

IN PARTNERSHIP

May 2024



Walking Together on the Easter Songlines Tour

As part of this year's Easter Walk for Hope Appeal in Victoria, 18 people gathered to walk alongside one another through the streets of Melbourne on the Indigenous Easter Songlines walking tour.

The group included individuals who support Global Mission Partners and Indigenous Ministries Australia (IMA). Lonny Bendessi and Brian Smith from the Melbourne Indigenous Church attended, as well as members of The Salvation Army's National Indigenous Leadership team from all over Australia. This included Salvation Army Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ministries Manager Shirley Congo.

The group visited significant sites in the Melbourne CBD and outskirts to learn about local Indigenous history and culture, walk alongside our IMA partners, and pray for relationships and reconciliation nationwide.

Around Melbourne and Victoria, there are many sites of significance to Aboriginal people that predate colonisation, some of archaeological significance with material dating back

over 31,000 years. The Songlines cultural walking tour offers insight into increasing our awareness and sensitivity to the social, political, physical, and spiritual forces affecting many Indigenous Australians, both in the past and today.

Carly Cassidy, National Church Relationships Manager, attended the tour and described it as a combination of experiences. "It is part history tour, part prayer walk, and part cross-cultural learning experience," she said.

Nick Wight, IMA East Australia Coordinator, led the group. Carly appreciated how he "weaved historical facts and stories into a beautiful tapestry of learning for us all."

Centred on the foundational stones of Aboriginal culture, Nick spoke about land, family, law, language, and ceremony. He then offered the group time to reflect on their understanding of Indigenous culture.

"What a privilege it was for us to learn in, listen and learn. For some of us,



it was a time to unlearn or unpack our previous understanding," Carly reported.

The Easter Songlines Tour was an opportunity to walk together in the hope of a reconciled future with our First Nations people.

If you would like to learn more about IMA or participate in a future Songlines Tour, please email nick@gmp.org.au

Australian Churches of Christ Global Mission Partners Ltd.

ABN 30 455 408 814

www.gmp.org.au | info@gmp.org.au | 1800 467 222 | PO Box 341 Torrensville Plaza, SA 5031

News & Events

Walk for Hope Easter Appeal

Thank you for your generosity in supporting Indigenous Ministries Australia (IMA) this Easter. So far, \$18,177 has been raised to support emerging Aboriginal leaders in accessing ministry training and mentoring. Thank you!

National Sorry Day, May 26

National Sorry Day, officially the National Day of Healing, is held annually in Australia on 26 May, commemorating the Stolen Generations.

Reconciliation Week, May 27 – June 3

National Reconciliation Week is a time for all Australians to learn about our shared histories, cultures, and achievements and explore how we can contribute to reconciliation in Australia. For more information and resources for Reconciliation Week, please visit <https://www.reconciliation.org.au/our-work/national-reconciliation-week/>

State Youth Games Victoria, June 7-10

State Youth Games (SYG) is a weekend sport and art event for high schoolers and young adults. SYG 2024: RELEASE in Victoria is about stepping out in faith; it's about trusting in God's path for us; it's about trusting in the word. embody will be attending the games and launching Safe Water September! Sign up today www.stateyouthgames.com/vic

For more news and updates, follow us on Facebook or Instagram @gmpaustralia



Paulino Malou, Christian Mercy International, distributing tarpaulins.

The Good Samaritans of South Sudan

A little over 12 months ago, on April 15th, 2023, violent clashes erupted between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in Sudan, resulting in the deaths of 15,000 people and the displacement of more than 8.7 million (source UNHCR).

The current conflict in Sudan is considered the worst displacement crisis in the world.

While many remain displaced within Sudan, approximately 1.5-1.7 million people have fled over the borders into neighbouring Chad, Central African Republic, Egypt and Ethiopia, with South Sudan receiving the most people (650,000).

Our partners, Christian Mercy International (CMI) and LAID Foundation of South Sudan (LAFOSS) continue to respond to the needs of the refugees, many of whom are unaccompanied women and children. Our partners have provided hundreds of these families with food, tarpaulins, mosquito nets, and blankets. This has been in the country's north in Aweil and Juba, the capital city.

Considering many of the refugees from Sudan are Muslim, I see this concern and care provided by our partners as a beautiful act of Christian service.

This situation reminds me of the Good Samaritan story that Jesus told (Luke 10:25-37), where a Samaritan from the north of Israel provided emergency assistance to a Jew from the southern kingdom

(when others, leaders, didn't respond to the critical need).

This parable is told to someone who asked Jesus, "Who is my neighbour?" when clarifying his second commandment. The Good Samaritan was able to look beyond racial and religious division to extend life-giving care to a suffering, beat-up traveller.

Peter Gatdet (LAFOSS) in Juba shared this with us:

"Brothers and sisters, your continued prayers are requested for the suffering people from Sudan. Some are still wandering along the borders without food, shelters and medicines."

This conflict continues to displace and hurt people. I'm proud that our partners, CMI and LAFOSS, are the modern-day Good Samaritans, reaching beyond usual boundaries to care for many victims. They are truly loving their neighbours.

We can support them in their love of neighbour too.

Please generously support our South Sudan Refugee Crisis Appeal as much as possible.

You can also read about LAFOSS peacebuilding initiatives this month on our website as we highlight them for the UN International Day of Living Together in Peace on May 16.

In Faith,

John Lamerton,
Chief Executive Officer

Evangelist Hlupo Baptises 140 People!

SPOTLIGHT

Evangelist Hlupo could get discouraged by the people who don't want to know about Jesus in Zimbabwe. Recently, however, he baptised 102 people in the Murerezi community! On another day, he baptised a further 38 people. This evangelist is putting God first.

BJ Mpfu helps to resource and encourage Zimbabwean church leaders. This is through our global mission partner, the Associated Churches of Christ in Zimbabwe (ACCZ). He reports that the number of baptisms by evangelist Hlupo is impressive.

"Talk of enthusiasm, dedication and commitment," he remarked.

BJ shared that evangelist Hlupo is willing to hear God and let him lead him in his work. He is also inspired by the great commission to go and make disciples. Evangelist Hlupo "moves amongst the people" doing ministry. He believes only God brings the people to himself. Hlupo prays that people can hear Jesus speak and not himself.

Despite hard hearts towards the good news, Hlupo is a faithful servant. When confronted with people who don't want to hear about Jesus, his answer is, "Pray, pray, pray." He does not give up.

BJ agrees, "He [God] only needs faithful servants who put him first and the rest; he will do it for us. With

Him in us, we are but conquerors."

The baptisms have yet to finish; they still need to baptise 12 people from the community who were absent. This will happen "on their next visit," said BJ.

This is an example of the resilience shown by evangelists sharing the gospel in Zimbabwe. It also reminds us of the importance of prayer and the need for discipleship. It is inspiring to see the rewards of standing firm in the faith.

Please keep evangelists like Hlupo in your prayers. Especially those who face challenges when sharing the gospel within their communities.

Reconciliation – Now More Than Ever

It's inspiring to see local churches play a role in acknowledging and supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Christians. One example is Steeple Church, Victoria. They have recently opened a new church and community centre in Balwyn.

Indigenous Ministries Australia Coordinator Nick Wight attended the 'housewarming' party in April. He reported the service included a significant acknowledgement of the Indigenous community.

"Steeple Church has been on a profound journey," Nick said.

"Listening, learning and walking with our Aboriginal brothers and sisters in Melbourne."

The opening of the community centre included a performance by the Djirri Djirri's Wurundjeri women's dance and cultural group. Uncle Norm Terrick

facilitated Welcome to Country. He is a Wurundjeri Elder and a member of the Melbourne Indigenous Church.

Nick shared that including these Indigenous contributions was powerful. "Honour and respect, true to the Steeple Church values of humility and hospitality."

Nick also reflected that Steeple Church is participating in practical restoration and reconciliation. Providing a space for our first peoples, "who have for so long been overlooked, not seen or heard," he said.

Steeple Church, established in 2017, has already formed strong connections with their community, particularly with Aboriginal Christians in Melbourne. Nick believes, "This is a testament to what can be achieved in a relatively short time, which is so encouraging."



This year, the theme of Reconciliation Week is Now More Than Ever.

There is a sense of importance and urgency to listen and learn from our Aboriginal brothers and sisters. "To walk towards true reconciliation in Australia," Nick said.

Would your church like to prepare for Reconciliation Week or connect with our Indigenous partners? Get in touch with Nick to begin this conversation. Email nick@gmp.org.au.

To learn more, visit www.reconciliation.org.au/our-work/national-reconciliation-week/



Surrender Festival and the Invitation to “Wominjeka”

Carly and Nick connect with Brian and Charlene (friends of IMA) at Surrender

Indigenous Ministries Australia (IMA) Coordinator Nick Wight and I had the pleasure of attending the Surrender festival in March. The event’s host, Surrender Co, has a mission to call followers of Jesus to the margins. They are committed to inspiring followers of Jesus to “make every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:3).

Surrender Co facilitates safe spaces at the festival to discuss challenging and sometimes painful issues related to poverty, justice, and incarnational ministry. By keeping Jesus at the centre of their conversations, people leave with peace, hope, and unity, even when challenged.

They do this because they share a common belief in a risen Christ and the hope of justice, beauty, and wholeness through him. The festival

is a Christ-centred, locally led space. That is also extremely important to all of us at Global Mission Partners.

Right from the beautiful Welcome to Country, we felt the “Wominjeka” - the invitation to come with purpose.

Surrender Co does a wonderful job of supporting existing practitioners. They affirm, encourage, and connect people living out the often lonely and unseen work of incarnational mission and justice. They also recognise their crucial role in raising the next generation for discipleship. We gratefully and humbly accepted and deeply appreciated all the various guest speaker’s input and teachings.

It was incredibly thought-provoking to listen to the voices of those walking alongside those on the margins. It was also a privilege to hear and listen

to some of the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of this land. We were reminded of the important work that Global Mission Partners is involved with through IMA and encouraged as we reflected on the Indigenous focus of our recent Easter campaign, Walk for Hope.

The festival is a great tool for motivation. It encourages us as individuals and as the wider church to move from interest to action by becoming personally involved in expressions of Christ’s call to the poor and marginalised. What an invitation to come... with purpose.

If you would like to partner with us to help reach the poor and marginalised or support Indigenous ministry through the work of Global Mission Partners, please contact nick@gmp.org.au

Safer World for All

Global Mission Partners commits to building a Safer World for All.

In March, our CEO, John Lamerton, joined leaders from Australia’s humanitarian agencies in Canberra. Advocacy efforts included meeting Senator David Pocock and Dr Mike Freelander (MP, MacArthur). Our commitment is to urge our leaders to:

1. Increase investment in Australian Aid.
2. Support a fairer global economy.
3. Contribute to a safer climate future.

You can get involved and add your voice at <https://saferworld.org.au>

