

IN PARTNERSHIP

April 2023



Blessing Women in the Community



Nirmala leads the women's ministry at Vuci Road church in Nausori, Fiji. Every Wednesday the women meet to chat, read from God's word and support one another. Sometimes women come from distant villages to join the group, and both Fijian and Indo-Fijian women take part. Nirmala is blessed by the stories of the ladies coming to know Christ and helping them in their discipleship journey and walk with Jesus.

There was one moment particularly, where Nirmala and her neighbour were discussing how to encourage more women to attend the group. So, her neighbour just started inviting women to come. "Women who didn't know the Lord," said Nirmala. "In the beginning some of the ladies were not interested. When Sunday comes, they say, "I will come," but when the time comes on Wednesday when the women's ministry gathers together, some women, they don't come."

Despite this challenge, the invitation from Nirmala's neighbour continued, and 10 to 15 women started to regularly attend. When the women were asked to give their testimonies, they said, "We were not willing to come here... When we came here, our heart was blessed... the Lord has brought us here". Nirmala and her neighbour were encouraged.

"It is good for us that the Lord is doing miraculous things. Good things in the women's ministry," Nirmala said. "They have the Lord's love in their hearts. When they come here, they are happy."

The women's ministry has continued to share in the blessings of Jesus, with Nirmala's children encouraging the women to memorise scripture. The Vuci Road church members also enjoy the partnerships with other churches in Australia, who send

teams to visit them in Fiji. "Some women had backslid in their belief and heard that people were coming to visit the church, so they came to hear and were blessed," Nirmala said.

The women's ministry has received encouragement and has grown in their knowledge and love for God. Nirmala is blessed by all the things God is doing in their church community. She says, "It's good news".

When you support Walk for Hope during April, you can help our international church partners share the blessing of Jesus with others. Partners just like Nirmala and her neighbour.

Find out more or donate now at www.WalkforHope.com.au

Share the Blessing
of Jesus **THIS EASTER**

www.walkforhope.com.au

Walk for Hope is an opportunity to support evangelism, church planting and ministry training across the nations. This Easter, when you support Walk for Hope, you will help our church partners like Nirmala share Jesus' blessing with others.

You can give today at www.walkforhope.com.au or Freecall 1800 467 222



News & Events

Walk for Hope Written Devotion and Videos

You can now download a 30-day written devotional, and watch video devotions on Youtube, to enrich your walk with Jesus. The Blessed to be a Blessing resource features scripture devotions, reflections, activities and stories from our international partner ministries. The resources can be used for small groups, included in church services, or be used as an individual devotion. Visit www.walkforhope.com.au or scan the QR code to access the resources.



Vanuatu Tropical Cyclones

Please join us in prayer for the people of Vanuatu who have experienced Tropical Cyclones Judy and Kevin. GMP has launched the Vanuatu Cyclone Response to help people recover after the destruction caused by the cyclones. This response will be implemented through our partners, the Churches of Christ Conference Vanuatu (CCCCV). You can donate to the Vanuatu Cyclone Response online www.gmp.org.au/vanuatucycloneresponse or Freecall 1800 467 222.

John Main Tribute

It is with great sadness we share that our dear friend and servant of God, John Main, passed away in March. John and Valerie Main served as missionaries with Churches of Christ in India for 20 years. They maintained a lifelong commitment to global mission and local church ministry throughout South Australia. We give thanks to God for John's life, and his contribution to ministry both overseas and in Australia. Our prayers are with John's family in this sad time.



Damage after Cyclones Judy and Kevin in Vanuatu

Significance in Suffering

Dear Friends,

Over recent weeks I've thoroughly enjoyed connecting with our partners online, in places like India, Vanuatu, South Sudan, Zimbabwe, Thailand and Bangladesh. Each of these country's projects are being led by passionate, capable and visionary Christian leaders eager to bring hope and change to their communities.

In South Sudan, a nation which sits the lowest on the Human Development Index (HDI), and where violence and lawlessness is rife, our Christian partners are promoting and building peace.

In India, where vulnerable slum communities miss out on public education and health care, our Christian partners are establishing hospitals and informal schools to give vulnerable people a brighter future.

In our neighbouring Vanuatu, where people with a disability cannot easily seek shelter during the annual cyclone season (which they had two of in early March), our Christian partners are working with local churches to provide safe places for whole communities to seek refuge in times of disaster.

In Türkiye and Syria, where the recent earthquakes tragically killed over 50,000 people and over one million have been left homeless, our Christian partners are providing shelter, food and medical assistance.

As Easter approaches, I am reminded of the significance of Jesus' own suffering, sacrifice and resurrection.

Jesus came and immersed himself in our shame and brokenness. He obediently followed his Father's guidance to the cross. He rose again, glorious!

Jesus models to us the way in which we must lead.

This is often countercultural. Rarely do we see leaders displaying selflessness, entering the pain, brokenness and hardship of others to bring hope. But we see it in our partners.

These partners and leaders continue to put their faith in action for the betterment of others. Their hope unwavering in the day-to-day challenges of poverty.

Building off our long pioneering heritage and the bold faith of our current partnerships, may we springboard into the future. I pray our impact will reflect and honour those who have gone before us and serve as inspiration for generations to come.

"Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen."
Ephesians 3:20-21

John Lamerton,
Executive Officer





Filling the Hunger Gap in South Sudan

SPOTLIGHT

What would you do if you were facing starvation in three months' time?

This was reality for more than half of the people living in South Sudan in 2022. The people faced a year of deadly hunger.

Sadly, many people in South Sudan already know what it feels like to go hungry. They face a food shortage for three months every year. The lead-up to the October harvest, is known as the 'lean season'.

Usually, the World Food Programme (WFP) supports vulnerable people with food during this time. However, last year the WFP was forced to suspend its food assistance. Internal conflict, severe flooding, localised drought, and soaring food prices due to the crisis in Ukraine, meant that there wasn't enough funding for life-saving food assistance.

Local people were caught by surprise. One person we interviewed from Marialbaai said, "We were told at the last minute". Another person living in a household of 12 people in Nyamlel said, "We were not having hope".

GMP relief and development partner, Christian Mercy International (CMI), responded to the cry for help. They were directed by the South Sudan Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare. CMI identified the most vulnerable people in their region and engaged their network of pastors and churches to complete the work of food purchase and distribution. Paulino Malou, CMI Director, said this included "food stuffs, oil and salt".

Paulino described the people who received food packages, "They are the poorest and vulnerable families who do not have goats or

cows to sell for food". Assistance during the lean season was crucial for "Widows, the elderly and young children," Paulino said. It was reported that 10 to 15 people were living in most of the households. CMI distributed food to five payams (counties) within their region.

Thanks to your support, many people and families survived the lean season. One thankful recipient shared, "We would love to appreciate your efforts during the hunger gap period".

GMP's Relief and Development program, COCOA, keeps an Emergency Fund so that our partners can respond quickly when disaster strikes. Your support provided urgent assistance to the Hunger Gap project. Thank you for your support of people in times of tragedy.

Help Fight Famine

Global Mission Partners is a long-time partner of Micah Australia, a coalition of Australia's leading Christian international development agencies. Micah leads advocacy campaigns like, Help Fight Famine, to connect and equip Christians to think and act justly in engaging our nation's political leaders to create significant change.

Help Fight Famine brings together Australian organisations and individuals who want the Australian Government to support

immediate relief to the hunger crisis in the Horn of Africa with a Famine Prevention Package of \$150 million. This will help avert catastrophe in the worst-affected hunger hotspots in the Horn of Africa, Afghanistan, Syria and Yemen.

Help Fight Famine has campaigned for and won \$40m in funding so far for the global hunger crisis and food-related emergencies, with \$15m last year from the government and an extra \$25m granted in February 2023.

Through Help Fight Famine, the Australian Government is also being urged to commit to a longer-term global food strategy, leveraging Australia's scientific expertise and diplomacy.

You can take action! Write to your local MP using the form provided on the Help Fight Famine website. Please urge your local MP to push our government to continue to respond to this urgent crisis.

You can visit their website to act now: www.fightfamine.com.au

Pastor Ndlovu Develops Leaders in the Sibozza Circuit



Pastor Ndlovu (second from left) and the Sibozza Circuit Elders

Pastor Ndlovu leads a handful of churches in Zimbabwe. Since each church is many kilometres apart, he can only visit one at a time. This workload is challenging, however with the ‘circuit system’ in place, he can give each of his congregations the attention and support they need.

It is common for pastors in Zimbabwe to lead four to six churches at once. The ‘circuit system’ enables pastors to provide leadership to each church and, most importantly, support when the pastor is not present. Pastors are often unable to visit more than one church at a time due to the distances between them.

According to GMP partner, BJ Mpfou, with the Associated Churches of Christ in Zimbabwe (ACCZ), the most significant role of a circuit pastor is shepherding the leadership in the various churches.

Pastor Ndlovu is highly gifted in this area. “Churches under his care are seen to be growing churches that have an impact on the community,” said BJ. Pastor Ndlovu aspires to train the leadership, to give the elders and deacons tasks that would usually be done by the pastor. This helps the church grow and maintain health.

Within his various churches, Pastor Ndlovu holds joint training sessions and meetings with the various elders and deacons from his churches. These combined sessions ensure consistency in the approach to teaching and strategies for strengthening the churches.

Because of Pastor Ndlovu’s teaching, local leaders are equipped to run the ministry. As part of their duties, they may visit the sick, both in the church and in the neighbourhood. They also organise

a rotational preaching roster every Sunday. Regular meetings are held to debrief ministry activities and to give each other constructive criticism and encouragement. This also includes regularly praying for the church together. With this feedback, Pastor Ndlovu receives the insight he needs for each congregation.

Sibozza is one of many circuits that are doing well, and it is because of Pastor Ndlovu’s investment in leadership. “As the saying goes, the church is as vibrant as its leadership,” said BJ.

You can find more information about GMP’s International Church Partnerships on the GMP website. You can support church leaders like Pastor Ndlovu and the churches of the Sibozza Circuit through the Walk for Hope Easter Appeal.

Voice to Parliament

Over the past month, Global Mission Partners have been listening and reflecting on the Voice to Parliament with our Indigenous partners across Australia.

As we discuss what the Voice to Parliament campaign means for our Indigenous partners, there are six guiding principles that inform our approach to Indigenous advocacy:

- Partner-led from the start of the process.
- Humility to walk alongside Australia’s First Peoples, and to seek pathways for church and



Colin Battersby, GMP Director of Community Education, (third from right) with key Indigenous Christian leaders and the Directors of the National Voice to Parliament campaign. Ps Greg Little (IMA-WA Council Chair) joined workshop via phone linkup

individual supporters to do the same.

- Amplify the voices of our First Nations partners with integrity.
- Inclusive and respect diversity of all voices across the various people groups.
- Strengths-based approach that acknowledges Australia’s First Peoples and the decisions that

directly affect their communities.

- Invitational. GMP invites Australian people to walk with Australia’s First Peoples towards a better, shared future.

We look forward to sharing more about how GMP will engage with the Voice campaign in the upcoming editions of In Partnership. *You can read the full article on the GMP website.*