

June – August 2017



Australian Indigenous Ministries

Planting – Partnering – Participating



A Year of Refreshment

by Alice Schroers



SMBC

SYDNEY MISSIONARY & BIBLE COLLEGE

Looking back on last year, I am so grateful to God for the way He has deepened my understanding of His overflowing abundance, sovereignty, perfect timing, brilliant plan of redemption of His people all over the world — and His good sense of humour!

At the end of my first year in Alice Springs, I remember telling a close friend that I would never choose to work at Concord Hospital or do another Emergency term. As it turned out, God had other plans. I've now spent 21 months of my training in Emergency and am currently embarking on a year of further Critical Care training in Anaesthetics and ICU at Dubbo Base Hospital. It certainly was a curve-ball,

but I keep reminding myself of the lessons God has been teaching me over the course of my Christian life - that He has a bigger and better plan and I can trust Him.

2016 started with a bit of bang when I hit a roo while road-tripping with mum from Alice Springs to Sydney. Thankfully we arrived safely and I moved into residence at Sydney Missionary and Bible College (SMBC) a few days later.

SMBC was even better than I had hoped it would be. Having started the Graduate Diploma of Divinity as a part-time student years earlier, I had an idea of what the study of missions was like. But studying as a full-time residential student was a wonderful surprise. From the first day being welcomed with a sermon about Jesus, our great Shepherd, and sitting down to lunch (and gelato!) with the lecturers



and Principal (*Stuart Coulton*) to the final week of celebrations, thanksgiving and final equipping to go, it was definitely a year to be remembered, treasured and learned from in years to come.

The highlights of my time at SMBC were the mission trip to Greece, Old Testament, Church History, Pastoral Theology and Ministry Matters alongside the day to day pleasure it was to study and worship God with like-minded colleagues from all over the world. I was really glad to be challenged by solid sermons from colleagues and lecturers three times a week at chapel, and during chats over meals and tea-breaks between lectures.

But I was most encouraged by the constant reminders that

Bible College was not there to make us 'smarter sinners' but rather to provide a platform for God to transform our lives so that we would love and acknowledge Him in all our ways.

We started class with prayer, and points of application to our lives and ministry were dotted throughout the lectures. Our lecturers not only helped us grow in knowledge but prayed with us and pastorally ministered to us.

Church history reminded me that we're standing on the shoulders of giants but was also humbling as we analysed what they fought for theologically and pointed out their blind spots, which opened the question of what our blind spots are today. Furthermore, I was amazed to find that a lot of what I learnt in church history was directly applicable to conversations I was having with my grandma each weekend (please continue to pray for her salvation).

It was an amazing privilege to hear from

missionaries from all over the world every Tuesday at Ministry Matters, as well as being spurred on by missionaries of the week and the missionaries in residence and to attend Reachout Mission Conference mid-year. I was ministered to by those who shared about their struggles on the field and I gleaned a lot of extra knowledge and experience from missionaries working in various cultural and religious contexts on all sorts of topics from: language learning to considering how helping a coral reef grow could be used to share the gospel, ministering to sex traffickers and drug abusers, and praying for and learning from the persecuted church. God brought a number of Territorians together at college and grew our prayer group to eight by the end of the year.

It's hard to encapsulate the whole year and the many lessons I've learnt, but I loved the time at college and hope that someday I may have the opportunity to spend more time there. It wasn't all rosy, but He taught me to sing His praises with creation, to lament as a church along with the psalmists, and trace the lineage of hope in His story.

And now I am in Dubbo... Praise God for a very warm welcome at Dubbo Presbyterian and Dubbo Christian Family Church as well as family friends.

I have found it more difficult than in the past to settle, particularly as I have been homesick for Alice Springs and probably because I have been travelling a lot since the start of the year for conferences, family and friends.

I have also had difficulty with gaining accreditation for this year as part of my GP training despite my colleagues having it count towards their training in NSW, so please pray for wisdom in how to respond, and mercy from the bureaucratic powers that be. I would also really appreciate prayer for settling into work, study, new routine and ministry. My rotation in Intensive Care involves working 7 days of 12 hour shifts then 7 days off, then 7 nights of 12 hour shifts then 7 days off until the end of the year.

Please pray for wisdom and discipline to use the time off well. I have started helping out at Younglife, a Thursday night group with unchurched kids and have applied to help with gaol ministry in Wellington. Please pray for these ministries.



When the phone rings...

by Rhonda Coats

It is hard when it happens late at night... your pulse races and your heart pounds as you wonder if the call is bad news. You are relieved when it is a friend saying she is just ringing to 'catch up'. She shares some encouraging things, then the sadness of those who have stumbled along their way, the gossip that keeps old feuds going and people at odds — some who could be vital in strengthening the church are involved and so remain on the fringes of what God longs to do.

But another call comes and goes something like this:... What was that bit? Your family has been fighting? Over something posted on facebook? So you went down and confronted those people... at the shop?! ('WHAT?!' *exploded in my mind — fortunately not out of my mouth...*) Oh my, of course there were lots of people around. There are always lots of people around the shop! It is important to remember what the Bible says about going to a person in private when something is wrong.

How old were these kids you were standing up for? Friend, are 16 and 17 year olds still kids? Do you really think you should step into their arguments? Had they said anything first to the person they say gave them a 'look'? Oh...you didn't ask them that... You think your kids were picked on because you are a Christian? Hmm... Oh friend, did you say *YOU* got angry and started yelling down at the shops? And you let go and were swearing at them? (WHAT? *another mind explosion...*)

Yes, it's good you were sorry and asked them to forgive you the next day, but... What do you think all this has done to your witness for Jesus in the community? Do you want to try and make sure it doesn't happen again?

It is important to think about the whole story friend. Were you putting the Lord Jesus or family as number one? What was most important to you — being a witness for the Lord Jesus or standing up for family? Can you think of another way you could have done things to be a better witness for Jesus, a good witness of the church, and to teach your family how to deal with problems and conflicts? What is making you so angry so quickly these days?

After more discussion the call concluded with 'Friend, let's pray about this now...'

Sometimes a phone call does bring sad news of yet another one passing away, and often in a place where grief has struck numerous times in recent months. And then there is the shocking news of another hanging — this one is just a child — age 13.

Another call... *Please pray for so and so. They are on the medical plane.* That is really good you went and saw them at the clinic. And you and some of the other Christians read scriptures and prayed with them before they were put on the plane? That is wonderful friend!

Again the phone rings and another friend shares... *'the Lord has really been speaking to me. After my niece's husband died so suddenly, I realised how much I needed His strength. I've been right back into God's Word and am writing down things I am learning in a notebook. I try to go out and talk to someone for Him everyday and it is so neat how He opens the way. The other day a young girl from that other town rang with all kinds of problems. I had a real good chance to witness for the Lord to her. What I had read that morning in the Bible just fitted in real neat. God is so good!*

I'm concerned for my niece who is interested in learning more about God. I don't know anyone at the churches over there who can meet her and encourage her. Well friend, let's pray together.

A week later she rings again... *'I was travelling back from a funeral and stopped at the shops in the next town. I met Pastor so and so and his wife in there and got talking to them. And guess what! Him and people from his church take a service once a month over where my niece lives! Praise the Lord! He answered our prayers!'*

Oh the burdens and the blessings of being able to serve Jesus.

Pray that we will have God's guidance, discernment and quickness of thought as we listen and share with people in all kinds of situations — face to face or over the phone — and seek to point them back to God and His Word. Pray too that we will help church leaders to deal with such situations in a Biblical and godly way so they can help others to be right and stable in their walk.

KCC Jubilee

This year saw the 50th Katherine Christian Convention held and it had several firsts. It was the first year it was held at the Showgrounds, the first year there was a small fee attached to attending, and the first year a woman was the main speaker.

The Convention has grown, developed and undergone various changes since the vision was first ignited between AIM (*John and Jocelyn Bridges*) and Baptists (*Lloyd and Win Kent*) all those years ago. The Convention started with just AIM and Baptist folk from Katherine and Darwin and was held over the Easter weekend. Soon others were invited which saw them outgrow the Katherine AIM facilities. It was moved to different school grounds, the date was changed to the May Day long weekend, and eventually all meetings were held at Morrow's farm.

With the farm no longer available the committee secured the Showgrounds which proved to be good facilities for the meetings held for adults, youth and children. A good number of folk from a variety of communities and areas were willing to travel and gather for time around God's Word and fellowship together.

Jude Long, Principal of Nungalinga College in Darwin, was enthusiastically introduced as the speaker by Katherine Church leader *Lisa Mumbin* and was warmly welcomed by all in attendance. Jude clearly expressed her desire to see the Aboriginal people empowered to their rightful place of leadership, which also brought a positive reaction from the audience.

As she went through her messages mainly based on Leviticus 25, she effectively incorporated Indigenous people into the presentation. Their thoughts and testimonies were a rich addition to what she shared on the theme of Jubilee:

1. God's Land
2. God's People
3. God's Blessing
4. God's Family



Ngukurr mob giving item

As always, the evening meetings with the various communities bringing items in song and dance were a highlight and very well attended. What a thrill to see over 30 new believers (since Christmastime) from Ngukurr give praise to God through action songs. Please continue to pray for their spiritual growth and development. Pray that those from other communities — often with small struggling fellowships — will be encouraged to look to God to do a similar great spiritual work in their area.



Jude Long and Lisa Mumbin



Katherine AIM Kids

Called Home

On March 12, a few weeks short of his 95th birthday, *Merv Pattemore* was called home to the Lord he loved and served for decades. Our love, sympathy and prayers are extended to his wife *Lelean* and family.

As news of his death was shared around the field the consistent comment was, *'What a faithful man.'* Among the aboriginal people there were tears for one they loved and respected so much — and for one whom they knew had loved and respected them. At the beginning of the Northern Land Council meetings an announcement and acknowledgement of his death was made by one of the leaders. Such was the measure of respect for him around the NT.

Merv joined AIM in 1947 and worked at Fingal, Cherbourg, Phillip Creek and Newcastle Waters. After his marriage to Lelean in 1951 they served in Delissaville, Borrooloola, and Darwin and surrounding area. He travelled thousands of kilometres in outreach ministry especially during his single years, then later as Area Superintendent of the NT.

It is in Borrooloola in particular that he is held in almost legendary status. When others were not interested, Merv started a school there following a request from the adults. He built a room onto their modest accommodation to use as a classroom, and the reading and writing skills of the students soon reached a high standard. A strong church with local leadership came into being during his ministry, and there is still spiritual fruit there today.

It was then onto Darwin to take on the tiring and thankless task of Superintendent at Retta Dixon Children's Home. His family recalls how he would often fall asleep at the meal table after dealing with house-parents, discipline, building and maintenance needs throughout the day. After retiring from AIM in 1992 he continued to minister in and around the Darwin area for many years.

Right until his journey to heaven Merv supported the work through his prayers, giving, and interest. The following memories and thoughts are from several who shared time in ministry with him:

'It is required of a servant to be found faithful.' This was so true of Merv.



He was GOD'S MAN first and foremost. God's Word was treasured and shared at every opportunity. He was always faithful to his conviction based on scripture. He lived what he believed and worked tirelessly to fulfil God's call on his life. He willingly spent and was spent for the ministry to which he was called.

There must be hardly an area of the NT where Merv hasn't been in his efforts to share the Gospel - from Alice Springs to Darwin, from the West Australian border to Borrooloola across the Barkly and all places in between.

He would stop at a waterhole on the Barkly and talk to one lonely traveller there, converse with a group of stockmen on an outstation, an isolated group on a remote cattle station or a small group of believers who needed encouragement. He knew so many people and was loved and respected in so many places.

He was practical! A true Mr Fix It and a great encourager.

He had a servant heart and was always willing to step forward to do even the menial tasks with a joyful attitude. He was a great role model.

He was a Northern Territory champion of the faith and of indigenous people.

We believe hundreds, if not thousands of indigenous people will stand and salute the person and memory of Merv Pattemore, preacher, teacher, counsellor, confidant and friend, as will we.

Merv was very caring, diligent, passionate for God, for His kingdom and passionate for the betterment of Indigenous people.

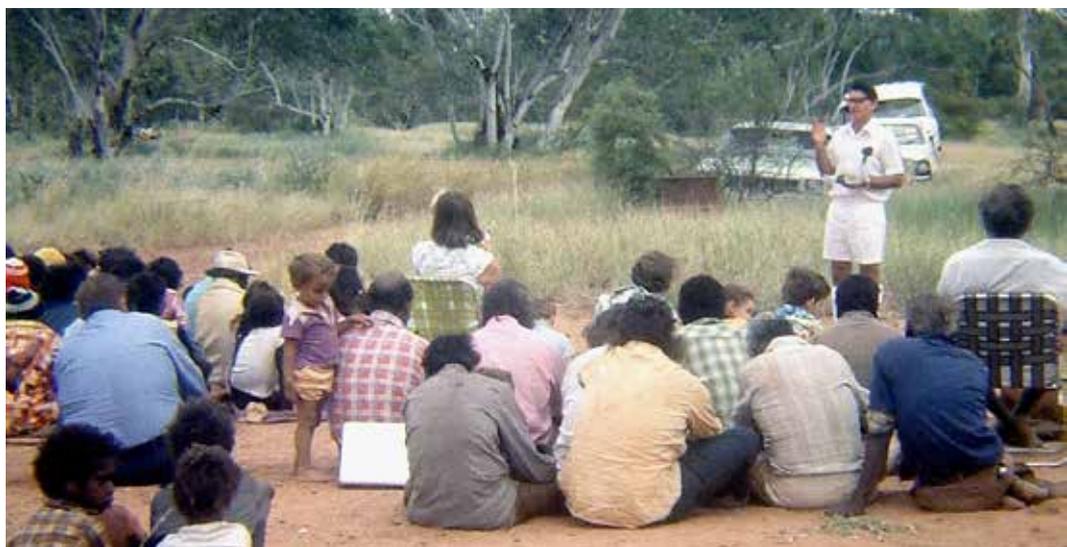
Mr Pattemore treated men and women as equals — as valued co-workers for the kingdom.

Though physically Merv was not a man of great stature, spiritually he stood as a giant in the NT, casting a huge shadow across so much of this vast land.

All who have worked in the Territory with or since his

time have done so in the shadow of his tireless faithfulness — and we are grateful, and are indebted to him. Many in heaven will have thanked God for Merv Pattemore, as so many on earth still do today.

WELL DONE, GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT.



Newspots

Health

Deb Mckerrell is now home after having four weeks in hospital. Unfortunately there is nothing surgically that can be done to help ease her pain. While in hospital she was accepted into the Transition Care program which is like having Rehab at home.



Please continue to pray for *Eugen Freudigmann and Ruth* that they will know God's love and strength through this journey with cancer.

New Workers

Justin and Caitlyn Field from Mudgee NSW have recently been accepted as AIM workers. They and son *Ronan* (age 6) will spend some time with the *Wrights* in Camooweal during June/July. Pray for God's guidance and wisdom regarding their place of ministry.

Rivers Convention

The Rivers Convention was held during the NSW school holidays in April. *Ike and Eileen Gordon*

with support from the *Strahans* from Moree held meetings in seven Northwestern NSW towns over the two weeks. They were also assisted by a Mission Awareness Team. They give thanks and praise to God for the ten new believers and for the opportunities of building up the saints.

Special Birthday

Very special birthday greetings are extended to former Director *Rev Edgerton Long* from all the AIM family. On 23rd July he will reach the remarkable milestone of celebrating his 100th birthday. We thank God for Ed and his faithfulness over the many years, and we pray he will know God's love, care, and nearness every day.

Old Ladies Meetings

The annual Qld Church Council Ladies Meetings were held the first weekend of May. Ladies from several centres gathered in Townsville and enjoyed the program organised by the Palm Island ladies. Everyone was especially blessed to not only have *Peena Gaia* among them, but to have her well enough to lead the meetings and singing. The times of prayer, hearing from God's Word, and sharing brought great encouragement to all who attended.

Aboriginal Art Book

by Peter Dixon

In the evenings on Sunday and Wednesday the Tennant Creek Church loves to gather for 'Sharing'. This is testimony, singing, what has touched them from Bible reading — and for some, sharing paintings.

Susan Nakamarra Nelson paints a lot at Barkly Regional Arts, and she almost always has several paintings on calico for Sharing nights. So it was really exciting to see two of her works included in the Bible Society's bicentennial celebration book *'Our Mob, God's Story'*. These paintings, 'Baptism in the Water', and 'Preparing for Burial' are on two of her favourite themes.

Sixty-six other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists also have paintings in this truly beautiful book. Gail Naden, Max Conlon, Glenny (O'Chin) Naden and Kristy Naden (daughter of Kevin and Glenny Naden) whose artwork is on the front page, are among those who will be familiar to many in AIM circles. The project began when Glenn Goodwin, an accountant in Moree, approached the Bible Society to make a memorial of the faith of Mrs Kath Carrigan with a book celebrating the Gospel message as portrayed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander believers. The steering committee for the book was set up in 2012. Artists were invited to submit paintings depicting a Bible story with a short statement of its special significance to them.

The result shows the importance of pictures in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communications. This fact profoundly impacted Bible Society CEO Greg Clarke. In a radio interview Greg acknowledged that Europeans had made mistakes in suppressing indigenous languages and separating children from their families. *'It's something we're deeply ashamed of as a nation, and certainly as a Christian church, that we have let people down in many places and many times,'* he says. *'We need to face that and be honest about that, and having done that, to be able to explore some of the good things that have happened as well, and learn from that.'*

The book shows the power of visual communication for all of us, especially in this screen age. It is a great encouragement to see the faith and hope the artists have found in Christ and express through their art.

Karen and I were so impressed and encouraged with the book that we made copies available to both Nakamarra and the Church. It is available through Bible Society and Koorong.

Ed. We are grateful to Bible Society and Kristy Naden for allowing us the use of the graphics in this issue.

