

IN PARTNERSHIP

December 2020



Jackson, Chaplain at Londua Bombua School

Londua Bombua School in Vanuatu isn't just a quality technical education and business management school — they also offer a holistic Christian education to their students.

Jackson, as chaplain, works alongside the school pastor to provide pastoral care, teach lessons, and help students manage their spiritual life. He also oversees chapel services.

“We do devotions, Sunday services, counselling the students, praying with the sick,” Jackson says. “I also find out about every student and the situations they are facing — that’s a lot of work.”

The Vanuatu Ministry of Education provides the curriculum for classes and Jackson, “makes sure what is taught is supported by the Bible.” The Ministry of Education encourages schools across Vanuatu to have a chaplain.

“I think that is important to maintain the motto of the country — In God We Stand,” Jackson says.

In schools that don't have a chaplain, Jackson has observed some

differences in student behaviour. “Because there is a chaplain in a school, this builds up respect, honesty and Christian behaviour in students,” he says. “I see that my role helps the children.”

Jackson wants to see that Christian education is taught well and that all the students receive a foundation of Christian belief.

The Londua Bombua School only has a few permanent buildings. This is one of the challenges that Jackson faces. Many children board at the school, meaning much of the space has to serve multiple purposes, for the children's living and educational needs.

After the Manaro Voui volcano erupted the second time in 2018, Londua Technical College moved from Ambae to Santo, and merged with the Bombua School. This meant the number of students using the facilities grew quickly, increasing their need to rely on temporary structures.

“When there is rain, we can't have classes,” Jackson explains. “And on a Sunday when we meet for chapel,

we remove the dining room table and chairs for worship. It would be my prayer to have a separate chapel.”

The buildings in the coastal school are vulnerable to damage from cyclones, like Tropical Cyclone Pam in 2015 and, more recently, Cyclone Harold. This means maintenance is an ongoing challenge. Despite this struggle, Jackson continues to encourage, guide and care for students after the traumatic events of the volcano and Cyclone Harold.

GMP supports the presence of a chaplain at Londua Bombua School.

“I understand that you (GMP) are paying for the chaplain and I want to say ‘Thank You’ for that. Thank you for your heart helping the school.”

CHAPLAIN

\$25

Your Great Gift of a Chaplain will give students vital counselling, care and spiritual support. A Chaplain like Jackson provides meaningful support to students at Londua Bombua School in Vanuatu.



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News & Events



Great Gifts Card Christmas Deadlines

There is still time to get your Great Gifts cards delivered in time for Christmas! If you need your card posted, the last day to order is **December 10**. But don't worry — Print Your Own cards will still be available until **December 23**.



COCOA Christmas Offering

Together, we are helping communities around the world build resilience! To give your offering this Christmas or find resources for your church, go to gmp.org.au/StrongerTogether

GMP Office Hours over Christmas and New Year

The GMP Offices will be closed from noon on Thursday, December 24. Normal office hours will recommence on Monday, January 4 2021.



January 26 Church Service Resource Kit

On January 26, we want to invite all followers of Christ to open our hearts to a greater understanding, a deeper compassion and an acknowledgment of what this day represents for Indigenous Australians. This Church Service Resource Kit has been developed especially for Churches of Christ congregations to use during a service on or near January 26.



SPOTLIGHT

Dr Hery Susanto, Academic Dean, and students at CCTSI

Finding New Faith in Indonesia

In his room, Ahmad is praying, in the way that he learned from his Muslim family. He is in a crisis of faith. For the last decade, he has felt his life slip from his control. He has become caught in his bad habits — gambling, drinking, and embezzling money from his job. And now, he can't feel a connection to God. Frustrated, he cries out:

“Lord, if you really exist, show yourself!”

This is the moment, Ahmad says, that God changed the direction of his life.

A few nights later, Ahmad started to notice some strange things. —>



We Have Seen His Glory

“We have seen his glory!” exclaims John in the opening of his Gospel (1:14), “the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.” It is a heartfelt description of the coming of Jesus to dwell with us. This description of the incarnation has richer meaning at Christmas.

there is God's deep trust in Mary and Joseph and the people who surround them.

This is our work – to do all we can to be the presence of Jesus in the midst of people's vulnerability – supporting, resourcing and guiding. Creating space for growth so they can be strong and not dependent on others.

There could be no greater vulnerability than being parents on the road and far from home, in a time of Roman occupation and with – at best – rudimentary accommodation on offer. There was no special treatment for this young family.

In our Christmas celebrations, let's focus on the gift of Jesus and the opportunity we have to be with others, as God is with us.

This is God with us, in vulnerability and with a journey of growth and maturity to come. There is no dramatic time travel delivering an adult from heaven. Instead,

Christmas Greetings to you from the Board and Staff of GMP.

John Gilmore,
Executive Officer



Opening of a new classroom at CCTSI

Continued ↓

“I slept with music in my earphones, with a playlist of songs made before my sleep,” Ahmad says. “When I woke up, I heard a lyric, ‘Hallelujah, Hallelujah’. I’m sure at that time, there is no song with such a lyric in my playlist. Well, maybe I accidentally touched my screen. So, I didn’t give any attention to it.”

“I coincidentally met my friend, that [I had] never met directly, only by ‘phone or WhatsApp chat. His name is Christian [and I] talk with him twice in two consecutive days.”

“Later that same week, inside me I began to make a conclusion from what happened. There was a great willingness in me to buy a cross necklace. So, I just bought it. During my confusion, I knew that I needed to make contact with someone who could help me. I took a picture of [the necklace] and sent it to Christian with the text: “I am confused about this. I want to learn and know more.”

Ahmad met with Christian, and explained what had happened to him, and how he felt that it was a sign that God was answering his prayers. Christian invited Ahmad to go with him to church next Sunday, and Ahmad accepted.

“The very first time in church, I was so nervous,” Ahmad says. “Like someone who is invited to visit, but doesn’t recognise who the host is.”

He did his best to follow along, singing the worship songs and listening to the preacher. That week, he bought his first Bible, and started to read it.

“The more I read the Bible, the more I can find the truth, and I am sure

this is the answer I’m looking for. The second time in church, I pray to Jesus and I cried. There was something inside me that told me, ‘Release, release everything, don’t keep it, release it’.”

He found that every time he prayed, he was hearing the same message from Jesus, “Release everything”.

So, Ahmad left his job, and joined an Alpha Course with Christian. Over the next three months, he learned more about Christianity, and grew deeper in his newfound faith.

“When it came to the session to learn and know about the Holy Spirit, I asked my boarding friend, Henry, to also join us. At that time, I felt an extraordinary feeling that I’d never felt before. I felt the Holy Spirit inside me, I cried for Jesus, the redeemer of my sins. I cried for a great thanks to God, I cried for I really needed Jesus, I cried as I want Him to keep holding my hand, I cried for I’ve been found, I cried because I am a nothing without Him. Jesus is all I really want.”

Henry and Ahmad went deep into conversation that night. Despite living together for two years, they had never felt so close. They found they had a shared desire to become a servant of God. They decided that they would both aim to get scholarships from the Christian Church Theological School of Indonesia (CCTSI).

And this is where you come in! Your Great Gift of Bible College helps people like Ahmad and Henry take the next step of their faith journey! Your gift this Christmas can help

CCTSI train students like Ahmad in evangelism and vocational mission.

“In June, my friend Henry got an offer from his church to join a theological school in Jakarta. For me, I trust one thing: that God has a plan for me. My longing for Him will bring me to Him, and because of His love that will put me where I should be.”

When you give a Great Gift, you are giving to faithful people like Ahmad who want to develop their own God-given gifts.

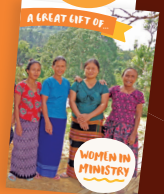
“I just want to preach this happy news to everyone — first to my family, when God says I’m ready for it.”

“Jesus is everything. He gives us a faith that can save us.”

WOMEN IN MINISTRY

\$40

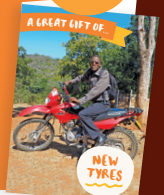
Support emerging women leaders with further training to increase their capacity in pastoral ministry and mission within local communities across ALL ICP PARTNERS



NEW TYRES

\$100

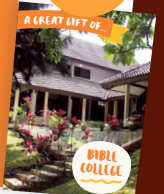
Help share the gospel by providing new tyres to a motorbike evangelist who rides rough dirt roads to reach rural communities IN ZIMBABWE



BIBLE COLLEGE

\$1200

Maintenance and improvement of educational facilities enables students to access training and further develop their skills as church planters IN INDONESIA





Small business selling ground nuts in Aweil, South Sudan

Small Businesses are Struggling in South Sudan

The city of Aweil in South Sudan has been in partial lockdown since March. And while lockdown is an important health and safety practice during the pandemic, it brings new challenges to the surface.

Aweil, in the north of South Sudan, borders Sudan. This means many Internally Displaced People (IDPs) end up in Aweil and the surrounding districts. Though Sudan and South Sudan are now separate countries, they are still closely connected in many ways. IDPs, because they have been moved around, don't have assets like land and cattle. So, many run small businesses, selling essentials like tea, groundnuts, or charcoal. Lockdown meant that their businesses stopped. With no assets to fall back on, this has left them and their families without enough money to buy food and other necessities.

Akook, a charcoal seller who could no longer operate his business, said that his life had become a struggle. On top of dealing with the lockdown restrictions, Akook is also facing environmental restrictions to the

charcoal industry. In an effort to stop environmental destruction, the government wants fewer trees to be cut for charcoal.

But thanks to the support of people like you, Akook is able to stay resilient in the face of these struggles. GMP partner, Christian Mercy International (CMI), has been able to provide necessities including food and soap to 130 business owners — including Akook!

"I was excited to receive support," Akook says.

With the lockdown anticipated to lift soon, CMI are also developing plans to help these vulnerable people to build up resilience. With the help of supporters like you, CMI will be able to set aside money to give business owners like Akook a small start-up grant, to get their trade moving again!

In addition to this, CMI is exploring ways to provide training and education to those in the charcoal industry. With the new environmental restrictions, it will help them to

move into other, more sustainable industries, like fishing!

These things are not possible without you! When you give your offering this Christmas, you provide people like Akook with necessities like food and soap. You are helping them become resilient and independent, able to develop their own businesses — even through the pandemic.

Please visit www.gmp.org.au/strongertogether to find out more, and learn how you can take part in the COCOA Christmas Offering.

