



life-changing
partnerships



IN PARTNERSHIP

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Signs of New Life

The Australian visitors welcomed at Ashwood Memorial Hospital, Daund, India.

A few days ago, I returned from two weeks in India. Most of that time was spent with a group of Australians visiting GMP mission settings. Any visit to India is challenging. The contrasts between Australia and India are significant, with the numbers of people, traffic chaos, unexpected changes in airline schedules, different food and even a group of monkeys walking across the stage during the program at Baramati. We were welcomed with wonderful hospitality and were received with warmth and grace, and left encouraged by people's commitment to their faith, often in the face of hostility.

I have returned with hope in the future of our partnership with Churches of Christ in Western India. There are many signs of new life. The Baramati Church of Christ is growing with people being baptised, and a further six churches planted. We heard a similar story of the outreach of the Church of Christ at Daund, and stories of the

ways that the Chembur Church (Mumbai) is supporting other young churches. Those who visited the 'slum' churches in Mumbai also told stories of growth and active plans for the future.

One of the highlights was sharing in the centenary celebrations at the Baramati boys home. More than 700 people were present and we saw the renovated buildings (funded locally) and bunk beds (from GMP). At Ashwood, we dedicated the renovated doctor's bungalow that will provide accommodation for visitors and teams. At Gnyan Sampada Residential School the classrooms are almost complete, while in Mumbai the renovated Christian Centre is looking good, as is the Patricia Coventry building at Shrigonda.

These changes and the energy of the churches were encouraging to see and experience. Yes, there are challenges, and much that can still be developed, but there are signs of new life.

Change is also coming to GMP. Over the coming months there will be changes including a fantastic new website, new staff and new ways of communicating with churches and people. There will be new projects, including some through Indigenous Ministries Australia. Other changes will be less visible, though equally important, such as improved fundraising strategies, and an integrated database and finance system.

These new steps are symbolic of the continuing new life in GMP and a reflection of our commitment to doing all we can to connect churches and people in Australia with others, here and internationally. Through all of this we are planning new ways of keeping you connected to our partners and their ministries and activities, and so growing our sense of the ways God is at work with and through us all.

John Gilmore
Executive Officer

This Month in InPartnership

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Julie Dix is retiring after 8 years working with the GMP team in Adelaide. Julie has been an asset within admin and finance. God bless you Julie and congratulations!

Introducing Sam Curkpatrick

GMP will be welcoming Sam Curkpatrick as the Vic-Tas Partnership Coordinator in February 2017. Sam brings enthusiasm for the work of GMP and our partnership with churches, communities and Indigenous people

with skills in writing, speaking and networking. Sam is the person to talk to if you live in Victoria or Tasmania and would like to know more about GMP projects and partnerships. Welcome to the team, Sam!



Celebrating Christmas in Norseman, Western Australia



A big 'thank you' to Dalkeith Church of Christ friends who provided Christmas gift boxes for the kids in Norseman!



SPOTLIGHT

Taking Flight at First Light

GMP partners with Dave Powell and Kate Appleby who are working in association with IMA as school chaplains in the Kimberly communities of Millijiddee and Noonkanbah, Western Australia. Using a private aeroplane, Dave and Kate fly out from Derby at first light (around 4am) to these Indigenous communities to work with the staff and primary aged children during class time. There they offer versatile support including counsel for troubled kids, running sessions on emotional well-being, attending local sports days and interschool sports competitions. Dave and Kate also provide an after school care program involving sport, craft, stories and snacks. "Our job is rich and rewarding and the demands on us vary greatly!" They can also find themselves making prison visits, attending funerals, arranging prayer meetings after school hours and generally working with troubled kids as the need arises. "We often work in office admin, maintenance or by assisting the few staff wherever needs arise."

Chaplains are vital because there can be a lot of pressure on the school principal in a small community with pressures on families and resources, while trying to run an economically marginal and under-populated school. Combine this with the task of keeping families

enthused to send their kids along to school, which can be a struggle because not everyone values or understands the need for continuity in education, especially given the wider community tensions in these remote places.

When Dave and Kate aren't flying to and from Millijiddee and Noonkanbah, they spend time at home in Derby to refresh, restock food supplies, or get to the post office. "We continually meet people in day-to-day life in Derby and support school staff practically and relationally when they have need for 'civilisation' or supplies that aren't readily available 'out bush'. Every second month we read water meters on Fridays and Saturdays and Dave has offered to read them in Halls Creek and Fitzroy Crossing because the money is helpful for the main work we do in the schools." Dave and Kate also attend Daystar Family Church led by a PNG family and are part of a supportive home group. "We love it!"

Please pray for Dave Powell and Kate Appleby:

- For opportunities to encourage the Christians in the various communities, and hopefully rekindle Bible studies and prayer meetings.



Helping kids learn to cook and being part of cultural activities all adds interest and variety to our workload but it sometimes seems more like fun!

- That there will be more opportunities to share God's love.
- For safety in the skies and on the ground.
- For continued financial support for their work.
- That the Christians in the communities will understand the importance of a personal and daily relationship with Jesus.



From left: Lionel Ward, Jeff Hirth, Ray Baker, Butho, Phil Lavis

New Water Geyser for KCV, Zimbabwe

Members of the River Community Church (RCC), New Life Church of Christ Wodonga and Chiltern AOG visited Zimbabwe in 2016. The main purpose of the team visit was to install solar hot water geysers on each of the Khayelihle Children's Village (KCV) homes, including the

guest house and manager's house, so that all residents can wash in warm water and save on electricity as an added benefit. Ray Baker, a retired plumber, was invaluable in the installation process and trained locals, Ben and Butho, on how to set up the geysers. A team of six

local men assisted further with the work on the geysers after the team left KCV.

Graeme van Brummelen, NSW

Meet the Banda Family

International Church Partnerships (ICP) supports student Augustine Mahlangu through the Theological College of Zimbabwe. He has been sharing the love of Jesus with the Banda family. Here is their testimony:

"Augustine has been an encouragement to us. We used to walk close to 25km to and from church, so being introduced to a church close to us allows us to be part of a community of believers with whom we worship and share our problems. I have come to understand that the Bible is not meant to be tailor made to suit my needs but is a way of getting to know God. As a family we have been taught – and are applying – conflict resolution, and how to be able to forgive each other and gain



family cohesion through Scripture. At church, we have been given the opportunity to discover our gifts and talents and through exercising them, this has led us to grow. Mrs Banda has now memorised many verses and loves praying in the evenings.

As the man of the house I am now learning how to study the Bible. I hope to get one soon and be able to also lead the Bible studies in my home." (Kenneth Banda)



Blessing Our Land in 2017

"If you have come here to help me, you are wasting your time.

But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together." — Lilla Watson (Aboriginal Queensland Elder)

Indigenous Ministries Australia (IMA) is committed to live and work for the equality of all, to join with the redeeming and healing work of God's Spirit towards restoration for the First Peoples of our land. The following ten 'First Steps' are practical ways we can choose to journey towards healing and blessing for our land and for all Australians this year:

1. Learn

Find out about the history of the First Australians in your area. Understand the impact of dispossession and other injustices.

2. Acknowledge Indigenous Peoples

Find out who the local traditional owners are in your area and display a statement of support and/or an acknowledgment of Traditional Owners in your church or office. When you conduct events, include a Welcome to Country or an Acknowledgment of Country to recognise the unique place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as the first people of Australia.

3. Fly the Flag

The Aboriginal flag not only shows respect but also lets Indigenous people know that they are recognised and welcome.

4. Celebrate special days and events

- National Sorry Day: Friday May 26
- Reconciliation week: May 27- June 3
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday: July 2
- NAIDOC week: First week in July

5. Personally connect with Indigenous Ministry/community

Engage with a local event that advances the cause of Indigenous people, such as NAIDOC activities. Is there an Indigenous church or Christian group in your neighbourhood? If so, get in touch and ask if you can help in any way. Join an IMA Exposure Trip or organise a Songlines Walking Tour. You can find these opportunities on the IMA website.

6. Engage in volunteer activities under the direction of Indigenous people

"What can we do?" is a popular question. A good answer is, "Ask the locals." There is always some task that needs practical helpers to achieve the outcome of supporting people in practical ways. Everyone possesses a skill needed to support church ministry. Start with the needs and let the locals lead.

7. Invite Indigenous speakers or conduct a workshop.

Get your church to organise a special visit from an Indigenous Christian speaker. Talk to us at IMA for more information.

8. Financially invest in Indigenous training

Sponsor an Indigenous student in further theological and/or

community development training. The need for Christian leadership development is great. Some estimates suggest that there are less than 100 qualified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pastors and ministers in Australia at this time. That would equate to one minister for every 5,000 Indigenous people as compared to the wider population, where there is approximately one minister to every 500 people.

9. Support through Prayer

A universal need exists to support the people of God in ministry through prayer. For example, in Victoria you can join the Indigenous Prayer Network and receive regular news and prayer points about Indigenous ministry in this State.

10. Financial Support

According to the 2006 Census, Indigenous income is between 1/3 less and 2/3 less than non-Indigenous people. The Indigenous Church and ministries have little cash resources or financial assets. Your financial support is greatly appreciated and would demonstrate a real commitment to partnership and reconciliation. One effective way to support Indigenous communities is through purchasing an IMA gift from the GMP Great Gifts catalogue.

You can find more information on the IMA website www.imaaustralia.org.au

Nick Wight,
IMA Coordinator East



Changing the World without Leaving Home: Introduction

The boy on the front cover of the GMP 2016 Great Gifts catalogue is happy. He and his mates have had a good lunch, they have uniforms and they are enjoying their schooling. If you asked him why it was necessary for GMP to step in to make these things happen, he might say “because my grandfather doesn’t have enough money to send me to school” or “because the government doesn’t have much money” or “because of the fighting.” He would be right with all of these answers.

Children sit down for their lunch provided by the school, at Emmanuel School, South Sudan. Image featured on the 2016/17 GMP Great Gifts Catalogue

His grandfather does not have much money because he has lost his sons in the fighting, because he is too old to work hard and because he has many children to look after. The government does not have much money because there isn’t a lot of economic activity to tax in South Sudan and because much of the money it does get is spent on fighting. When you ask why there is fighting, the answers will be many and complex – tribal jealousy, corruption, control of resources, international manipulation. The causes of the flagging economy are also complex – fighting over control, underdeveloped industries, and unfair markets. In addition, if you ask why these things happen, part of the answer is that the rest of the world doesn’t send much money to help South Sudan get on its feet, and the rest of the world has an interest in the world’s newest country not doing too well economically. “We do not want competition for our own goods.”

So some of the causes behind the big hole that has to be plugged for

our smiling friend on the cover to get a good lunch, a uniform and great schooling, happen far away from him, in countries like Australia. While this sounds a bit hard to take in and perhaps a bit scary, the good news is it means we can do something about it without leaving home!

Advocacy

One way to change the world without leaving home is to take up our God-given role as advocates for the poor. Proverbs 31:8-9 encourages us to: Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy. (NIV)

On behalf of our smiling friend on the Great Gifts catalogue and his mates, Churches of Christ Overseas Aid (COCOA) has been advocating locally for the government and the World Food Programme in South Sudan to take greater responsibility for the school.

Lifestyle

Another way to change the world without leaving home is to change our lifestyle to consume less. If everyone consumed like an Australian, we would need 4.8 planet Earths to keep us alive. Amos calls God’s people, living in a time not unlike our own, to change the way they live because their consumption means others don’t have enough (Amos 4:1; 6:4-6). Jesus reminds us of another downfall of focusing on stuff – it can disconnect us from God (Luke 12:16-21).

Over this new series, Changing the World Without Leaving Home we will look at ways we can advocate from where we are, to make life-giving changes in the world. Changing the world without leaving home could change you too!

Colin Scott,
COCOA Director



Let the Celebrations Begin – the Chief has Arrived!

If the opening of your new school was scheduled for December 19, you probably would not turn up on January 2. In South Sudan, however, life revolves around people, not time. Therefore, when the Chief returned from Khartoum on January 2, the celebration planned for December 19 could begin.

The work, of course, began many years before. In 2011, a feeding and schooling program for 200 children orphaned by the South Sudanese war of independence began. One building – a feeding hall – was built, a hut that was already on the property was used as the storeroom and a kitchen made of local materials was erected. Internal conflict in South Sudan erupted and the number of children increased to 390. In 2015 a storeroom, kitchen and two blocks of classrooms were built and at the end of that year, Brian Smyth (photographer for the trip) and I attended an impromptu opening with much singing and dancing. Now Emmanuel School would be recognised by the World Food Programme (WFP) because it has a kitchen and a storeroom! Now it would be recognised by the Ministry of Education because it has classrooms instead of each class meeting under a tree! This would mean that WFP would take over the feeding and in 2018 the Ministry of Education will take over the payment of teachers' salaries.

However, there is still no peace in South Sudan. In many parts of the country, people have fled to refugee camps, or are merely surviving in the midst of conflict. Reports of genocide continue. Northern Bahr el Gazal State is relatively protected from the conflict and some people have fled to it. Nevertheless, I was not able to visit in 2016 and even in 2015, and Brian and I were not allowed to sleep in the village where the school is located.

Everyone made it to the opening celebration on 2 January, including the Chief, the Commissioner of the county, the Education Director, Anjelo Atak representing Churches of Christ, and of course Paulino Malou, our program director. My speech was read out. Everyone's words were well received. However, the government said it has no budget to take over the teachers' salaries and there is some hurdle about the feeding program, but it might still happen. Like the date of the opening celebration, everything is up in the air because there is no peace in South Sudan.

Please pray for peace in South Sudan. Pray for our partners, Christian Mercy International (CMI), for their safety and perseverance. CMI is the new organisation that Churches of Christ in South Sudan has set up to run Emmanuel School and the new ploughs project plus



another project that one of the UN agencies has funded. Our partners display light and stability in a fragile place. Pray for Paulino as he heads off for further study and for Anjelo as he takes over managing the projects. Pray that we will be able to visit them this year.

“We thank all the Australians, COCOA, and GMP for having supported us to build the school for orphans,” says Emmanuel School Director, Paulino Malou and Director of Education, John Aguot.

Colin Scott,
COCO A Director

La'o Teacher Training in Grengrebu, PNG

Martha Wade and Silas Gibe are currently in Grengrebu, Papua New Guinea, to teach the La'o Teacher Training Course. When the course was first organised in October 2016, none of the participants was able to attend. The course has started again on January 4 with two participants and increased to six participants over the past few weeks! There is a lot of flooding in

the area and when the water level is high, people travel from house-to-house in small canoes. Please keep praying for these six teachers in training and for their perseverance and commitment despite some of the challenges involved.

Diane Miller,
Pioneer Bible Translators, PNG



The Khiang Community, Bangladesh

It was one of the aims of BHCOC to establish a new congregation within the Khiang community during 2016. We have now reached the community, but the community does not have its own Bibles and songbooks. They have borrowed resources from the Bengali and the

Bawm communities. The next step is to make the Bible and songbooks available in their own language. This is encouraging for us! Please pray for this process.

Vana Bawm,
Bangladesh



Great Gifts Changing Lives

During Christmas just over 1478 gifts were purchased through the GMP Great Gifts catalogue to support overseas aid and development, international church development and Indigenous ministry in Australia. Over \$95,000 has been raised for partners and projects around the world and right here at home. Thank you for your support and generosity! Together we are changing lives!



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