



life-changing
partnerships

IN PARTNERSHIP



www.gmp.org.au | March 2017



Some of the Pastors and their wives from District 11 Churches of Christ in Thailand, along with a team from Campbelltown Church of Christ (2014). Thailand will host the Partnering for Stronger Communities Conference in March.

Hope and Lasting Change

This month something will happen for the first time. Over 30 people will gather in Chiang Mai, Thailand, and be part of a 10-day program called 'Partnering Together for Stronger Communities'. Every one of GMP's international partners will be represented. The same basic program has been offered in Australia in 2015 and 2016.

It will be an exciting event! Imagine how it will be when people from 11 different national cultures and many more subcultures, with diverse life experiences, gather to explore ways of working together for the sake of others. There are still visa and logistical challenges to overcome, with final travel plans to be arranged.

This program is made possible because of funding from Australian Aid and GMP. It comes about because of GMP's commitment to invest in the strength of our partners.

All GMP projects are based on an understanding of people in need

and a desire to initiate hope and lasting change by addressing real and felt needs.

The media does not allow us to avoid the gap between the realities of life for so many, and the vision that God has for all people. It is tempting to say it is all too hard and the needs too great, so let's give up. Such attitudes are challenged by the images in Scripture reminding us that what seems small can have a Kingdom impact. This impact is not drawn from our excellent planning but flows from the ways that God takes what we do and offer, and grows the impact.

The program includes input on COCOA's project planning, design, implementation and evaluation processes. Time will be given so that participants can share experiences and ideas with each other. Surrounding all of this will be reflection on Scripture, prayer, and an exploration of theological approaches to development.

We will reflect on the desire of God to see a world of justice, joy, healing and abundance for humanity. Luke 10:1-11 and Philippians 1:1-11 will shape our time. Both affirm a deep partnership in mission, and an intention to trust and bless others through what we do.

The expectation that God is at work is the source of our hope as we plan this training program. As we look to the future we see possibilities and potential. We believe that what we see and hope will come about, as we trust God to do more than we can imagine through our work. We seek your prayers and encouragement in this journey of change.

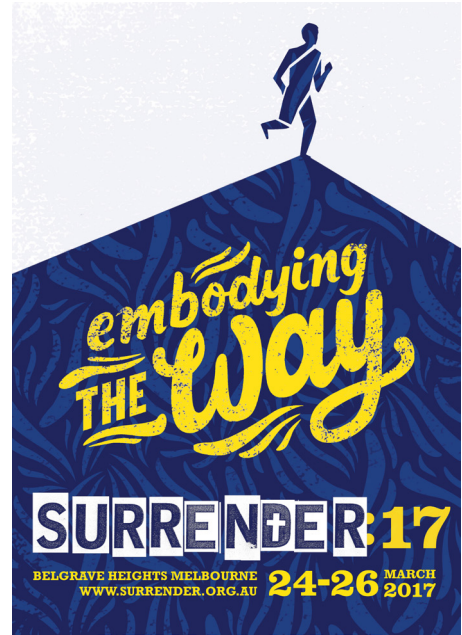
John Gilmore,
Executive Officer

This Month in InPartnership

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Surrender is on in Melbourne on 24-26 March.
www.surrender.org.au. More on page 8.



Introducing: Kyra Foster

Kyra Foster is providing GMP communications support in social media. Since October 2016, Kyra has been managing and implementing GMP Facebook campaigns, posts and strategies. Kyra also coordinates social media for her local church along with their mission projects and her personal

business. She is an asset for GMP and the Communications Team! Make sure you like the GMP Facebook page so you can follow along with our latest news, photos and videos from around the world!

www.facebook.com/GMPAustralia



Meet the Team at Bunbury

Here is some of the team from Bunbury Aboriginal Christian Fellowship, Western Australia. Pastor Ron Cook (left back) helps with preaching, the next couple along in the back are George and Violet Turvey, who are church Elders. In the front left are Warren and his wife and daughter. Warren is a Bible teacher who runs the studies in church. Please continue to pray for the team at Bunbury.

Remy Sese,
IMA Coordinator West





Philip Neyava (wearing the yellow shirt) and his friend Cain, who has been working on some building projects after the cyclone.

SPOTLIGHT

I Went Empty and Came Back Full

Philip Neyava, President of Tanna Island Churches of Christ Council Vanuatu (CCCV), is a young man in his thirties with a heart for God and his community. He is passionate about leading and growing the local churches on Tanna. Philip has been the Island President for about six years. During this time, he had never attended any of the CCCV meetings due to the expense of travel and the difficulty in getting there. GMP invested in the future of this young leader, providing him with the opportunity to attend the annual CCCV conference in 2016.



Damage and temporary classrooms after Cyclone Pam at Isla Mission School, Tanna. Isla has since been repaired and had classrooms rebuilt.

Over 100 members of the Vanuatu Church Councils attended the conference. Philip said, "It is not just about the conference that we attended but about new experiences, new relationships, strengthening, encouraging, and knowing we are united in the widely separated islands of Vanuatu." During the conference, Philip was included in the induction prayer with other Island Council Presidents and graduate pastors from the Mobile Bible College. "That was the most important part in this conference as a young leader. I once thought I am not that important and recognised. Now I know differently." Presentations included the Christian Women's Fellowship (CWF) training, Bible study, youth ministry and AGM resolutions. Discussions of these

empowered participants to take new ideas back to their churches. "I have experienced new ways, and heard of how successful some Island Councils are. We shared our failures, encouraged each other and prayed together."

During the conference, Philip received the opportunity to share about his experiences of living through Cyclone Pam in March 2015. His story of survival is like many on Tanna, only made possible by the grace of God. "Everyone asked about Tanna and what happened, during and after the cyclone. We took this opportunity to highlight the development in the churches and the chance to thank the Island Councils, churches, and individuals for their assistance during the cyclone." In the weeks and months after the cyclone,

Philip worked with the council, community and GMP to rebuild churches, schools, kindergartens and first aid posts. "Attending the conference and having the opportunity to share with others is very satisfying." This experience gave Philip new leadership skills, new relationships to build a future on, and encouragement to continue doing good works for Jesus. "I have learnt many new things in leadership and for the first time am becoming familiar with many Christian families around Vanuatu. That is too great for me. I went empty and came back full."

Please remember to pray for Philip, his wife Senny, and their two small children.

Vicki Marney,
GMP Partnership Coordinator, QLD



We stayed at Gnyan Sampada Residential School. The children seemed happy, competent, and exceptionally well behaved the whole time we were there! The school itself has day pupils as well as residential children. Here, a girl is creating sand art.

Mustard Seed Faith

In January, a team of 13 people from around Australia went on a trip to attend the World Convention Global Gathering held in Damoh, and to visit GMP's partners in India. Janet Woodlock, Federal Coordinator for Churches of Christ in Australia, shared some of her experiences:

“Our first stop was Daund, where we visited the Shrigonda Girls’ Home and Ashwood Memorial Hospital. The first Australian missionaries in Daund set up a tent under a tree over 100 years ago to begin ministry in the area. What a sacrifice it must have been in that era! Like the mustard seed of faith in the Bible, it has grown into a huge tree of fruitful ministry. There we were, at Shrigonda, treated to a welcoming ceremony, a church service, a concert performed by the girls, then a shared meal. Team members, Chris and Lindsay Parker from South Australia, were delighted to meet their sponsor child. In talking with the school director, I was struck by the realisation that girls’ education is critical for releasing families from poverty, and saving vulnerable children from early marriage, forced prostitution, and other forms of exploitation.

The next morning involved a tour of the Ashwood Memorial Hospital and we participated in the official opening of the Doctors’ and Guest House of Ashwood. The hospital treats patients regardless of their income status; patients pay what they can afford (which in some cases is little or nothing). We visited a hospital-sponsored support group for HIV patients, where we heard testimony after testimony about how the clinic had given them hope and happiness, helped them find Jesus, and calmed fears about HIV in the wider community. It was incredibly moving. That evening involved a service at the thriving church nearby.

A unique experience on the trip was the centenary celebration of the Baramati Boys’ Home, which involved many formal speeches, and testimonies from former residents. At one point, the star of the show was a large monkey wandering about on the stage! In the evening, there was celebratory dancing by the young boys (who had sat in an unbelievably quiet fashion through the many hours of speeches!). Other attendees, including the Australian guests, joined in the dancing too!

One strong take-away impression from my trip was the words of a Hindu Member of Parliament to the Christian Global Gathering: ‘You have something no one else does. You have a calling. You go to places that no one else goes to.’ Reflecting on 100 years of Churches of Christ ministry in India, I wonder what the fruit of our local church and of own personal ministry might be 100 years from now. Whom might we be called to reach, and where might we be called to go? We have much to learn in Australia from our Indian friends and their passion for the gospel, their ministries of mercy, their church planting, and their courage in the face of persecution.”

Janet Woodlock,
Federal Coordinator for Churches of Christ in Australia



Two women leading the worship in Lautoka

Bonding through Prayer in Fiji

I love the Indian food and culture of Fiji, and it is always a rich and rewarding experience to visit and see what God is accomplishing. I visited Pastor David and Christy Reddy in Lautoka for the fifth time in 2016. I was invited to preach on two Sundays and lead Bible studies during the week. Pastor David translated my message in Hindi for the locals. He felt the Lord really touched hearts and we prayed for people after the service. Most of the

people are very poor, but this is no barrier to the Lord.

Last year David invited a young mum in the congregation to give her heart to the Lord. It was good to see during my recent visit that she is still going on with the Lord. We visited her and her family during the week for a time of sharing and prayer, finishing with a time of silence. It really brought tears to my eyes to hear the wonderful words

of encouragement she felt the Lord had said to her in the time of reflection. That became our pattern of visitation during the week, with many more uplifting times. I was given the opportunity to preach again on the last Sunday, and I was amazed at how much bonding and connection had taken place during the week!

Peter Berry,
NSW

Pastor Ramdir's Story

Pastor Ramdir is in charge of the Bandarban Hills Churches of Christ (BHCOC) Literature Ministry. Literature Ministries is one of the tools used for spreading the gospel through the local dialects. This ministry has resulted in a number of people becoming obedient to the gospel and receiving water baptism. The Literature Ministry team has prepared the book of Romans for Sunday School studies in 2017.

Ramdir was born on 21 May 1979 and raised in a Christian family. At

the age of three, he lost his father and so lived with his mother and elder sister. He personally believed the gospel and was baptised on 4 December 1993. Since childhood, he has loved writing and storytelling. He has composed songs in the Bawm language since 1993. He used to write various sermons on topical issues from the books he collected. On 12 February 2009, he joined BHCOC and was assigned to the Literature Ministry. He is now married with four sons. They are devoted as a family to this ministry.



Pastor Ramdir

Vana Bawm,
Bangladesh



Changing the World without Leaving Home: Campaigning

There are lots of ways to change the world for the better for those who are poor. One obvious way is to campaign for a fairer deal for the poor. Campaigning can involve being part of a march or other meeting, but more often it means adding your voice to that of others that care. This could be through an everyday action like sending an email or signing a petition online. These actions demonstrate to those in power that there are people who want a fairer world. There are lots of ways to join together to have your voice for justice heard.

Micah Australia

Micah Australia is a coalition of churches and Christian organisations raising a powerful voice for justice and a world free from poverty. GMP is a member of Micah Australia. Micah is constantly researching the issues of justice and poverty from an Australian Christian viewpoint, and making accessible ways for you and me – and our churches – to be involved in changing things for the better. Here are some practical ways to take action:

1. Contact Your Politician. Email your local MP to encourage them to speak up and act towards ending poverty. You can find more information in the 'Take Action' section of the Micah website where you will find MP's addresses and a suggested email.
2. Up To Us*. Have your say in Australia's foreign policy. Once in every person's lifetime, the Australian Government reviews

its foreign policy and asks Australians for input. This is happening now. It's up to us to have our say. The Micah website has a 60 second survey to help you make a submission based on their research. You will find this under 'Take Action – Australian Aid'. Even if you don't have any unique ideas of your own, you can add your voice to the weight of Christ-centred ideas developed by people who have done their homework.

3. Tax and Transparency. Developing countries lose billions of dollars each year due to corporate tax dodging, bribery, corruption and illicit financial flows. Add your name to a petition on the Micah website to help ensure justice prevails in global tax, transparency and finances.
4. Climate change threatens the existence of some of our Pacific neighbours. Rising sea levels displace communities and affect whole nations. Collect signatures for a petition in your area.
5. Micah Pledge. Commit yourself to pray, speak and act for a world where God's love and justice overflow for all people. Join the movement and find out more on the Micah website.
6. Voices for Justice. Join others in learning more about the issues and challenging politicians to act with justice for the poor. Each year the Voices for Justice Conference in Canberra provides all the training and

companionship you need to get started. Put 9-11 September 2017 in your diary now!

7. Vote. This is an oldie but a goodie. Whenever you vote you have a chance to influence the way Australia acts towards the global poor. Next election, look at what the political candidates in your electorate are saying about issues that matter to God, like poverty and justice – and then vote accordingly.

Now, you could do four of these actions in less time than it took me to write this article. It's that simple! Campaigning relies on numbers so if you have an opinion on these issues, formed by your faith, then make sure your voice is heard! Don't let people in power assume they know what you think. Tell them! And help change the world for the poor whom God loves as dearly as you.

Colin Scott,
COCOA Director

*The Campaign for Australian Aid is a broad group of organisations campaigning to extend the effectiveness of Australian Aid across the world. There are many Christian organisations involved, and the UpToUs foreign policy initiative is a joint campaign with Micah. The Campaign for Australian Aid is a valuable resource if you are trying to involve not-yet followers of Jesus in advocacy, and if you want to see what some celebrities have to say on the issues.

See www.micahaustralia.org



Happy KCV kids with their gift of knitted dolls

Lasting Impressions

Lyn Bray and I travelled as part of a Kiwi Link group to Zimbabwe in September 2016. The main focus for Lyn and myself was to spend time at Khayelihle Children's Village (KCV) and get to know not only the children I sponsor but to better understand the workings and needs of the village. Staying at the KCV guesthouse we often had children waiting on the verandah to interact, play or just hang out with us. They occupy their leisure time in inventive ways – a skipping rope made from old cabling, or kicking a soccer ball made from a plastic bag filled with dirt and then bound with more plastic until it resembled a ball. When we produced the football, netball and soccer balls we had brought over they were ecstatic until the many three-cornered jacks created slow punctures, and then there was a constant plea to pump the balls up.

We attended the church services at KCV and although they were conducted in Ndebele, we were able to join in the singing with the aid of

their songbooks. On both Sundays they had preachers who were passionate and animated in their sermon presentation, and so we were able to 'get the gist' of what they were saying. We were also able to present a blanket that members of Brougham Place Uniting Church had created along with hand knitted dolls for the pre-school children. We enjoyed a three-day visit to Hwange Game Park and Victoria Falls with the group and saw many animals including elephants, hippos, buffalo, antelope, zebra, giraffe and cheetah. Our last week included four days at Zvishavane (east of Bulawayo) where we visited the Great Zimbabwe ruins, participated in a mid-week rural church service (1¾ hours on concrete pews), and witnessed the commissioning of a bore hole and hand pump in a rural area provided by Showers of Blessings which is overseen by Boniface Mpfu. It was amazing to watch the reaction of the villagers as the first water came out of the pump – plenty of singing, dancing and praising God! One woman told

me the well would mean a walk of only one kilometre instead of five kilometres to get water. These wells also enable the villagers to establish vegetable gardens, providing fresh veggies for themselves as well as selling any surplus.

Our experience of the mid-week rural church service was both inspiring and joyful. The congregation is made up of people who have little but they worship their Lord with passion and love. Some of the people had travelled kilometres on foot to celebrate and worship with us and the women in particular were dressed in their 'Sunday best'. The choir of approximately 20 women and men was fantastic to hear. After church, we shared a meal together. This trip has left a lasting impression and made us determined to do more to assist not only KCV but also other projects through GMP.

Geoff McIntyre,
Marion Church of Christ, SA

Upcoming Events:

SURRENDER 2017: Embodying the Way

GMP and embody will be attending the Surrender Conference in Melbourne on 24-26 March. SURRENDER is a gathering of Christians from across Australia to share ideas, stories and hope on justice, discipleship and mission. SURRENDER is for people from all walks of life – with workshops for first-timers, amazing speakers and performing artists, and fantastic programs for kids and youth plus heaps more! This is a family friendly event. Make sure you register for the weekend or get your day pass and we will see you there!

www.surrender.org.au



Conversations in Mission: Exploring India

Recently returned from World Convention and visiting our partners in India, Val Zerna (GMP Partnership Coordinator SA/NT) warmly invites you to join an afternoon of conversation on mission in India.

We will also look ahead to some of the upcoming events in global mission for 2017. Church Reps, Ministers and all who are interested are most welcome.

Sunday 26 March 2017, 2:30 – 4:00pm
Hampstead Gardens Church of Christ
28 Gambia Ave, Hampstead Gardens, SA
Coffee & Cake provided



For more info contact Val Zerna:
val@gmp.org.au
0412 201 133

Sons of Korah Concert

Join the Churches of Christ Vic/Tas community for a special concert with Australian contemporary Psalmists Sons of Korah on May 4. Sons of Korah breathe new life into the ancient words of the Psalms, combining them with a multi-ethnic musical sound to bring the joy, pain, and authentic wrestling faith of the Psalms to a modern audience. This is a great night out for small groups, youth groups, and leadership teams to be inspired and encouraged.

Thursday May 4, 7pm.
Grace Church of Christ, 21 Koomba Rd, Wantirna, VIC
\$10 pre-purchased tickets, or \$15 at the door.



This event is part of CCVT's Animate Summit. Find out more and book tickets at churchesofchrist.org.au/summit.



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