



life-changing  
partnerships



**IN PARTNERSHIP**

[www.gmp.org.au](http://www.gmp.org.au) | June 2017



Bruce Edwards walking side by side mentoring leaders and pastors in Nakasi, Fiji

## Walking Side by Side

From time to time I get asked the question: “How many missionaries do you have?” My off the cuff response is, “I don’t know.” Most of the time what is being implied is that only Australian expat workers are missionaries.

Sometimes I ask, “What do you mean?” before saying, “I don’t know.” This question creates some uncertainty, and so I ask – “Ah, you mean how many Australian missionaries do we have?” My answer to that is very few, because GMP chooses to invest in local people and what they believe God is calling them to do.

The legacy of the committed and sacrificial Australian missionaries that served in Vanuatu, Australia, Papua New Guinea, India and other places continues to be strong. Decades later these people made decisions to “hand over the fields to the locals” – a process that was described as ‘Indigenisation’. In this process, the role of the missionary continued and focused on training

and supporting emerging local leaders.

This priority continues to guide GMP.

GMP will always invest in local people. We want to do all we can to facilitate what our partners believe God is calling them to do. This determines how we use our time and where we apply resources. We are, as a result, mutually accountable to each other.

Whether we are talking about activities in Australia or internationally, the core purpose of GMP is to serve those we support. Our ministry is to be in solidarity with our partners and to do all we can to enable their work. In practical ways then, we offer our gifts and commitments to our partners for their work.

A good metaphor for this way of working is ‘companioning’. We seek to companion local people in mission. We walk side by side, we have a sense of common direction

and, rather than give advice, we listen. Now, we don’t always get this right. GMP has a lot of power in our partnerships. We represent the resources that our partners rely on. If we are companions, then both of us bring what we have and who we are to a common journey. We companion in a mutual learning journey where both partners can grow.

Our partners have a cultural competence that we as non-locals do not. We depend on them to do what they are called to do in their own culture. Many times, they guide us and at times correct us, so that we grow in our awareness and understanding of culture.

When we say, ‘we know the locals and we work with the locals’, we are serious and are affirming a deeply held and long-term core value of our mutual work.

*John Gilmore,*  
Executive Officer

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**Our Languages Matter**

**2-9 JULY 2017**

## Together, We Can Bring Change through Livelihood Initiatives

Livelihood initiatives provide a source of income so that people have the opportunity to pay for health care and education, rather than relying on organisations like GMP. These initiatives give people independence, dignity, and the power to make their own decisions. Supporting projects through the Mid Year Appeal has immediate impact and creates ongoing change. Your generosity offers people a chance to earn their own living and support their families. Please give before June 30, so that more lives can be changed. Let's bring change together! [www.gmp.org.au/mid-year-appeal-17](http://www.gmp.org.au/mid-year-appeal-17)



### YOUR GIFT CAN CHANGE SOMEONE'S LIFE!



**\$50**

Can provide a family with 10 chicks, and two bags of feed in Thailand.



**\$100**

Can provide a vulnerable woman with a sewing machine, in Vietnam.



**\$160**

Can provide an ox for a farmer in South Sudan, kick starting their farm.



Mrs Chihombodo

SPOTLIGHT

## Restoration, Repentance and Jesus Revealed

Here in Zimbabwe God is moving, and we have three stories to share with you! These stories include Mai Sipanera, a woman whose health has been restored, Mrs. Chihombodo who found forgiveness at a funeral and Bamblela, a young man who is sharing the love of Jesus in Fort Rixon.

### Health Restored

During the Sunday service of an evangelism convention at Rupemba Church of Christ, Pastor Moyo launched a fundraising appeal for Mai Sipanera. She had become very sick, and her sickness made her blind. The only way she could access care at the hospital was for someone to pay for her. When Pastor Moyo launched the fundraising appeal the church raised \$290. This is a lot of money in Zimbabwe. Mai Sipanera was immediately taken to the hospital, the doctors were able to help and Mai recovered her sight. Her health was restored. We are thankful to God for this testimony of His provision through His church and Mai's community. We met Mai because we planted a church in her village at Vungwe. We are thankful to God for opening this door and that 60 people have given their lives to Jesus. This is a joy!



From left – Shacky Moyo, Famalos Zhou, Sampson Mudimba and Bamblela Jiyane

### Forgiveness at a Funeral

Evangelist Shacky conducted a funeral for a family who had lost their mother. Mrs. Chihombodo was challenged by Shacky's message from John 14, and invited Christ into her life. Mrs. Chihombodo had turned to a witch doctor for help. This opened her eyes to the spiritual realm, and Mrs. Chihombodo began seeing her ancestor's spirits. She then began practising witchcraft herself. After hearing Shaky's message, Mrs. Chihombodo repented and found forgiveness. Shaky then invited her to burn the traditional instruments of her ancestors. They made a bonfire and burnt everything she brought from her house. Today, Mrs. Chihombodo has invited two people to become Christians. God is bringing His kingdom in many ways.

### Revealing Jesus in Fort Rixon

Bamblela was a young boy who lived at Khayelihle Children's Village (KCV). He graduated from high school and attended Bible College. He then returned to KCV to be a youth pastor. Now, Bamblela has moved to Fort Rixon to help pastor three churches and to open two more preaching points in the surrounding areas. Senior evangelists Famalos and Mudimba will assist Bamblela as he begins this new responsibility. These evangelists are very passionate in the service of God's work. This is a good testimony!

*BJ Mpofo,*  
Zimbabwe



Some of the team who volunteered for the 2016 Juraki Indigenous Surf Titles

## Juraki Indigenous Surf Titles

Nick Wight from Indigenous Ministries Australia (IMA) invited us to join him for a short exposure trip to Fingal Head, NSW in 2016 to participate as volunteers in the Juraki Indigenous Surf Titles. The event was organised and run by the local Bunjalung Christian community, who have been living and ministering on their traditional lands for many years. The surf titles are a significant outreach and exposure event in the wider Indigenous community, and attract participants and families nationwide. As volunteers, we were able to build relationships with people in that community and work under the direction of the local leaders. It was an incredible experience. We were able to learn

about the history of their land whilst also getting a unique experience of their culture and faith. The trip was well organised and we were certainly well looked after – with both the IMA and Juraki teams being more than hospitable.

Nick challenged us to be fully present over the weekend, and his wisdom and insight into the Indigenous community helped us to engage at a deeper level. I work in the mission team at One Community Church and I highly endorse this trip. It is a wonderful opportunity, not only for church teams, but also for any individuals who would like to open their hearts, expand their minds and learn something new

about Indigenous culture and even some of our country's history. One warning, though – you will most definitely come home with some of the most beautiful new friendships, and a deeper love of the ocean! Our church community is committed to taking another team next year, and I will be the first to sign up. Thank you to Nick Wight and IMA for all of their efforts in planning our trip.

If you would like to register your interest in joining this great ministry and cultural exposure experience for August 2017, email Nick Wight at [nick@gmp.org.au](mailto:nick@gmp.org.au)

*Carly Cassidy,*  
VIC

## Connecting Names to Faces

It was a rewarding experience to spend two weeks in Thailand in March, as part of GMP's Partnering Together for Stronger Communities workshop. It was both inspiring and humbling to meet, and hear the stories of, GMP partners from around the world. People whose names (like mine) you read about in In Partnership took on new significance as we met face to face.

The joys and challenges about training midwives in war torn South Sudan were shared (please give to GMP's emergency appeal for South Sudan – the growing famine crisis is of deep concern to our friends there), or providing access to clean

water in Zimbabwe, training church planters in Indonesia, and pastors in Papua New Guinea (PNG). Concern for all people was expressed in word and action through providing sustainable livelihoods such as chicken farming projects in Thailand, employment opportunities for women and sanitation solutions for the disabled in Vietnam – along with other expressions of God's love and generosity.

One of my highlights was meeting and spending time with Yabru Jerry from PNG. Yabru spent three years in Fiji, working primarily with the churches at Lautoka and Vitogo, and I have heard quite a bit about him



over the years. It was good to have a face and personality to attach to all those stories, and to then bring Yabru's greetings back to David Reddy and other old friends in Fiji.

*Bruce Edwards,*  
Fiji



A lady from Bright Solutions is empowered to create beautiful handcrafts

## Bright Solutions Pushing Forward

Part of this year's focus in Bright Solutions is to move things forward, from skill levels to deeper involvement, from raising the bar for individuals to connecting Bright Solutions to a wider local audience. Due to an experienced worker leaving suddenly without completing her handover, we were left with some gaps in the production process. A few days ago, I asked one woman to look at the written steps for an item and have a go at it. She tackled it with enthusiasm, was so excited, and rewarded when she saw the results! She commented, "In other companies, managers don't allow workers to try or discover by

themselves." What a joy to build up this woman with a sense of achievement and pride in what she can do!

Another woman, with limited cognitive capacity, was challenged to stop asking her supervisor to organise things for her, but to take some initiative in collecting resources herself. With some guidance, she managed to complete the tasks independently. This not only encouraged her, but also challenged her supervisor who had defaulted to doing things for her. There has also been a recent attitude change in one young manager. After finishing a small

run of books she confessed she had tried hard to check and do them well, and her results were pleasing. When she didn't need to repair any pieces, her relief, satisfaction and joy positively influenced the rest of her day as well as her colleagues! Our aim is to continually empower these individual women with a higher sense of self-worth. For Bright Solutions, our encouragement of newly formed patterns of thinking is bearing fruit.

*Fiona Briers,*  
Vietnam

## Meet Elder Zinguman

I was born in 1952 and brought up in a Christian family. I became a Christian in 1964 when Pastor Dirling taught the plan of salvation and I was baptised in 1967. I grew as a Christian and wanted to share the gospel among my neighboring community of Mru. I served the Mru for seven years from 1978-1984, and we developed a songbook and translated part of the New Testament. This experience prepared me to be an evangelist and teacher for Duhkhah village from 2012. With my family, we have

committed our lives to serve Christ in the Mru community. My wife is the Chairperson of the Bandarban Hills Churches of Christ Women's Christian Auxiliary, and is a devoted and talented woman. We have four daughters and one son. Our eldest daughter is married, and our other children live at home with us. Prayer is the best tool to gain strength for my ministries. Some challenges we face include limited songbooks and Bibles, no church building, transportation shortages and a lack of medical assistance. Partnership



Elder Zinguman with his family

with GMP has brought support to my ministries in terms of prayers and finances. It is a great encouragement for my ministries.

*Elder Zinguman,*  
Bangladesh



## Changing the World Without Leaving Home: Fair Trade

In thinking about the rights of the poor and our interconnected world with its limited resources, we are left with the idea that each of us is to own some responsibility for the situation of the poor.

Not far from our partners in South Sudan, many children in the Democratic Republic of Congo labour hard harvesting cocoa (not COCOA!) when they should be at school. One helpful response would be to set up a school for them. But it would be counter-productive if, at the same time, we consumed chocolate, made from that same cocoa – on one hand we would be trying to get them back to school, and on the other we would be keeping them out! To really change the situation, we would have to make it worthwhile for their parents to do the harvesting work, so that the kids only needed to chip in after school.

The concept of Fair Trade aims to give producers in developing countries their fair share of the profits from the goods they produce. Too often when consumers demand lower prices, producers in developing countries, who are generally the least powerful in the production chain, get their slice of the pie pared down to a sliver, pushing them to do things like getting children to harvest crops

in school hours. The FAIRTRADE label is a guarantee that this hasn't happened, and that the producers have received their fair share of the profits. Fair Trade is an effective way for consumers to challenge poverty as part of their lifestyle. And, of course, it is an age-old biblical principle (Proverbs 11:1).

This idea has become increasingly popular, as consumers demand more products that they can be confident are treating producers fairly. Now there are Fair Trade brands of coffee, tea and chocolate in the major supermarket chains. The chocolate still makes you chubby and can bring pimples to the surface, but you won't have ripped off someone across the sea in the process!

Fair Trade is an alternative approach to conventional trade and is based on a partnership between producers and consumers. When farmers sell on Fair Trade terms, it provides them with a better deal and improved terms of trade. This allows them the opportunity to improve their lives and plan for their future. Fair Trade offers consumers a powerful way to reduce poverty through their everyday shopping. When a product carries the FAIRTRADE mark it means the producers and traders have met Fair Trade Standards.

The Fair Trade Standards are designed to address the imbalance of power in trading relationships, unstable markets and the injustices of conventional trade. In mountains in the north of Vietnam, for example, the tea growers of the region of Yen Bai began exporting wild tea to European markets through the Nam Khat Cooperative in 2005. Their aim is to increase their income to help them stay on their land and in their villages, maintaining their traditional lifestyles. A small percentage of their tea is now being sold under Fair Trade terms and the community has started to receive a modest Premium. Mr Ban Thua Chieu, President of the tea cooperative in the Yen Bai region, explains that, "While we have a limited production capacity and have only been selling small quantities of tea under Fair Trade terms, the Premium money we have received is still low. But this small amount is enabling us to carry out a 'big' project." This 'big' project is a concrete school structure for over 40 children in the village.

For more of this and other Fair Trade stories visit the FAIRTRADE website [www.fairtrade.net/producers/meet-the-producers.html](http://www.fairtrade.net/producers/meet-the-producers.html)

Colin Scott,  
COCOA Director



## The Bungalow

Growing up in India formed my view of Christian engagement with the world. I was a missionary kid, Daund was my home, and Ashwood Memorial Hospital was where my father worked. My subsequent experience of people and cultures has been tinted by this first experience. My father was Dr Thornley Thomas, and he was the last Australian doctor at Ashwood. He consulted, operated, delivered babies, conducted remote rural village trips, and for a time was the only doctor at Ashwood, so was on call 24 hours a day. My mother Edda, of course, also played a pivotal part as wife, mother and home school teacher; she filled in the broader brush strokes of our life. Daund, being an important railway junction, was a central point for meetings and people movement in our mission, so my mother was also involved in office work, compound management, women's work and hospitality. Medical work within a community is a fundamental expression of Christian presence amid humanity, and Ashwood Hospital continues to do

this today with Dr Philemon Pawar as the medical superintendent.

Leaving India, this work remained a lifelong passion for my father. We returned regularly as a family for months at a time when Dad had accrued the next issue of long service leave, and he returned independently for many brief visits for consultation and meetings on behalf of the OMB (Overseas Mission Board, as GMP was known then). I have returned to Daund and India many times (eight and counting) each time consolidating my earliest impressions. My most recent visit was in January this year; I saw the newly renovated bungalow—my former home. It has a renewed purpose and it promises to be an ideal place for hospitality, learning and life changing experiences.

We also spent six weeks exploring India as a family in 2006. This was the first time we visited Daund and its surrounds with our three teenagers. They remarked that so much seemed familiar as they

recognised that they had grown up with the family's Indian narrative and being surrounded by Indian patterns, shapes and images. I have since gladly watched my husband, Stephen, and our three children, Surekha, Samuel and Isaac, embrace India and draw on their impressions in their continuing support for GMP over the years. My son, Samuel, is now working for GMP as the Vic-Tas Partnership Coordinator.

I treasure my earliest and continuing relationship with Daund and India, and my aspiration is for others to encounter something of my experience of Daund and India in forming faith and commitment to mission. So, if you ever have the opportunity to visit Daund and maybe even stay in 'the bungalow', seize it, for I know that it will leave an indelible impression within you, as well as inform you about Ashwood Memorial Hospital, Daund, India and humanity.

*Virginia Curkpatrick,*  
VIC



Virginia as a little girl outside 'the bungalow'



The Bungalow today after the completion of new renovations



Greg Little, Margaret Little, John Edwards, Melba Wallam, Len Wallam, Judy Dann, Neville Councillor, Basil Snook, Lois Little and George Turvey

## Bunbury Aboriginal Fellowship Easter Convention

This year was an opportunity for the Bunbury Aboriginal Christian Fellowship to host their first Easter convention in their church building, focusing on the local Noongar community. We had a wonderful time of fellowship with many of the Noongar people attending the services and sharing meals together over the weekend. The theme this year was all about Christ who lives within us (Galatians 2:20). The convention began on Friday morning, with daily and evening services throughout the weekend, a Saturday night gospel concert and

a special dawn service celebrating the resurrection of Jesus Christ at the local back beach. It was a chilly morning but our hearts were warm with the fact that Jesus had risen! Visiting folk from South Hedland in the Pilbara who traveled a great distance to fellowship with us also encouraged us.

Our pastor, Greg Little, alongside two other local pastors including devotional speaker Ron Cook and Dennis Jetta spoke throughout the weekend. We were blessed with a varied attendance of 200 guests

spread out across the weekend. The highlights for the Bunbury fellowship were to see former members of our church and community coming along to reconnect with our church and its people. It was wonderful to see the young people with their families coming along, learning about Jesus and sharing in song at our Saturday night concert. This was a time for our people to come and hear God's word in a safe, family environment.

*Charmaine Councillor,*  
WA

## How Will You Celebrate NAIDOC Week?

NAIDOC stands for National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee. Its origins can be traced to the emergence of Aboriginal groups in the 1920s that sought to increase awareness in the wider community of the status and treatment of Indigenous Australians. NAIDOC Week is held in the first full week of July. It is a time to celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, culture and achievements, and is an opportunity to recognise the contributions that Indigenous Australians make to our country and our society. We encourage all

Australians to participate in the celebrations and activities that take place across the nation during NAIDOC Week. This might involve listening to some Indigenous musicians (like Stanley Guwurra, a Yolngu singer from Arnhem Land in the NT <https://gawurra.com>) or rent a movie about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history. You could go on a local adventure to visit Indigenous sites of significance in your local area and research the traditional Indigenous owners of the land. If you live in Melbourne, you could contact me to book an IMA walking tour! You can find more



Greg Little with Stanley Guwurra at SURRENDER Conference in Melbourne

ideas on the NAIDOC website [www.naidoc.org.au](http://www.naidoc.org.au) and you can also support the ongoing work of GMP's Indigenous partnerships by donating here <http://bit.ly/SupportIMA>

Nick Wight,  
IMA Coordinator East



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