

IN PARTNERSHIP

February 2020



What does it mean to be the light to people around you? What does it look like to walk with Jesus in your daily life?

These are some questions that we may have considered in our journey as Christians. For us in Australia, we may have some idea of what that looks like. But in other countries around the world, does it look the same way?

BJ Mpofu is a leader of the Churches of Christ in Zimbabwe. You may have heard him speak when he was out in Australia last September and October. While he was with us, we sat down and talked with him about what it means to be the light to others in Zimbabwe.

BJ works closely with their team of evangelists, and he considers sharing the Gospel to be the central focus of our work as Christians. So, for him, it is important to make sure people have the opportunity to hear what God has to say.

“Any other work must build off from the main thing, and the main thing is the message of Christ to the people,” BJ explains. “Growing the church, and ensuring that our people grow in an environment where they know Jesus Christ too. To live a relational life with Christ is my desire, my passion.”

Through his passionate work, BJ has seen the difference it makes in a community when they have the opportunity to see the light of God through people around them!

“When people grow up with many Christians in an area, they become the *mila*, the light, of that community. All life is better when Christ is a part of what is happening in that area.”

He pauses to think for a moment.

“You know, for me, the most important thing for anybody who is Christian, is to understand that your faith is nothing unless you get to a situation where you share it with others. That sharing might be through prayer, might mean sharing the few resources you have, and always thinking about what else you can do to bring a difference in the life of those you encounter.”

“Sometimes you live with people and never bother to know who they are and whether they are in the church or not. But to always think that you know, if we can pray for them, work with them, find a way of sharing the living Christ with them, that would be great.”

There truly is a power in sharing the light of Christ with people. Not just at church, but in our daily walk of life. Through prayer, through charity

and volunteering, through being with others.

That’s why this year, we’re taking a different focus with Walk For Hope. Instead of asking you to walk to church, we are challenging you to consider how you can be the light to others around you! What can you do in your daily walk to show the light of Christ through your actions?

Even if it’s difficult, it’s important for us as Christians to really consider what our actions say and mean.

“The challenge for today’s Christian is that we cannot just sit, and go to church, read our own Bibles, and keep it to ourselves,” BJ says.

“This faith is as alive as we are prepared to share. And “Walk For Hope” is one of the ways you can do that. Because you do touch people when you do an activity for Christ. That’s the best I can advise fellow Christians to do in our world today.”

We are preparing to send resources out to churches who want to participate in Walk For Hope in March. If your church is interested, email us at info@gmp.org.au or contact your State Partnership Coordinator. State contact details can be found on our [website](#).

News & Events



Walk For Hope 2020 March 16 – April 12

This Easter, while you reflect on your own spiritual journey with God, Be the Light to others who need Him. With your help, many people around the world will have the opportunity to start a relationship with God and have their own Walk For Hope.

If your church is interested in receiving resources for Walk For Hope, email us at info@gmp.org.au or contact your State Partnership Coordinator. State contact details can be found on our [website](#).



SURRENDER20 Melbourne 19 - 22 March

SURRENDER20 is a conference to inspire Christians to respond to the radical call of Jesus to the margins. It invites you to see God's vision of hope and wellbeing, and to motivate you to work for the healing of others in your local and global communities. Be challenged to take action for the poor and marginalised, as we explore what it looks like to work towards Shalom: the flourishing of all creation.

www.surrender.org.au/conference



Growing in Sensitivity and Understanding

None of us can live or fully experience or understand the life situation of another person. We may have insights, make intuitive guesses or identify with an experience that they have had; however, it is not living their life.

Part of recognising that we are part of the body of Christ is to grow in sensitivity to other people through listening and appreciating their individual experience. Part of the challenge of doing this is to suspend our ideas, thoughts and opinions so that they experience us as empathetic, compassionate and gracious.

When we do this and become closer to another, both of us are changed by the experience. One experiences grace through being understood, and the other is humbled through being trusted. Doing this is not always easy. It may be that we are responsible for the particular experience having happened, or we may disagree with the interpretation of the particular event, and feel the need to correct or disagree.

The struggle of the Indigenous people in Australia is a case in point.

How do we interpret the journey of Australia since colonisation in light of its impact on the Australian Aboriginal peoples? We can avoid thinking about this and not listen, or we can stop and pause to listen. Such listening is painful; it does cause discomfort and we may want to avoid it. When we listen, though, something deep changes in us and in the persons listened to. We grow closer, and a bond of respect is established. We are connected as part of one family under God.

During this year IMA will be collating some resources for local churches to aid in the ways we understand local Indigenous stories in regard to the location of the particular church. Such a process is much more than a sign on a wall (though that is a good step) as it takes us into the experience and story of the local people. One result of doing this will be the affirmation that we know them and they know us. In such relationships healing is possible and hope grows that the future for Australia will be healthier than the past.

John Gilmore,
Executive Officer



Lautoka Church congregation at their new venue

A New Home for Lautoka Church

We sometimes talk about the fact that we can have church anywhere. If we were honest, we usually say that when we have a convenient place to meet and have ‘church’.

That was not the case for the church in Lautoka, Fiji.

Pastor David Reddy and his wife, Christy, used to have the church meet in their small home. Because of its growth, the church was forced to find a new location. For a relatively economical price, the church was able to hire space at the somewhat rundown Cathay Hotel in Lautoka. While conveniently located, the space had some significant downsides – it was an open space outside with a roof, but little protection from the heat, humidity and rain of tropical Lautoka. Another significant factor was that the church could only hire the space from 1-3pm on Sunday afternoons, and had no freedom to move outside of that time allotment – or to have prayer meetings, Bible study groups or run church administration out of the space. As the church sought to grow, it would often lose people to one of the many churches already in existence in Lautoka.

Quite suddenly, the ownership of the Cathay Hotel changed and all the churches hiring the space were told that they no longer could meet – effective immediately. This, of course, posed a problem.

If church can be anywhere...what happens when it appears you have nowhere?

David and Christy both believed that no situation was beyond God’s reach. They had been praying for a more suitable place to meet and, in conjunction with ICP Director Craig Brown, had been exploring other possibilities. One day David was walking along Saweni Beach, his thoughts immersed in the situation his church was facing, and he bumped into a man he knew.

Who happened to be a property owner.

Who happened to be looking for new tenants.

Whose property had a house with a covered terrace that could fit 60-80 people, as well as space for the Reddy family in the home.

Because he knew David, he agreed to a long-term tenancy and to reduce the rent.

To David, it felt like God had answered the prayers of the church in abundance. “In this place at Saweni Beach, we will be able to have our Sunday service and other services (Bible studies, ladies meeting, youth fellowship) throughout the week. This location is a very good place for outreach as well. It is surrounded by a Fijian village and an Indo-Fijian community.” Added to that is the fact that there are no council restrictions on having a worship service in a residential home in this area.

Having been moved out of the unsuitable Cathay Hotel, the Lautoka church is now primed to experience a new season where it can grow, minister to the local community, and run services and ministries that the community needs.

Craig Brown,
Director of ICP

National Redress Scheme

The Commonwealth Minister for Social Services on 17 December 2019 formally declared Churches of Christ Global Mission Partners as a participating institution in the National Redress Scheme. GMP is now officially participating in the Scheme and will be responding to applications for redress within the operation of the National

Redress Scheme.

The Board of Global Mission Partner welcomes being declared as a participating institution. The Board is committed to being part of a process of healing and hope for those who have experienced institutional child sexual abuse.

Questions regarding, and applications for, redress are to be made via the National Redress Scheme itself
www.nationalredress.gov.au

The Close of the GMP Card Ministry

At the close of business on 30 June 2020 the GMP Card Ministry will conclude after 54 years of raising funds for the work of Churches of Christ Global Mission Partners. You can't talk about the card ministry without the stamp ministry. The first cards and stamps were sold at the 1966 Federal Conference to raise much needed funds for the then Gospel Outreach Fund and, in particular, mission in India. The stamp ministry was run for 50 years, 44 years by David Lewis and followed by Ros Beale. It concluded in 2018 due to a lack of buyers and a decline in the use and collection of stamps. You can read the rest of this story on the GMP Blog: <https://www.gmp.org.au/news/2020-news>

Jenny Baker, SA



Jenny Baker at the GMP Card Ministry Stall

Bushfire Recovery Appeal

The impact of the recent bushfires has been overwhelming. We have seen large areas burned, more than 2,000 homes and buildings destroyed, countless kilometers of fencing lost and tragically people have lost their lives.

GMP, through its sub-entity GMP Extend, has launched a Bushfire Recovery Appeal. The giving to date is generous, and this week we were advised that the Disciples of Christ

in the US through their Board of Global Ministry would be making a donation in excess of \$US10,000. We do appreciate this generous statement of solidarity.

Support will be provided to assist in the recovery of people and communities. More than 27 family contacts and members of the Lenswood Church of Christ were affected by the Cudlee Creek fire. Some lost everything; others lost

orchards, sheds and equipment. Churches of Christ is assisting with vouchers so that people can have some immediate assistance. We are currently identifying other ways of providing help.

You can give to this appeal through the website www.extend.org.au