have the opportunity to attend a locally led and supported PNG Mission School after graduation. Students travel four nights by canoe, bus and ship to attend the school in Rabaul. It is a long journey and a big commitment. Jane attended the Mission School and said, “The benefit of going to the school included a deeper understanding of

which direction to take in life, and how to be supported in mission, gain knowledge and skills, and learn about the Kingdom of God.” Raphael also commented, “Six students graduated from Yamen one year ago in 2016. They go to mission’s training for nine months, are sent into the field for six months and then return for guidance and refection to discern God’s call for them. In the future, they will go into the field or work at home in the church.”

When asked about their hope for the future, they all responded that they “hope to save the lost”. Pastor Thomas, the Principal of Yamen Bible College says, “The dream is spreading the gospel and the kingdom of God – sharing with other provinces, and this district.” The Yamen Bible College program lasts for two years. The first six students have graduated, and now another 15 students are starting their first year of studies.

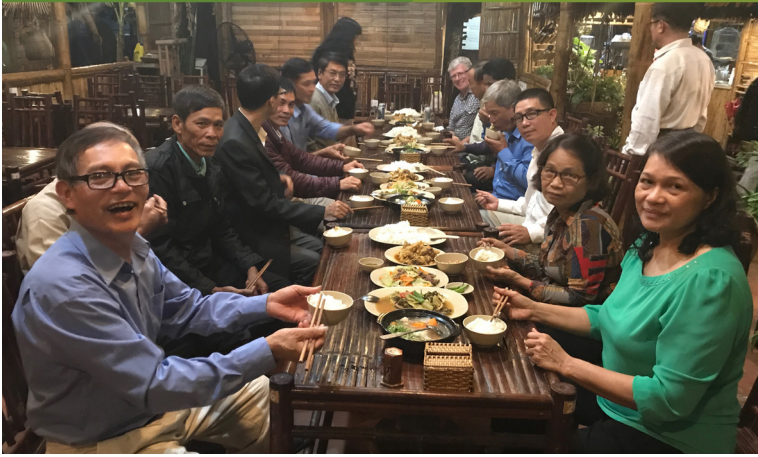
## Gandep Bible College Update



We have started the academic year with joy and peace in our hearts, and we know that we will have a successful graduation in the end. We have created a new curriculum, and all of us are taking part in the teaching program each week. We have created new departments so all of us are teaching courses from each area, for example Mission

and Evangelism, Pastoral Ministry, Christian Education and Work of the Holy Spirit. We have 12 second year students and 11 third year students. Please pray for the students and teachers – thank you!

*Caleb Drankro,*  
Dean of Studies



Left: Sharing a meal together  
Right: Vietnamese leaders

## Visiting Vietnam: Eat, Pray, Sing

Vietnam was a mystery to me until I travelled there with John Gilmore and Mark Stevens last November. Mark and I are GMP Board members, and we were travelling with John as he visited the areas in Vietnam partnering with GMP.

My knowledge of Vietnam came from what I had read in history, discussed with Vietnam War veterans, and read in newspapers and other media. I knew it was a communist country, but I wasn't prepared for the experience of seeing Christianity operating in a communist country.

We arrived in Ho Chi Minh City and met up with Pastor Doan and Fiona Briers (Bright Solutions). Learning of Pastor Doan's work in supporting the Churches of Christ pastors in Vietnam, and Fiona enabling women to have a better life through life skills and family income generation, was encouraging and challenging.

We visited local churches in homes and backyards, even being brought to them surreptitiously. It was

good to see Pastor Doan and John encouraging local Christians and their pastors, many of whom did not have formal theological or indeed any training, but have a passion for the gospel and involvement in their local communities, living on very little.

The highlight was a gathering of Churches of Christ pastors forging a way ahead as a group and a movement. Churches of Christ in Vietnam have, I was informed, their roots in Christian military members (particularly from the US) who served there during the Vietnam War.

It was quite challenging to hear the stories of the older pastors who experienced the impact on their lives once communism became the dominant philosophy in Vietnam. There were also younger pastors who had not experienced that, and to see them all join together for the first time and forge a way ahead as a united group was an incredible experience and, to me, a move of God. It was a privilege and a humbling experience to also have some input into their lives and ministries.

We experienced being driven to the meeting location through back streets. On one occasion we had to move next door, as the owner of the place where we were meeting was unhappy because we were foreigners meeting with locals in a group. To sing together, pray together, eat together and to share a testimony together with these pastors was an inspiring experience.

As Chair of the GMP Board it was good to be able to share on behalf of the Churches of Christ in Australia our support for them, for which they were very appreciative.

Vietnam in some ways is no longer a mystery to me. However I am aware I have only seen a small part and only met a few people. Pray for the fledgling Churches of Christ churches there as they work and share together for the gospel in their local communities.

By the way, Vietnam has great food and very tasty coffee!

*Barrie Yesberg,*  
WA

## A New Motorbike for Evangelist Sichoni!

Evangelist Sichoni always dreams big in his work and for a long time was dreaming of a motorbike to make travelling to remote locations easier. Sichoni received a new bike in February! He is excited and grateful to all the people who contributed to buying him the bike. Sichoni says, "It's now easier for me to evangelise."

*BJ Mpofu,*  
Zimbabwe

Evangelist Sichoni with his new motorbike

