

# the aim

[www.aimpa.com](http://www.aimpa.com)

Australian Indigenous Ministries

February-April 2015



**A New Creation with New Identity in Christ**  
see article page 2





# identity in **Christ**

*Testimony of Alfie May — Darwin Community Church*

**W**e always went to AIM Sunday school which started at the old Stuart Park Church then moved to the current Milner site. When I became a teen I started wasting my life on drink and drugs. Things only got worse as the years went on. When I broke up with my girlfriend I just partied harder trying to find a way out of my low self-esteem and depression. I was a qualified cabinet maker but was struggling to keep a job.

Then I went to Kakadu National Park as a tour guide and was working with traditional fellows from Arnhem Land. The push for Aboriginal people to return to their tribal and cultural ways to gain a sense of identity had begun. It was all about discovering who we were as Aboriginal people as many of us are highly urbanised and are what is termed half-caste and felt that we didn't belong.

I thought it would be great being 'cultural'. I began learning a lot of cultural stuff from the Arnhem fellows and planned on going through ceremonies. But I had to return to Darwin for family business before I got started in them. I think my mum's prayers played a big part in that.

My dad had found out who his grandmother was and where she came from and so he was taken out to meet the old people there. Coming through one area dad very suddenly started getting really sick — it was a spiritual thing that came upon him. They hurried out of there and then he was fine. But not long after that he got terminally ill so I stayed in Darwin to help look after him.

My partner (now my wife) and my mum were going regularly to Community Church. I decided to go along with them. One message really spoke to me about the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and my need to get right with God. For the first time in my life I began to understand what Christianity was all about. It was such a

joy to know that I could be forgiven for all my past sin. For the first time in my life I felt free from guilt that had held me in its grip.

2 Corinthians 5:17 tells me that I'm a new creation! Old things are gone! The Word of God has shown me **my true identity is in Jesus Christ**. He is all I need. I don't need to give into the pressure from others saying, 'you have to do this, you have to be at this funeral — you have to go there, you have to give to me.' I am free in Christ and don't have to live under the law or the pressure of those kind of rules and law.

I could start facing pressure and problems from others as I feel I need to start speaking out on things like: we were made by God and haven't been here for 40,000 or more years, and God created the land, He is the true owner of it. And also, speaking out on how men treat women — it is terrible and needs to be confronted. People won't like it but I have to share the truth and just be appropriate in how I share it.

The Bible meets my needs and answers all the questions for me. I read the Word and God renews my mind. As I stay in the Word it helps me stay focused on Him, then I can give an answer to what the mob might throw at me. Their arguments won't stand up against the Word of God. Some won't like it, but I'm only telling the truth.

About 15 years ago I started doing prison ministry with men from Community Church. Those prisoners need to know Jesus and come out of the darkness. The verse from Acts 26:17-18 has really spoken to me that this is what I need to be doing there.

***I now know that I am truly loved by God and that He has healed all my past hurts. I have my identity in Jesus Christ and try to share this message with others.***

## health **updates**

**O**n 7th January *Deb McKerrell* had her much needed neuro surgery to relieve the spinal pain she had been enduring and there was immediate relief. However, problems developed from a small piece of bone that had broken off during surgery and was pressing on some nerves. She is now

receiving medication and treatment. Please continue to pray for Deb and for *Bob* who is also struggling with some health issues at present.

*Fay Chambers*, wife of *David* from Rockhampton AIM Church suffered a heart attack in mid-2014 and her heart stopped beating for 20 minutes. Many months of prayer, rehabilitation and support have seen her make a tremendous recovery well beyond the expectations of the medical staff. Fay has renewed her faith in God and is continuing to grow strong physically, spiritually and mentally. Your prayers are greatly appreciated.





by Dr Alice Schroers — TEAM Partner

## Tennant Creek in a Day

One of my favourite trips to in the Red Centre is a drive up to Tennant Creek to visit the church as I have been greatly encouraged by the fellowship and strong Aboriginal leadership there. Earlier in 2014 I drove up with my parents for a day trip from Alice so we could attend church and meet some of the local missionaries. It was good to see and hear how God has been growing the church and I was glad to find them still strong later in the year when I was able to attend the Tuesday women's fellowship.

## Bible Study @ Hostel

Throughout 2014 I was greatly blessed by the relationships I have made with people from Tennant Creek as well as other visitors to Alice Springs from Canteen Creek and Lake Nash. Praise God that some of these people have gathered to read the Bible together at Topsy Smith Hostel & that the Bible study is slowly growing. Please pray that we would continue to reach out to others with the gospel as well as growing in love and knowledge of the Lord through our reading of His Word.

I would also appreciate prayer for my Kriol learning as a number of factors have made it difficult to have continuity with my language teachers this year. Praise God for the opportunities so far to learn and please pray that He might continue to grow and prepare me by these experiences for future ministry.

***In particular I would appreciate prayer that I might continue to find ways of empowering Aboriginal people to live for Christ and that I would be wary of thinking or behaving in a paternalistic way despite some of the prevalent attitudes here.***

## Work @ Hospital

I have now completed my internship (first year of junior doctor training). It was quite a tempestuous year but also a very rewarding one, getting to know patients and learning the ropes. Particularly when things were very busy or stressful I praise God for His strength and the prayers of the saints who helped me (and my patients) survive! I am also grateful to all the staff and patients for their patience as I settled into a new location, new responsibilities and new house.

## Life in the Alice

There are still many things I am learning about Alice Springs and life in the Red Centre. This past year has held many challenges and surprises. One of the difficulties I have encountered was the relative lack of healthy relationships between non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal people on an even playing field.

There is a group at the Baptist Church that started towards the end of last year to discuss how we can work better together. So far our weekend away, planning & prayer meetings, lunches and Christmas celebration have helped raise awareness and allowed some of our Aboriginal brothers and sisters in Christ to have a voice about how we could be working better together for Jesus. ***Please pray that we will not lose momentum and that He would grant us wisdom and love as we work through some of these issues. I would love prayer for more opportunities to get to know more Aboriginal women my age.***



group meeting at Baptist Church

# home call



**F**ormer worker *Jocelyn Bridges* (nee Gadd) went home to the Lord Dec 13, 2014. She joined AIM in 1952 and was always an energetic and enthusiastic worker. Her first assignment was to the Retta Dixon Home where she was responsible for up to 14 children between the ages of three to six years. Jocelyn also helped with the Sunday school held at RDH and in two Darwin suburbs each Sunday, and at times with meetings across the harbour at Belyuen.

During her RDH days she met John and they married in 1957, beginning a life of marriage and ministry together. They were sent to Newcastle Waters and also began weekly visits to the developing town and nearby camp at Elliott. In both areas they saw God work in lives and small groups of believers grow into responsible churches. Buildings for worship were erected in both places during their seven years here.

Jocelyn had always been keen to work in the camp situation (now called communities). She quickly and easily built good relationships. Raymond Dixon from the Newcastle Waters area shared: *I am very thankful for them coming and helping our Mudburra people to know the Lord. We know the Lord from their teaching and sharing God's Word. She respected our people. We are*

*thankful for that.*

Then they began ministering in the established town of Katherine, where finally having electricity was a great bonus! The ministry of seeking to reach people both in the town and communities scattered in various directions and distances from the town had its challenges as it still does. Citizenship had come to the people the year before they arrived and with it all the opportunities and challenges (such as freedom to drink) that came with that. While here they helped establish the Katherine Christian Convention.

Their time with AIM finished in April 1972. But in the following years Jocelyn encouraged and enthused people about missions and much prayer and support was raised up in the Baptist churches where they served. We are grateful for her many years of faithful ministry. ***Please pray for John as he adjusts to life without his partner of so many years.***

Are you coming on the next

## mission awareness tour 2015?

***Come and see what God is doing in and through Aboriginal Australians and the opportunities to serve.***

**When:** 3rd-18th April, 2015  
(Training day 21st March)  
**Cost:** \$1600 per person  
**Where:** Centres in NSW, QLD and the NT

**When:** 8-29th May, 2015  
(Training day 25th April)  
**Cost:** \$1770 per person  
**Where:** Centres in NSW, QLD and the NT

**Enquiries:** mat@aimpa.com





# payback



by Jono Wright

The community is virtually a ghost town. Almost every person is stuck inside with their air-con cranked up to full. Across the community a dog cries out in a fight, crickets sing their songs, air conditioners hum and thunder rolls off in the distance — the only sounds that cut through the thick wet season night.

A quiet word between houses, cars start up and several young adults are on their way down to the river where they can drink and stay cool in the breeze that drifts across the waterhole. It's quiet down at the river too. But that will soon change...

A few casks of wine into the night and the senses stir as people slowly realise that someone is missing. 'Where is.....?' 'I dunno, I seen him walking over there near the water before.'

As they realise their mate is no longer around their eyes widen, but not a word is spoken. They return quickly and quietly back to the cars and drive rapidly back to the community where they jump into bed. None of them get any sleep that night.

The next day brings the news that 'such and such' is missing and the search is on.

**No one is willing to share what they know in case they are seen to know too much and be seen to be guilty and liable for payback.**

Devastatingly, the young man's body is finally found. No one that was there that night has slept properly since. When they speak, which is rare as they are very tight lipped, the fear is right there in their voices.

Human nature is the same everywhere. It doesn't seem to matter what culture you come from — payback will be there somewhere. The recent popularity of TV shows such as 'Revenge' illustrates the point that everyone loves a story that involves some kind of levelling up.

Payback impacts life on a fairly regular basis in communities — especially those more tribal. The details of the story above are based loosely on things I have seen over the years. People will refuse to comply with police

investigations, even when they have nothing to hide, because someone somewhere might think them guilty and the cycle of payback will continue.

In some ways payback stems from an inbuilt desire to see justice measured out, to see something happen as the result of another's transgression. Sadly though, payback never ends, it never squares off, it never levels out. The cycle just goes round and around and around again 'tit for tat' fuelling multi-generational fighting.

The Gospel is no stranger to payback. God demands that sin against Him must be punished. There is no way out of it. Every sin we have committed has to be punished. But the Good News is that Christ has actually taken that punishment on Himself for everyone who believes. Christ has taken our 'sin payback' by dying on the cross -so that when we believe on Him we are instantly saved from the punishment we deserve.

**So our sin payback is finished, and with it so is our old way of thinking... or is it?**

When you have grown up with payback as such an integral part of your worldview it is hard to change. When people around you look down on you as weak because you refuse to get involved in payback and blaming — it is hard. The pressure is so strong that some do sadly crumble — but many also triumph.

Nothing is more beautiful than seeing a family who has been wronged in some violent way, quietly and gently shake hands and tell the guilty parties that they are leaving everything up to God. A very hard thing to do before man, but a wonderfully liberating thing to be able to leave it all in God's hands knowing that one day He will make all sin right — either through His Son Jesus or through the fires of hell forever. We pray and work for the former but ultimately leave it in God's hands.

*'If someone does wrong to you, do not pay him back by doing wrong to him. Try to do what everyone thinks is right. Do your best to live in peace with everyone. My friends do not try to punish others when they wrong you, but wait for God to punish them with His anger. It is written: 'I will punish those who do wrong; I will repay them,' says the Lord.'* Romans 12:17-19 NCV

# western NSW

by Stephen Bignall

Out west has proven to be a dry and thirsty land for most of 2014 but in God's mercy there was still a modest harvest. 2015 opened with much needed rainfall and so the farmers have begun to sow the next crop. The same could be said of our four NSW ministry centres where labouring with perseverance, mutual care and prayerful hope we look to God. Personal communication and co-operation among NSW AIM workers has been key in meeting a year of challenges.

*Isaac and Ilene Gordon* are engaged in Walgett and Brewarrina despite real health struggles for Isaac. They continue to comfort those in the valley of the shadow, and gently bear testimony to eternal life in Christ to the bereaved. Early death is an all too frequent reality in these communities. Small but regular weekly gatherings continue in both towns for prayer, Bible teaching and worship. Gospel rallies were also held in Goolagong with folks from Moree and Gilgandra participating.

In Gilgandra *Henry and Maria Louie* press on together rebuilding and laying a good foundation in the AIM church. Their passionate concern for the isolated community of Pilliga (180km away) led to a new work in partnership with a Newcastle church bringing the Gospel to the children of the town. Many turned out for the Bible club and whole families flocked to the final afternoon, giving an enthusiastic invitation for the team to return next holidays.

A great occasion for unity and teaching was the Gilgandra Rivers Convention bringing together folk from all four NSW centres as well as visitors from other supporting churches. Six messages were brought from Jesus' I AM's by the five speakers, including three aboriginal brothers.

Moree TEAM partners (the *Strahan* and *Robinson* families) as part of the local Presbyterian Church have continued a compassionate ministry to local youth throughout 2014 with up to 80 youngsters gather during the week. It is encouraging to see aboriginal mums and their kids regularly welcomed to other church meetings. Much thought and prayer is going into exploring effective ministry and real engagement across the whole community.



**Stephen and Fiona Bignall**

Dubbo congregation under *David Cox's* pastoral care has been a servant church providing sound teaching and genuine hospitality including their 'Day in the Word' meetings. The elders are also encouraging a number of young men to develop possible leadership and teaching gifts by giving short Bible talks on Sunday evenings. In September Rose Cox and the church ladies worked tirelessly to prepare an excellent Women's Conference. Their new website is now in place. Why not listen online at [www.dubbochristianfamilychurch.org.au](http://www.dubbochristianfamilychurch.org.au)

Ministry in schools provides a great opportunity throughout the region, both chaplaincy and Scripture teaching. In Warren and Gulargambone, school students have had weekly Bible lessons and pastoral support from AIM workers throughout the year. It was a joy to organise some end-of-year celebrations and give gifts carefully prepared by loving Christians in Sydney.

Out west we are very aware of a wider network of believers engaged in prayer, practical and financial care for AIM workers and the communities we serve and through whom God supplies many needs for which we thank Him. We want to go forward together and continue working while it is day!





**Isaac Gordon**



**The Strahan family**



**Rose and David Cox**



**The Louie family**

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED...

WHAT IS GOD DOING IN THE OUTBACK?  
WHAT ARE THE STRUGGLES & JOYS?  
WHAT GOSPEL OPPORTUNITIES ARE THERE?

COME &  
CHAT TO  
OUR TEAM



NOW IS THE TIME TO FIND OUT  
THE MANY OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE GOD  
IN TAKING THE GOSPEL TO INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS

AIM is a servant organisation whose mission is to  
PLANT, PARTNER & PARTICIPATE  
in Gospel ministry to the Aboriginal people.  
[www.australianindigenousministries.org.au](http://www.australianindigenousministries.org.au)  
E: [mat@aimpa.com](mailto:mat@aimpa.com) M: 0408 157 975  
PO Box 126 TAREE NSW 2430







*An insight from TEAM Partner Marian Quinn*

**T**his year sees me starting my 8th year of teaching at Woolanining Homeland Christian College (WHCC). I would just like to share some of that time with you.

Many of the challenges and celebrations have been the same as those of teachers everywhere: dealing with discipline issues, finding new ways to explain a concept for students who aren't responding, teaching across a wide range of ability levels; but also the satisfaction of seeing someone suddenly grasp a new idea, building relationships with the students and believing you're part of something that makes a difference.

Some things however are more specific to our school. WHCC is a remote indigenous boarding college for secondary students. We are in Litchfield National Park, about a 10 minute drive from Wangi Falls, so we have the best backyard and swimming holes in the country.

The students live in group homes of up to 12 students, each home has a married couple as house parents who look after them just as they would their own family. We have a full complement of house parents this term but have waited and prayed quite a while for this outcome. We believe that having the students live in family homes is the best model, but we also recognize that house parenting is both a rewarding and demanding role. A former house parent probably summed it up best when he said *'the highs are very high but the lows are very low'* (read with expression!).

We have three houses for girls and three for boys. We try to put students in a house with family but we also try to avoid putting all of one community in the same house. It has been a blessing to see friendships develop across communities as students share a house together.

As a Christian school we start each day with class devotions. We also meet together on Sunday nights with the students to sing, pray and listen to someone share from the Bible. A few years ago we started alternating the service altogether with separating into girls and boys groups. This has removed the distraction of flirting and the self-consciousness of worrying about them looking at you. At girls' church we spread out a few bedspreeds and cushions on the floor and make ourselves comfortable. The atmosphere is very relaxed and the girls are happy to share, pray and sing together.

Because we are remote the school is self-sufficient with its own power, water and sewerage. So as well as teachers, assistants, and house parents we have office staff, ground and maintenance staff, hospitality and shop workers and

extra family members. As a community everyone has the same goal no matter what their official position is — that of leading the students to know and love God.

One of my highlights for 2014 was to see a student graduate who started in the lowest class with me the year I came. I am so proud of him. He was a kind and quiet boy and has grown into a kind and quiet young man.



One of the challenges of WHCC is also one of its blessings — that we all live on site. This means that the student you just went three rounds with in the classroom and who left with a face like thunder and a comment you chose not to hear, will see you walk past ten minutes later and call out *'Hey Miss, look what I can do on the trampoline!'*

So your interactions are not just in the classroom. You get to see and understand more of the whole person.

A challenge for the whole school is retaining students long enough to complete their education. You grieve over past students who did not return and are now making unwise choices with their lives. I know that this is not the end for them, and we pray that they will remember what they have learnt, and turn around again and be blessed.

***Thank God for Marian and her faithfulness at WHCC. Please pray for her and for TEAM Partner Simon McKee who is also involved with WHCC as chaplain.***







Australian Indigenous Ministries

### General Director

Trevor (and Pamela) Leggott

### Office Secretary

Peter Smith

### Field Director

Stephen (and Fiona) Bignall

### AIM Office

PO Box 126 Taree NSW 2430

Phone 02 4754 3833

E: aim@aimpa.com

www.aimpa.com

### AIM Representatives

NT Richard & Sue Davies  
Canteen Creek NT 0831  
P: 08 8964 1500

VIC Merv and Elizabeth Topp  
Jan Juc Vic 3228  
P: 03 5261 4550

WA Ian & Elaine Lindsay  
Esperance WA 6450  
P: 08 9072 0509

### The Aim Editor

Rhonda Coats  
PO Box 40555 Casuarina NT 0811

### Assistant Editor

Grace Wright  
Camooweal Qld 4828

### Cover Photo

courtesy Challenge The Good  
News Paper

New Series Volume 51 No 1

### Design & Printed by

Springwood Printing Company Pty Ltd  
P: 02 4751 6119  
spc@springwoodprinting.com.au  
www.springwoodprinting.com.au

## Subscription

The Aim Magazine subscriptions are \$10.00 a year (inclusive of GST). Please send to AIM Office.

The requested amount of \$10 per year helps fund the printing and posting of this quarterly magazine.

**Partnership  
support with:**

**Australian  
Indigenous  
Ministries**

*Our God is Able*

Name:.....

Address:.....

..... P/C.....

Phone:.....

### I would like to join in partnership with AIM through:

☐ Prayer support by getting monthly topics.

☐ By Email at:.....

☐ Subscribing to Aim Magazine: \$10 per annum.

☐ Making a one-off gift for AIM ministry.

☐ Giving regular financial support to AIM for provision of Gospel ministry to Indigenous Australians.

☐ I would like to arrange for direct deposit of my support. Please contact me with details.

☐ Giving regular financial support to a missionary by joining their support team

Missionary's Name:.....

☐ Monthly

☐ Quarterly

☐ Yearly

Amount: \$.....

☐ Setting aside part of my estate as a legacy for the ministry of AIM. Please contact me.

☐ Please find my cheque or money order.

OR

☐ Please charge my credit card:

☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard

Card Number:

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Expiry Date:..... / .....

Name on Card:.....

Signature:.....

### Please Post to

PO Box 126 Taree NSW 2430