

March 2018 – May 2018



AUSTRALIAN INDIGENOUS MINISTRIES

Planting – Partnering – Participating



God loved the world so much that He gave His one and only Son so that whoever believes in Him may not be lost, but have eternal life. John 3:16 NCV

Keeping Up with The Alleys

by Jenni Alley

The following is an excerpt from the newsletter we sent just before Christmas. We are thankful to God for his enduring faithfulness!

SOME MAJOR CHANGES

AIM has been keen to de-centralise the administrative responsibilities for the bus trips from Head Office for quite some time. Additional to this, we ourselves have been considering the advantages of being a more independent operation so as to partner more effectively with multiple mission agencies working with Aboriginal people in Australia. Subsequently and after much juggling with ABN's, a business name, bank accounts and such we now have ownership of the OKA bus through the generosity of AIM and have launched:

Across the Divide. Although, on paper this is a business, we are not intending it to be a profitable venture but rather continue to cover costs for the ministry we plan to do. Our website is a work in progress but you can see how it's going at: acrossthedivide.com.au



Are we going to stay 'missionaries'? We feel very strongly that it is important for us to remain missionaries with an agency — we want to stay accountable and we also desire to be part of a wider network to challenge us and help us serve more effectively. We will be exploring our options in regards to this in the coming few months.

This brings us to an extra personal venture that we have undertaken.

We have made the decision to launch a small machine shop called **Machining Plus** in the wonderful big shed that we have built on our property here. This will allow Rob to have some headspace when he's home from trips, and it's another way for him to contribute financially to our home and practically to our ministry when the need arises.



Rob & Jenni, Isaac, Katie, Miriam



The new machine shop

MISSION AWARENESS TOURS

Our 2017 Mission Awareness Tours were a bit fast and furious. We are so thankful for the opportunities that God has given to us to show people what God is doing in Australia and get them thinking about how they could be involved in God's purpose for all nations around the world.

In April we enjoyed taking a group from Canberra to once again support the ministry of *Ike Gordon* and *Henry Louie* amongst many others in putting

the River Convention on in NSW. We look forward to doing this again this April.

We had a great group from Central Coast Evangelical Church in July including two friends from our church in Taree. It was wonderful to see them continue their partnership with *Jono & Grace Wright* and get involved in the ministry in Camooweal.

In August we thoroughly enjoyed taking a group from St Augustine's, Neutral Bay. They have been long standing supporters of *Richard & Sue Davies* and we had the privilege of taking this group out to Canteen Creek. Even better was that Richard & Sue were there then so that was extra special for the team.

In September we finally got to take a Hunter Bible Church team again after a 5 year break. As always it was a great group. They visited a few communities along the way and then spent the bulk of their time in Canteen Creek. It was special to be able to encourage the church folk there over these two trips. At the end of this trip, we did something different and finished it up at the MTS Mission Minded Conference in Katoomba. It was a wonderful way to conclude. It gave some of the team members the opportunity to think even more practically about options for training in ministry.

Immediately following, we had the privilege of organising the logistics of a get together with Pioneers and AIM leaders visiting different centres in the Northern Territory.

OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

We attended Katoomba ReachOut and National Training Event (NTE) as AIM missionary representatives. Both of these conferences provided a great opportunity to connect with people interested in what God is doing in this area of ministry. Particularly at NTE, we have the privilege of being a sounding board for students as they think and consider how they want to serve God in their future.

We are heavily involved (Jenni is chairperson) in Manning Valley ReachOut. This is a one day missions conference with the aim to see *'all Christians passionately and effectively involved*

in global mission'. It was the second one held in Taree, NSW with the idea of bringing resources to a regional area that haven't previously been easy to access.

A few months ago we said to each other that due to the changes, we would not be overly proactive about chasing bookings for trips for 2018. But by God's grace (and irony!), we already have three, possibly four trips booked in. As mentioned, the first will be in April. This involves a bit of a rush for Rob in regards to the start of year maintenance for the bus and trailer as well as preparing for training days and logistics management. **Please pray that as we continue to work hard to prepare for 2018, that we will be effective servants for God's glory.**



Central Coast group



Manning Valley Reachout

With the Lord

In the late 1970's *Jenny Benson* was a school teacher in Tennant Creek and gave AIM worker *Elizabeth Ham* much appreciated support. She also got to know others in AIM as she joined in the annual Bible Schools that were held in Barunga. Jenny joined AIM as a full time worker in 1982, having done Bible College training many years before.

Elizabeth remembers: Jenny believed strongly that the Lord had called her into full time missionary work and He faithfully helped her make the adjustments necessary for such huge changes to her life. What Jenny did was never about her – it was about building people up in the Lord without taking over. She was a great encourager. And she always enthusiastically joined the ladies in going bush on a hunting trip. Jenny sought to keep up to date with world missions and to see what could help in the development of the Aboriginal Christians and Church.

They left Tennant Creek in 1985 and Jenny joined the work in Alice Springs. She lived and worked at The Gap while *Norm and Lola Wall* continued working in the Mt Nancy area. They worked together where possible and showed support for one another in their ministries in this desert town. Lola shared: “We remember Jenny as always keen to get out and share the Good News with others. In Alice Springs she was involved with home visiting and encouraging people, RI at Yirara College and sharing in meetings. We really enjoyed the time with her and it has been a joy to keep in touch with her over the years since.”

Due to the deteriorating health of her aged parents, and having no siblings, Jenny had to return to Sydney and was never able to go back to the field. But she made valuable contributions to the ministry of AIM through doing countless deputation meetings and keeping prayer groups and churches up to date with news and points for prayer and praise from the field. Jenny also served on the AIM Council for many years after returning to Sydney. Her insight from first-hand field experience brought a valuable contribution to them.

Esther Mackintosh recalls of Jenny: *I would say she fitted in well to the outback scene. She willingly did whatever tasks came to hand but was able to step back when that meant others were given the opportunity to use their gifts and take up responsibility. She stuck to her tasks faithfully – plodding on to contact people in the largely*

unresponsive community of Alice Springs, then going home to care for her parents when her heart was still in missionary work. Jenny was always able to laugh at herself and she was a staunch friend with a genuine interest in the lives of others.

After officially retiring from the Mission and the Council, Jenny remained keenly interested in the work. Each phone call with friends and former co-workers was met with “any news from the field...”. She remained a faithful supporter and prayer partner for the people and work of AIM until her peaceful passing into the presence of her Lord on 12 January 2018.

We give great thanks to God for the life, service, and faithfulness of Jenny.



Enjoying one of her many friends in Tennant Creek

Like Coming Home

Richard and Sue Davies swapped the chill of Cootamundra NSW for the warmer temps of the Territory for several months in the middle of last year. But chasing the sun wasn't their objective... serving *The Son* was! They share below, a few of the highlights of that time.

Our time back in the Territory went well. We were able to connect with people in most places, except Borroloola, where *Vincent Charlie* was unavoidably away. But we found *Muldoon Noble* there and he, like so many other people, enjoys listening to the Bible via the solar powered Megavoice. He puts it in the sun every morning so that he can listen to it as he goes to sleep each night.

The church in Tennant Creek asked Richard to run a series of 8 night classes, which were really well attended. It's always a great joy to us to spend time with them.

'All Wumpurrarni (Aboriginal) people believe in God. It is important for us to have the Bible in our own language. Our young people really need to know about God'. This is what one of the Tennant Creek Warumungu elders told me as we talked about the planned translation of the Scriptures into that language. Being a strong Warumungu speaker, she would like to be involved in some way with the translation. We hear that some who have joined the team have returned to attending church.

Arriving in Canteen Creek was like coming home! We both found it so good to be back. Richard was able to get all his recent translation work on John's Gospel 'road-tested'. People enjoyed coming every afternoon to sit and read through what he had written, making really valuable suggestions which have been incorporated. The SEV Simplified English Version is proving to be quite popular and useful in many areas.

'Have you got any Bibles with you? I like to read the Bible to my children at night, but someone has taken our Bible!' I was quite surprised by this. I realised that though we had lived in the community for 10 years, there were many people we had not known



Circled: Their 'home' in Canteen Creek

very well. I had not known this family well enough to know they read their Bible at night. We have since continued to keep in contact through Facebook and we were able to leave some Bibles at the church for her to look at.

We only spent a few days in Epenarra, and as always, it was good to renew friendships there.

It is interesting how the Lord has given us both the desire to return and spend a longer period of time in Canteen Creek this year. For Richard, it's the ability to get more translation work done. Living in community means hearing the language being used all around you, and there will always be people who can check his work. And I noticed he had more energy when we were there. Every morning before dawn he was out walking in the hills!

For me, it is the ability to spend time one-on-one reading the Bible, and just having time to spend with people. In the past, we were always so busy and dictated to by the clock. The community is delighted that we are going back and will give us 'our house' back again. We have spoken with the church mob, and they know we are not coming back to run things, but to support them.

But before all this happens, we are looking forward to being in New Zealand in early April when our third son, *Simon*, marries *Lydia*. As soon as we return from there, we will be heading back to Canteen Creek for 5 months.

Thank you so much for your prayers for health, strength, safety and good opportunities as we go.

Newspots



RESIGNATION RECEIVED

The following news came from *Bob and Deb McKerrell* in January:

For the past 10 years in our ministry with AIM, we have been most grateful for your prayers and support. Thank you.

As Deb has not been well enough to travel, we have reluctantly decided to resign from AIM.

This has not been an easy decision as our heart still lies with the people and families of the Northern Territory. We would still value your continued prayers for Deb's health, and regarding the sale of the truck and fifth-wheeler.

We thank God for the faithful service of Bob and Deb to our Lord and to AIM. They travelled extensively each dry season in the Territory and conducted Children's meetings in various places. They were always keen to take up the offer to have extended time in places like Elliott and carry out a more extensive and appreciated ministry in a local setting.

Please continue to remember them and their health needs, and pray that God will guide them as they seek avenues of continuing to contribute to the building of His Kingdom.

QUEENSLAND CHURCH COUNCIL

A recent report received from *Jandalyn Mitchell* is as follows:

We give thanks to the Lord for His faithfulness towards Qld Church Council, and for all who have been praying for us. And we give thanks to *Pastor Apenisa and Sister Lolou* for their faithfulness in their many years of service to Church Council and their ministry amongst the Qld Churches. May the Lord bless them abundantly in the future and whatever God has in store for them. Pastor did not stand for re-election for another term as Council Chairperson.

2018 Qld Church Council Leaders chosen by those assembled at the January meetings are:

<i>Chairperson</i>	Lesley Power
<i>Vice Chair</i>	Ruth Moffatt
<i>Secretary</i>	Leanne Bond
<i>Treasurer</i>	Jandalyn Mitchell
<i>CEO</i>	David Chambers
<i>Advisors</i>	Pastor Bill Power Zacheriah Mitchell

Please pray for wisdom, guidance, understanding and UNITY amongst the brethren.

TENNANT CREEK UPDATE

Karen Dixon is thankful to have received a new teaching contract, and is teaching Year 1. This year continues to be off to a good start for her with her having 'a great aboriginal Assistant Teacher' named *Brenda*. There have been some humorous moments, such as when Karen saw lots of students all around the room trying to write with their eyes firmly closed. She had told them to have a go at writing their names without looking!

There have been very good developments in the cultural studies program at the school (including





Language Centre

Warumungu language) also with the high School. Several church ladies are involved with this as well as one of the Bible translation helpers. In spite of holidays and funerals, there continues to be progress made on the Bible Translation Project. *David Blackman*, the AuSIL Translator (Alice Springs) is working towards a Workshop just before Easter. A new Language Centre facility was opened recently. The translation group are praying they will be able to access it on Saturdays.

When the Dixons arrived in Tennant *Peter* thought a good way for him (because of his training) to get a feel for the town would be to sit in the Local Court. He quickly realised that there were ministry opportunities in praying for families and also helping people to understand what was happening. So he is a regular attender at the sittings every second week, sometimes praying outside one on one, but also providing a presence inside the court room.

Oldest and youngest on anniversary day



Pray this generation will follow Jesus

to reopen. The church doors were closed there for nearly 11 years before reopening in 1999.

Pray that those now attending the church will be firmly committed to Jesus, and to making sure the doors remain open as a witness to Him and as an opportunity for many others to hear the Word of God and have fellowship with His people.

STOP PRESS: News has been received that TC Church leader Michael Jones and family have gone to Elliott to spend time serving the Lord. He shared: **'I'm in Elliott for awhile, until God wants me to move.'** Thank God for his willingness to go and ask God to protect them and bless their ministry.

FRONT COVER

Our thanks to *Glenny Naden* for allowing us to use her painting on the front cover and back page (which is copyright and not to be reproduced). She is the daughter of *Nellie (and the late Jack) O'Chin* and the wife of *Kevin Naden*.

Glenny is finding traditional Aboriginal artforms a tremendous avenue for sharing her Christian faith and values. The painting is based on John 3:16 which she first learned in Sunday School days in Cherbourg. The U shapes on page 8 *'represent the people gathering around the meeting places of the people groups,'* while those outward from the cross on the front page are *'the heavenly realm where God is, and a much anticipated place for all believers.'*

KATHERINE CORRECTION

My apologies for proving my maths skills remain poor by stating in the last issue that Katherine Church was opened 60 years ago. Former worker Rev. John Bridges pointed out that it was actually 50 years ago, and he ought to know. He was the AIM worker there then and was of course present on the day it opened! Editor

In January this year the town remembered the flood that devastated Katherine back in 1998. This major event was a catalyst for a number of people to begin seeking the Lord and look for the AIM Church

To Those Who Pray

By John Keane, AIM Council Chairman

As I sat in my study recently I came across an old poem. It tells about the effectiveness of the prayers of those who are part of the support team who pray for missionaries. Some of you have prayed for the ministry of AIM for many years. Some of you I know personally and some I don't. But I want to say how important the part you play is in the ministry of AIM. **Prayer is vital to the effectiveness of our work and you, our prayer partners, are a vital part of our team.**

Because You Prayed (author unknown) A Missionary's poem of thanks

Because you prayed

God touched our weary bodies with His power,
And gave us strength for many a trying hour
In which we might have faltered had not you,
Our intercessors, faithful been — and true.

Because you prayed

God touched our lips with coal from altar fire,
Gave Spirit fullness, and did so inspire
That when we spoke sin-blinded souls did see!
Sin-chains were broken; captives were made free!

Because you prayed

The dwellers in the dark have found the light!
The glad, good news has banished all the night!
The message of the Cross, so long delayed,
Has brought them life at last — **because you prayed!**

Serving the Master is a very demanding task. But it is also a very rewarding task when we hear of people who have been touched by the Lord and have come to experience Him in their lives and had their lives totally transformed by Him. And those of you who pray have an important role to play in these things being accomplished, and in encouraging our workers when they are exhausted in seeking to win people to His kingdom.

So, don't give up — keep praying! Galatians 6:9 reminds us '*And let us not be weary in doing good: for at the proper time we will reap a harvest, if we do not give up.*' And what better thing can we be doing for the work and ministry of AIM than upholding it in prayer as a faithful prayer intercessor. Thank you!



