

IN PARTNERSHIP

February 2019



Shanti with two of her children

From Heartbreak to Hope

Shanti's story starts in Sultanpur village in India's crowded capital, Delhi. She was the first of five children, born to a vulnerable Hindu family at a time when riots had broken out in the city. The family moved to Ambernath in Mumbai to escape the crisis—but it would be a long time until Shanti's situation improved.

As the eldest child, Shanti soon realised that she would share in the burden of caring for her younger siblings. She had the responsibility of helping her parents and had no choice but to work as a labourer so that her siblings could attend school.

Life in Ambernath brought its own challenges, and Shanti knew many women who had turned to tobacco and alcohol in their desperation. She slowly grew addicted to these things herself and, for many years to come, would depend on them in an effort to escape from reality.

At the age of 16, Shanti married her husband. She continued to turn to tobacco and alcohol while experiencing domestic violence from her husband and in-laws, but these things no longer provided the escape she needed. Unsure of what to do, she fled from home.

After some time, Shanti rejoined her husband and they moved away to the slums of Mumbai to pursue a life on their own. She started following a Hindu goddess, who she spent hours praying to and fasting for, but she continued to experience addiction and emptiness.

At this time, Shanti also started to build a relationship with her new neighbour. The neighbour would visit her each day, telling her stories about the God of the Bible, but it was foreign to Shanti. She didn't want to listen.

When she became pregnant and continued to struggle with addiction, Shanti's neighbour became concerned for her. She encouraged her to attend a prayer meeting and, to her neighbour's surprise, Shanti agreed. She was interested to see how her neighbour would pray.

Throughout the meeting, Shanti carefully listened and observed as the others prayed, sang and spoke with hope about their God. As the meeting continued, she felt as if their God was speaking to her. She decided to attend church regularly, but was afraid of sitting through a service without tobacco or alcohol.

As she came to know and love their God as her own, He helped her to become completely free from addiction. A great sense of peace washed over Shanti, and she says that she has never experienced addiction again.

Shanti now has three children, and with God to guide her, her outlook on life has significantly improved. Hosanna Ministries came to know Shanti and her story when the ministry started working with children living in the slums of the suburban Mumbai region. Shanti's children are enrolled in the Hosanna Ministries' Emmanuel Education Centre, where children from the slums are given free tuition and snacks.

While Shanti has a story of hope to share, this is not the case for many others. An estimated 6.5 million people live in the slums of Mumbai and, many of them – like Shanti's family – have not experienced the hope of Jesus.

Through partnering with projects such as Hosanna Ministries, people like Shanti and her children are given the opportunity to go to school and receive vocational training to prepare them for in-demand jobs. Please pray that more people would experience the hope that Shanti now has in Jesus.

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News & Events

Good Friday Walk for Hope April 19.



Order of Australia Medal Congratulations!

Global Mission Partners congratulates two people who have made key contributions to the work of Churches of Christ overseas and Indigenous mission. IMA Council Member, Dawn Gilchrist - Medal (OAM) of the Order of Australia for service to community health, and Reverend Jeffrey Richard May, Medal (OAM) for service to Churches of Christ in Australia and in the area of Chaplaincy. Read more on the [news](#) section of our website.

INTERWOVEN: Surrender19

The Surrender19 Conference is a gathering of Christians from across Australia to share ideas, stories and hope on justice, discipleship and mission. It is for people from all walks of life – with workshops for first-timers, amazing keynote speakers and performing artists, fantastic activities for all ages, and heaps more! Register now for the **March 21-24 conference in Melbourne.** www.surrender.org.au/conference



The ongoing ministry of Global Mission Partners is built on the heritage, strength and purposefulness of our long-term identity. Behind these concepts is a great deal of human endeavour, and beyond this human part is our deep response to the call of Jesus Christ to engage in mission. This call is to make the message of Jesus' love, forgiveness and resurrection power real in the lives and experience of people. It is a call that we share with local churches and other bodies (in and beyond Churches of Christ).

This gospel imperative keeps GMP from becoming an institution with a Christian identity drawn from the past, and leads us into continually being renewed so that we are creative, responsive and open to the future.

In this new year we will be inviting input and reflection in response to the question "What is God's call to GMP for this next season?" This is not a question to be answered in a one-off workshop or in a scheduled meeting – it needs to be explored prayerfully and with discernment.

Our heritage comes from people responding to God's call. These responses led to new initiatives in mission, new partnerships and opportunities. It is simpler and easier to imagine God asking nothing new of us. Our God who "makes all things new" leads us on. To travel this way means letting go, so that our future may be shaped by what we discern and not by our human desire to preserve everything.

GMP has a strong history of almost 130 years of people and churches that are committed to mission to the whole world. GMP is part of Churches of Christ at work in the world, and so has a special place in the mission identity and story of our churches. What will it mean in the future to care for this identity and heritage and continue to become what God needs us to be?

About 15 years ago GMP was given a new purpose statement – linking people, churches and resources across nations. It is a clear and strong guiding statement. As we look forward, we will ensure that GMP has a continuing sense of purposefulness. Our mission space includes international settings, Indigenous Australians and local churches. In this space we want to be as creatively effective as possible. Join us in this journey by being a prayer partner, encourager or by making suggestions. Our staff members are keen to be in dialogue with you.

John Gilmore,
Executive Officer



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on Facebook**

This year you can follow along with many more stories, photos and news updates via our GMP Facebook page. Search for Global Mission Partners and 'like' our page! facebook.com/gmpaustralia



Chelkou Community discussion about the new mill project

SPOTLIGHT

Empowering a Resource Rich Community

While the vast majority of South Sudan’s population know the difficulty of living with low income, the country is rich in natural resources and has an abundance of fertile land. Chelkou Church of Christ in South Sudan is planted amongst some of the most established mahogany forests in the country. With your support, the Chelkou community is being trained to use this resource to improve their income and the education of future generations.

With minimal funding for education in South Sudan, only one in four schools in the country has a functioning building. The Chelkou community worked hard to save for and build the brick work for a secondary school building, but lacked the funds to complete the roof, windows and doors. This left the county with no secondary school and no local education for its young people. Children who couldn’t afford to travel (mostly

girls) missed out on high school completely.

During a visit from Global Mission Partners (GMP) in 2017, Chelkou community leaders requested financial support to finish the school. Instead of providing funds to see one positive outcome, GMP worked together with the community to reach a longer-term solution that would improve income and therefore the community’s ability to complete the school and support the community further into the future.

During discussions about how to improve income within the community, the local timber assets were raised. A small timber mill would not only enable them to fell timber, but to mill it, increasing value and productivity significantly.

Cutting down trees, of course, requires planting new ones to be a sustainable long-term solution.

Churches of Christ Overseas Aid (COCOA) is supporting a forestry-training program alongside the provision of the mill. Participants will plant 15 trees for every one that they cut down. They know there are lots of things that can go wrong for a sapling so they are making sure that they provide a future for coming generations. Participants in this program are also pledging a percentage of their increased income to community projects. In this way the school will be completed and further community projects can be supported into the future.

While this solution will take longer than simply sending money for a roof, your support of COCOA and this program means that the community can not only complete the school, but will have the resources and vision to use their assets to improve the overall outlook of the community for generations to come.

Pray for Zimbabwe

Please pray for peace as most of our people have been caught in the recent disturbances. Pray for churches to open for services, as most people will not be able to attend. Many households were caught unaware and have no food supplies. Where shops are open, mielie meel and bread are not available. Where you can get bread, it’s selling for five dollars. Bus fares have shot up to seven dollars where

it used to cost a dollar. So those going to work cannot afford the new prices. Petrol in Zimbabwe is now the most expensive in the world. Petrol is scarce in Bulawayo, and where you can get it, it costs \$3.80 – up from \$1.24. So you can see it’s pretty much a nightmare for the ordinary worker. We need your prayers. Internet shutdowns are used to stop people communicating with each other and the outside world.

Please hold the churches, and the nation of Zimbabwe in your prayers. Pray for an end to the economic and social instability, and for the wellbeing of the people caught in the midst of this crisis. Thank you GMP for offering support, care and encouragement.

*BJ Mpofu,
Zimbabwe*





Helping Can Be Tricky: Oversimplification

Goats changing lives in South Sudan

Malla Awa was two-years-old when a food crisis swept through his country of Niger and six others in the region. Sporadic rain was to blame, coupled with soaring grain prices and chronic poverty. At age two, there were a lot of things that Malla couldn't do much about. His mother, Mariama, didn't have a lot of options either. There was no hospital in their town, but NGO intervention made a makeshift 'ambulance' available, which carried him 160km to a special hospital where his life was saved.

In an article reporting on Malla's story and that particular food crisis (Why does Africa always have food crises?) the author, Matt Wade, reflects that, "Nearly three decades ago Band Aid and Live Aid aimed to bring an end to African hunger" (Matt Wade, This Child Deserves a Future, Sydney Morning Herald, Weekend Edition, May 26-27, 2012). The article is from 2012 but it could have been written last year.

Why didn't Live Aid bring an end to African hunger? We can understand sporadic rain being responsible for a food crisis, but why are the grain prices soaring and where did the chronic poverty come from in the first place? Why isn't there a government hospital in Malla's home town?

The answers run as wide as the political issues in Niger and the region, to colonialism and the modern grain market, indeed to the global market and the choices

of Western consumers, companies and governments – to name a few. It turns out there are some things you can do about sporadic rain. In the end that may be the simplest cause to tackle.

The point is that Malla's situation, like every situation of poverty, does not have a simple solution. There are multiple and interrelated causes. Band Aid and Live Aid were fantastic initiatives, which changed attitudes and saved lives, but they weren't a complete solution.

So what does this mean?

1. We need to recognise that any intervention we make (even Band Aid) will tackle part of the problem of poverty but it won't be a complete solution. At COCOA, we will do our best with your next donation, but we will need another one after it, and again after that as well.
2. Be wary of organisations that say they have the complete solution. They are overstating their case. If there was one complete earthly solution we would have solved poverty by now.
3. Recognise that people in poverty are part of multiple interrelated systems. We are unlikely to change all of the causes that make them poor. COCOA, along with many NGOs, is analysing the systems that communities

are part of to try to find the interventions that might make the biggest change. Goats for families at Emmanuel School in South Sudan, for example, have the potential to get children through high school, not just through this year of primary school. System analysis makes our interventions potentially more effective but they are still not a complete solution.

4. Recognise that the world will not be complete until God's Kingdom has completely come. Poverty is a symptom of wrong relationships – the wrong relationships that Christ came to put right. The poor therefore wait for the reconciliation of all things with an anticipation that the rest of us do not know.

Colin Scott,
COCOA Director



Breeding goats assists Emmanuel School families to earn a small income to pay school fees and expenses

IN SOUTH SUDAN

www.greatgifts.org.au