

IN PARTNERSHIP

May 2021



Pasinkap Church,
PNG

Local Leaders and Languages in Tribal Papua New Guinea

The first missionaries GMP sponsored to Papua New Guinea (PNG) arrived in 1958. From that small beginning, the Melanesian Evangelical Churches of Christ (MECOC) has grown to more than 100 local churches. PNG is home to hundreds of ethnic, communal, tribal or clan 'wantok' groups and there are at least 850 indigenous languages spoken. All the MECOC churches in PNG are located in remote/tribal settings where illiteracy is high. Teachers/missionaries sent by GMP taught literacy in Tok Pisin, one of PNG's official languages and developed alphabets and dictionaries for local languages. Now, there are local MECOC leaders, pastors and evangelists working among the wantok groups, running Bible studies, discipleship training and crusades in local languages.

Soni Bakura, one of the MECOC Regional Coordinators, takes responsibility for supporting and encouraging the pastors and churches, training leaders, and preaching at meetings. Last year, Soni and his wife, Nansi, held meetings and workshops, Bible studies, and baptisms, in the Sogeram River Valley

area of Madang Province. One visit involved teaching in a two-week Bible school held in Angguna – a remote village in the Sogeram Valley. The language of this area is 'Apal'.

Martha Wade (Pioneer Bible Translators) is working on a long-term project to translate the New Testament into the local language and says of her partnership with Bible schools, "I can help the Apal students to read in their own language, while other teachers work with leaders from the Mum and Nend language groups." This particular Bible school, in Angguna, dedicated the Bible books of Mark, Jude and Titus in the Aci dialect of the Apal language. These translations were published in one booklet and the books were dedicated in September last year at Wanang.

Another Bible school is led by church leaders, also in Wanang, which is located in the Middle Ramu. There are also low levels of literacy and people speak in 'Maghu', which has few written records. Martha said the course is "helping church leaders to counsel people and worship more fully". Also, "from the participants in

this course, we will see which literate young leaders will want to start a serious study of the Bible, beginning with Genesis". Other two-week Bible schools are held throughout the year and more are planned. All input is by national church leaders.

Despite the challenges of living in remote areas, community leaders, church members and pastors often walk for several days when there is a regional renewal, crusade, or teaching program on offer. Yabru Jerry, Executive Director of MECOC, is passionate about revival in the tribal areas of PNG. Lately, Yabru was preaching as part of a crusade at Misingi, also located in the Middle Ramu – between Tsumba and Chungribu. He reports that 17 new converts were baptised.

With the growing impact of COVID-19 in PNG deep concerns are held for these communities. They have limited access to information and health programs. Informing people about the virus, the importance of mask wearing and social distancing is challenging.

Please continue to pray for PNG and the many remote communities at risk of COVID-19 and for the church leaders as they care for the churches and lead the outreach programs.

News & Events

Happy Mother's Day! May 9
Happy Mother's Day from GMP staff and partners.



COCOA Mid-Year Appeal Closes June 30



When you give to the COCOA Mid-Year Appeal in June, your gift can help empower some of the world's poorest communities to break the cycle of generational poverty. This year you can help children re-write their future with a gift of education. Give via reply paid envelope, online, over the phone or email GMP for more information info@gmp.org.au

Mission Unplugged: embody's Podcast

Sometimes caring about the world and taking action feels lonely. But there are other young people who share your passion and struggles – and these form the stories of Mission Unplugged. Mission Unplugged is a resource designed to inspire and encourage young people through the honest sharing of stories. We believe healthy mission happens through community, and this podcast can connect you or the young people you lead to other young, passionate, and faithful people's experiences of ministry and living out our faith. Listen now on Spotify or Anchor.

Do You Have Further Questions or Feedback for GMP?

We value and welcome your questions and feedback! Please contact us:

-  Website www.gmp.org.au/about-us/contact-us
-  Email info@gmp.org.au
-  FreeCall **1800 467 222**



Hosanna Ministries, Mumbai

Behind the Numbers

There have been many words spoken about COVID-19, and in 2020 there were many times where we would anxiously sit and wait for word on the latest statistics telling us how many Australians had contracted COVID-19 and how many had died. We now rejoice that our numbers are low here in Australia. And rightfully so.

We are aware that this is not the case globally. At GMP, we've been tracking the figures in India over the past month with alarm. Our concern is not restricted to India, but is also focused on Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Thailand and the Philippines, where cases are growing and so is the anxiety and complexities of their citizens. However, statistics never tell the whole story. Yes, they show trends; they display areas that need our immediate attention, and they show the results of not doing the right thing at the right time.

What statistics fail to do is tell the story of the person behind the number. Of the family that lost a mother. Of the community that lost a leader. Of the church that lost its most devoted prayer warrior. Of the vulnerable group who lost their most vocal advocate. We need to remember that behind every number is a story, a set of relationships and a hole that remains where the person once was.

When Jesus walked through crowds, they weren't just numbers to him. They were people. People with individual stories, with unique circumstances and needs. Even if they brushed against him briefly, touching the very edge of his cloak, he knew them and their circumstances. In one famous incident, he stops and calls the woman out who touched him and gives her the opportunity to tell her story of what he had done for her: *Then the woman, seeing that she could not go unnoticed, came trembling and fell at his feet... she told why she had touched him and how she had been instantly healed* (Lk 8:47).

Let us, too, take notice of the people in the crowds – they are so much more than statistics. We say at GMP 'that we know the locals, and the locals know us.' This knowing is not based on counting the numbers in a crowd – but knowing actual individuals, their needs, their strengths, and how we see them and can partner with them. While numbers help, they can never tell the story of the names, the relationships, and the stories behind them. When we pay attention to the an individual in the crowd, we can make them feel noticed.

Craig Brown,
Deputy EO



Partnering Together for Stronger Communities

In 2017, Churches of Christ Overseas Aid (COCOA) partners from around the world gathered for two weeks of learning and fellowship in Chiang Mai, Thailand. In 2021 it was time to do this again, but COVID restrictions meant we could not travel and meet.

It is crucial for us to update our understanding of good development practice and learn from one another. So, we wondered, could we achieve the same goals through an online workshop? The answer was a resounding 'yes'!

On 20 April, 13 partners (from Bangladesh, Thailand, Zimbabwe and South Sudan) met online with

the COCOA team for a short pilot workshop. It was wonderful to see everyone meeting and renewing friendships.

COCOA Director, Colin Scott, said "We would really love to visit all of you, but we haven't been able to for a year, and we are not sure when we will be able to in the future." He spoke about monitoring projects, reviews, and evaluations in a COVID world.

We spent some time thinking about key safeguarding issues. We identified Child Protection and Sexual Misconduct risks in our work, and our partners emphasised the need for everyone to work to a

known code of conduct.

Some partners dropped in and out because of bandwidth problems. We had delays in sound and other technical problems.

We learned what things work well and what things certainly don't. Our partners were patient and gracious – they're used to things not always going to plan – and they were keen to meet again.

We expect to run a series of online workshops in the second half of 2021.

Jan Bayliss,
COCOA Partner Education Officer

One Bucket Challenge

Emily completes the One Bucket Challenge

United Nations World Water Day fell on 22nd March, 2021. This annually observed day promotes the importance of Sustainable Development Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation.

At embody, we know from years of supporting COCOA safe water projects in Zimbabwe and Vanuatu, the positive flow on effects for communities when they have access to safe water. That's where I come in.

I'm Emily – the newest member of the embody team. My challenge for World Water Day was to live on one bucket of water for 24 hours (#OneBucketChallenge). This meant I only had 7.5 litres of water to drink,

shower, clean, wash clothes, and cook with. Over the course of the day, I documented my progress with videos on Instagram (@embodyau).

The most challenging part of the entire experience was the way I had to constantly be thinking about how much water I was using to ensure I rationed it appropriately. Waking up with the rain pouring for third or fourth day in a row, knowing I had to handwash some clothes, was not an enjoyable thought because I knew they would drip EVERYWHERE and certainly would not dry. Having a cold bucket shower at the end of the day was another experience I did not look forward to.

Aspects of the One Bucket Challenge



were not comfortable, but nor was it meant to be! The challenge simultaneously highlighted both how I am grateful for, and take for granted, my access to safe water.

If you'd like to see the result of the day, check out our Instagram @embodyau and start to think how you can get involved with safe water initiatives in the future (Safe Water September perhaps?)

Emily Wood,
embody Network Developer



Partners in South Sudan

Pray for Global Neighbours Impacted by COVID

While here in Australia we currently have COVID-19 well contained, many of our partner countries have seen an alarming spike in infections.

Our nearest neighbours in PNG are seeing their fragile health system overwhelmed, and there are lockdowns in Bangladesh and Fiji, while restrictions continue in the Philippines and Thailand. Christy Reddy shared a Fiji Health & Medical Services Department update on Facebook, which stated there have been COVID cases in

communities where GMP works – including Nadi, Lautoka and Nausori, which have all become official containment areas.

The most recent news about India is concerning. Maharashtra State is one of the worst affected areas, and cases in the megacities of Mumbai and Delhi are rising. Daniel and Glory Gaikwad (Hosanna Ministries, Mumbai) tested positive for COVID, as did some staff and family members at Ashwood Hospital, Daund. All have since experienced

a full recovery. Philemon Pawar says of the situation, “Thanks for your concern and love. The COVID epidemic is very bad...it is spreading fast...many are dying...hospitals are full with patients...”. Thailand, too, is now experiencing record numbers of cases.

Our partners and their nations need your prayers and support. You can download the GMP monthly Going Deeper prayer resource online at www.gmp.org.au/get-involved/resources/going-deeper

In Loving Memory of Pastor David Moses-Martin 21.03.1958 – 31.03.2021

I greet you on behalf of the Board and Staff of the Australian Churches of Christ Global Mission Partners to give thanks to God for the life of David Moses-Martin. We offer our sympathy and prayers of comfort for Margaret and David’s whole family and the Niyaparli people who also feel his loss. David loved the land of his birth that gave him his identity and deep stories. He knew the old people and listened to and loved the stories of his culture, food, medicine, and plants. He was deeply home in the lands of the Niyaparli people and in the language of his birth.

David was a remarkable man, and the story of his life is inspirational. He faced many setbacks, worked as a stockman, and came to faith guided and led by the late Len Wallam (his future father-in-law). His faith was the foundation of his

life and gave him strength and peace. He lived with a deep trust in Jesus Christ.

David and Margaret shared a deep and long-lasting bond, both as husband and wife and as partners in ministry. Margaret was David’s eyes and the trust they shared was deep and strong. All of us who saw them together knew this to be true.

The Aboriginal Fellowship at South Hedland was re-established with David and Margaret as key leaders in this. David sang and preached and supported many in their journey in faith with Jesus. His whole approach to life was a witness to Jesus’ love and strength.

We give thanks for his life and pray for comfort and strength to all those who mourn his passing.

These words, sung by David in the video of his life, sum it all up:

**God is good to me,
God is good to me,
He holds my hand
He helps me stand.
God is good to me.**



John Gilmore,
Executive Officer

Please Note: In many areas of Indigenous Australia, reproduction of photographs of deceased people is restricted during a period of mourning. The length of this time varies and is determined by the community.

If you would like to watch the video, Yirtiya Purtay (Many Roads) or receive regular IMA prayer updates, please contact IMA West Coordinator Colin Battersby colinb@gmp.org.au