

IN PARTNERSHIP

July 2022



I've just returned from a 'quick' 4000km road trip throughout the Lake Eyre basin and the vast desert regions of South Australia. Goomeroi man and IMA East adviser, Billy Williams, Maori man, Galen Rangiawha, and I, were able to visit several IMA partners and prospective partners in both South Australia (Port Augusta, Coober Pedy, and Adelaide) and NSW (Dareton).

I want to share of our time with one of our close brothers, Kokotha and Yankunytjara man, Robert Nyimmy Taylor.

Robert's traditional lands begin just north of Port Augusta as you travel along the Stuart Highway and continue all the way to Uluru, taking in the towns of Woomera and Coober Pedy (amongst others) to the very centre of Australia. Robert, together with his wife, Wanita, are involved with running Dusty Feet Mob, an incredible youth-focused cultural dance group based in Port Augusta. Rob also runs his own consultancy. Together we are working on ways to offer a unique journey of learning and connection with him on country. This is a rare

opportunity for people to visit some of Australia's most beautiful and remote desert regions to camp under the stars, learning and sharing together about the unique cultural perspectives of creation and our Creator.

Time on the road (and off it) at the centre of our country, we experienced life devoid of structures and forms that are normal to our coastal and urban surroundings. In the desert there are barely any hills or mountains. Vast plains of red sand stretch for miles with sparse native grasses and saltbush, very few water sources and even fewer flowing rivers or creeks.

All of this 'space' is rich with the sense of God's presence and creative handiwork.

The colours are beyond spectacular. The subtlety of changing light and landscapes, and the sense of slowing time, all help create a rich awareness of self in creation.

This is enriched further when hearing stories of the First Peoples of this land. Stories from over millennia how the Indigenous cared

for the country, raised families and communities, and connected deeply with the Creator through his creation.

To stand on open plains, viewing fossilised shells and wood, ancient grinding stones and campsites, fills you with a sense of awe. Time and time again, I found myself looking at the horizon in the desert, having my view filled in equal measure with land and sky, symmetrically split along that 360-degree line.

Good friend, Bunjalung man Kyle Slabb, believes that these two inseparables, the 'worlds' of land and sky, are the symbolic and tangible manifestation of God's creation. Billy Williams reminded us also that what is true in the 'sky story' is true for the 'land story.'

We are both spiritual and tangible beings at the same time. The land being temporal and tangible of our day-to-day lives, and sky being the invisible, spiritual realm of our reality. As we see and feel ourselves in both, it's a reminder of the wonder of the unity of both worlds and our place in it. For we straddle both the land and air – our feet are on the land and our heads are in the air!

The time with our partners was rich and deeply rewarding for us all. Perhaps, this 'land' and 'sky' view of the world could enrich our understanding of the Lord's prayer.

Jesus says in Matthew 6:10, '...Your Kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven', or to paraphrase it a little for when you are next in our beautiful remote outback, 'Your Kingdom come, your will be done through the land story as it is in the sky story'.

Nick Wight
IMA East Coordinator

News & Events

NAIDOC Week, July 3-10

National NAIDOC Week celebrations are held across Australia in the first week of July each year (Sunday to Sunday), to celebrate and recognise the history, culture, and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. NAIDOC Week is an opportunity for all Australians to learn about First Nations cultures and histories and participate in celebrations of the oldest, continuous living cultures on earth. You can support and get to know your local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities through activities and events held across the country. Find out more online at www.naidoc.org.au

Safe Water September

Take the Safe Water September challenge and give improved access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene. It's simple. Drink nothing but water all September and raise money for safe water, hygiene and sanitation projects. Every \$25 you raise can improve one person's life! Sign up as an individual or as a team. Sign up or donate today at www.safewaterseptember.org.au

For more news and updates, follow us on Facebook or Instagram @gmpaustralia

The Part We Play

Learning to drive involves mastering many skills. Some are visual – paying attention to the road, traffic, signs, signals, and people. Other skills are relatively physical – mastering steering, braking, the clutch, changing gears and reversing. Some are a bit more instinctive, anticipating the speed of traffic, positioning the car on the road, keeping a safe distance and so it goes on. When it comes together, we are driving. Some parts can be mastered separately, however the 'art' is it working together.

Paul writes of the body of Christ in Ephesians 4:15-16, 'But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knitted together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love'.

This is such a complete image of the Body of Christ – the body growing up, each part connected and working, and building itself up in love.

The truth of these words is seen so clearly in that no one person, local church or mission enterprise is complete on its own. We need each other and rely on each of us playing our part. And as we do our part the whole-body changes and grows.

It is true of the work of GMP at so many levels. We cannot engage in mission without our local partners, their vision, hope and sense of God leading them to what they are meant to do.

GMP also needs local churches and people in Australia who pray and give so that the mission priorities of our partners can be realised.

In this GMP also plays its part in creating mission partnerships.

This three-way mission relational paradigm is at the core of what we do, and without local partners and without supporting churches and individuals, GMP cannot undertake mission.

We look to the future with hope and expectation, never pretending that there will not be challenges and difficulties. Our hope and expectation is that, as we all play our part, the result will be more than we can ever imagine or anticipate.

This is what it means to partner – each taking responsibility for the part we play, not taking each other for granted – and so having an impact.

John Gilmore
Executive Officer

We are looking for a new Executive Officer

The Executive Officer will give sound leadership and direction towards the achievement of GMP's mission, strategy and objectives. They will lead the overall development and delivery of the Mission, Vision, Strategic and Operational plans, and provide leadership by way of missiological thinking to the Board, staff and volunteers, Australian Churches of Christ and overseas partners. The EO will provide inspiring leadership and ensure that the annual operations plans and financial budgets are in line with the strategic plan.

The successful candidate will be a mature Christian with a proven

track record in Senior Leadership roles where you have built, led and nurtured highly effective and co-operative teams. We are looking for a servant-leader who is strongly aligned to the Christian values of this mission-based organisation, and has the ability to inspire and influence others, to build excellent relationships with key stakeholders, including donors, church leaders and church partners.

You will possess spiritual integrity, have excellent leadership skills, be highly organized, have sound financial acumen and have the skills and ability to engage people in the work of GMP. You will be an active

member of a local church, and your knowledge and understanding of Missions and International Development in particular will be important for this role, as will be your passion for mission and aid and development work. This is one of those great opportunities for someone who wants to use their skill and talent to help bring the Gospel to many through worldwide Christian mission.

Applications close on Monday 1st August, 2022. To apply please request an application package from Linton Deane at: linton@eaglehr.com.au. Or, for an initial discussion, please call Linton on 03 9653 9468.



SPOTLIGHT

One Vision, One Mission, One Pledge

With so many needs present in the world, how do we as Christians live out our belief in Jesus and his heart for justice? You probably have your own ways that you do this but, if you're like me, I am constantly challenged by this question.

When tested by the Pharisees on the greatest commandment, Jesus said, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbour as yourself" Matthew 22:37-39.

This is a vision and calling that we at GMP have been trying to live out together for the last 130 years. Whether it's been through work that ends cycles of poverty, or partnering with international churches, or Indigenous peoples and churches here in Australia. Each area of work is a part of the one calling, to love our neighbour.

We are grateful for your compassion for people in need, and for your partnership. We are thankful that you have walked this journey with us, alongside our partners, whether recently or for many years. We thank God for faithful, compassionate people like you.

Whether globally, nationally, or locally, we have one holistic and integrated mission to live out the greatest commandment of Jesus: To journey with our partners across all the different countries, projects,

and areas they work in. To take part in fully integrated mission.

And you can now make One Pledge to support this vision.

One Pledge is a monthly gift to support holistic mission. Your regular gift will go to the area of most need across all GMP partnerships and areas of work:

- To help empower people to break the cycles of poverty that harm their neighbourhoods.
- To stand alongside Australian Indigenous Christians to support their ministries.
- To help grow international church communities and share the good news of Jesus around the world.

This is One Pledge.

We know you already partner in this work in many ways. We are so grateful for the ways you give, pray, and walk alongside our partners. We know you have deep care for our partners, reflected in the way you journey with us. One Pledge is a new way to join with, or continue, your investment in God's mission.

One Pledge enables your financial gift to go to where it's most needed each month. It gives security to our partners, as your pledge is something they can rely on. It's also an opportunity to contribute to the big vision – loving our neighbours, through Church

Partnerships (ICP), Relief and Development solutions (COCOA), and empowering Indigenous Ministries in Australia (IMA).

Your partnership has already achieved so much. Partners like you have already helped kick-start a tailor-made program for emerging Christian Indigenous leaders to be supported in their ministry or mission training here in Australia. Your partnership has also enabled 157 future leaders to attend Bible college in the past year. Over 5,013 people now have access to safe water, some for the first time in their lives.

One Pledge is a new way to join in this story. When you make your pledge, you'll receive monthly updates on how you're helping our partners change lives. You'll also receive a progress report every 12 months, outlining some of the great things you've helped make possible.

Join One Pledge online at www.OnePledge.org.au, or call our team on FreeCall 1800 467 222. We'd love to talk with you about how your partnership is making a difference.

Thank you for sharing with us in the greatest commandment of Jesus. You make the work of our partners possible. Whichever way you share in this mission, our partners are so grateful for your support.

John Gilmore
Executive Officer

Changing Church Culture in Zimbabwe

There are many women who attend church in Africa. Churches are characterised as being mostly female, however few women are in positions of leadership or public ministry. Culture, tradition, and history, including patriarchal ideologies, may have influenced this. Pastors, teachers, and evangelists are mainly male and undertake ministry tasks such as preaching. We recently received a report from Zimbabwean evangelist, Burl Banzi, that indicated some changes in this area. More specifically, at the Chinamasa Church of Christ.

Traditionally, “the church would rely on male preachers, elders and deacons when it comes to preaching,” Pastor Banzi said. However, since the outbreak of

COVID-19, Chinamasa Church of Christ women are beginning to take on active and empowering roles in the church.

Women now preach.

This came about through some of the Bible study lessons they were having during the lockdowns. Pastor Banzi says churches have adjusted to the pandemic lockdown because it gives them more time to study the Bible. “We see the grace of God now that we do have some individuals from the women’s wing who can now preach or share the word of God in the church,” Pastor Banzi said.

Galatians 3 says there is neither Greek, nor Jew, slave nor free, there

is neither male nor female, for we are all one in Christ Jesus. Realising that women can preach is like the “no Greek, no Jew concept”, Pastor Banzi said.

The changes are not limited to women. Banzi says, “Even the youth in the church can lead Bible study lessons.” There has been a real mindset shift.

GMP continues to build the capacity of local people in ministry by supporting key leaders and developing leadership skills through International Church Partnerships (ICP). Supporting Zimbabwean evangelists means supporting local church leadership development.

Back in the Air

Colin Scott and Eva Ntege-Dhizaala travelled to Zimbabwe during the month of May as one of the first GMP staff visits overseas since the Australian international borders re-opened. Eva is new to the COCOA team, so this trip was an exciting opportunity for her to meet GMP partners for the first time.

Both Colin and Eva said how travelling has changed since COVID-19. There was a lot of checks, sanitiser and mask wearing. Colin said, “There were less flights to choose from so we went a long way around.” Positively, there were “no major hassles,” Eva said. After the long-haul flights, landing in Africa brought a renewed excitement for the people and the projects that were to be visited.

The COCOA team went to Zimbabwe to visit potential GMP partner Christian Care’s projects in Masvingo province. The next phase of the project will be a joint funding partnership with Act for Peace. The COCOA team saw many examples of conservation farming and small livestock projects in action. Farmers



Women speak with Eva Ntege-Dhizaala (second right) at a borehole workshop, Zimbabwe

were generally getting twice as much return than before. Eva said, “It was nice meeting the Christian Care team. They were very receptive from the beginning to the end.”

The team also visited GMP long-term partners Showers of Blessing (OSBT) and Khayelihle Children’s Village (KCV). Eva will be managing these projects, so it was an important visit for introductions. “Meeting the GMP partners whom I had only been reading about was very exciting,” Eva said. “Meeting Boniface and his family, and seeing the effects of people’s changed lives as a result of improved water access was great.” A highlight for Eva was talking to the children at KCV. “Watching how confident they were was so very energising,” Eva said.

Likewise, Colin also enjoyed talking to the children at KCV, including those who have graduated from school and are establishing themselves as young adults. One young woman shared that, living at KCV, she had been well-prepared for life in the outside world in every way. “She saw herself as someone from a good home, because she had been loved. I think she also felt that she had been mothered well to be a capable and dignified young woman,” Colin said. Eva noticed the house mothers and “how they all genuinely showed care for the children.”

There will be more overseas travel planned this year for the COCOA team. “It was great having the opportunity to get to see the great work GMP does firsthand,” Eva said.