



June — August 2018

# AUSTRALIAN INDIGENOUS MINISTRIES

Planting — Partnering — Participating



‘How good and pleasant it is when brothers and sisters live together in unity’.  
Psalm 133:1

# Reconciliation

by Rhonda Coats

***'How good and pleasant it is when brothers and sisters live together in unity'.*** (Psalm 133:1) As much as God plans and longs for His people to live in unity with one another, it is sadly not always reality. Having been through a church split I've know firsthand the deep hurts and the ripples that can flood out into the community from problems in the church.

**D**isagreements and problems among believers are often magnified in small churches and small communities. Everyone is well known to each other and many are related by blood or marriage. Loyalties are at times based on those relationships rather than on their relationship with Jesus. And sadly the problems don't always stay within the church. In fact, they rarely do.

The stories get out into the community and begin to spread and grow. Non-believers seem to enjoy hearing of such problems and tend to keep the stories well fuelled. As the problems continue and the stories spread, it is not only the reputation of those involved that are damaged, but that of all Christians along with the church. Non-believers often use these situations as another excuse for rejecting Jesus. The whole testimony of Christianity can be severely marred, not only in that area but into other communities as it flows out to them as well.

Sadly in recent times this type of situation occurred in one AIM area. But God has proven faithful to His Word, and those involved are seeing Romans 8:28 become reality,

***'All things work together for good to those who love God and are called according to His purposes'.***

God has been at work. He has brought about a change in the hearts of those who had left



the fellowship. They approached those who had remained in the church to humbly say 'sorry' and offer an apology. This was accepted and forgiveness was offered in return. What a wonderful example of reconciliation that we should all give thanks for.

God has been faithfully working in the lives of **all** concerned and as one person has said, *'Even in the problems and split of the church, I have seen God at work in all of us to change us.'* People on both sides have been examining their hearts and seeing where they needed to repent for the part they had played in the problems of the past. God has changed attitudes, healed hearts and restored unity among His people.

One of the locals shared: *'If we really love God, then we need to let God heal us from our hearts. What has now happened with our reconciliation is working for good in our own lives and hopefully in helping others to turn to Jesus for salvation. We are reaching out to the community and showing that He came to love and forgive us — not to condemn us. He wants to bring us back to Himself.'* This is the testimony of the now united group.

There seems no good purpose in mentioning the location of this situation. The Lord knows where it is. Please pray that the Christians involved will continue to grow in love, unity and spiritual maturity. Please pray too that others in the community will be challenged by the love and unity the believers now share, and that through this God will draw many others to Himself.

# Our God is Still Able

**An update from John Keane — Council Chairman**

Since the very early days of AIM, the motto has been **'OUR GOD IS ABLE'** — taken from Daniel 3:17. While there are many needs surrounding the ministry of our Mission at this time, we also rejoice that *'our God whom we serve'* in taking the message of Jesus Christ to the Aboriginal people of this land, is proving that He indeed is STILL able.

We are thankful to God for providing us with a new Council member in *Yane Damanik* who was welcomed at our May meeting (see page 8). *David Chambers* of Rockhampton, the CEO of the Queensland Church Council, has also accepted an invitation onto the Council and will attend when possible.

It is very encouraging that there are a couple of other men in the Sydney area who are considering becoming part of the Council as well. One potential member will be spending several months in Epenarra as of July. *Tim Letcher* has invited him to look after things there while he and his family remain on leave for health reasons. We thank God for the way He is providing for the needs of the Council, as well as that of the work at Epenarra. We are of course grateful that *Richard and Sue Davies* have been able to return to Canteen Creek for 5 months and visit the folk at Epenarra.

I have been appointed as Interim Field Director to ensure that all the technical and legal issues are covered since that position has been vacant following the resignation of *Stephen Bignall* at the end of last year.



Following a request made by field workers last year and revisited at a joint meeting between NT Field Staff and Council members in February, the Council has moved to appoint Assessors to help AIM at this particular time. There is an experienced couple heavily involved with mission organisations in NSW who have given positive feedback to our approach for this task. They would not be available to begin the role until July.

The assessment would include current AIM processes, structures and governance and the processes of the talks between AIM and Pioneers. The Assessors would then meet with both NT field staff and Council conjointly to discuss the report and plan the way ahead. Everyone would be expected to attend and this would then be incorporated into a Mission Conference. Please pray that this process will help in discerning God's will and way forward into the future.

The AIM Council has been much in prayer about a new CEO. As most of you are aware, *Trevor Leggott* has been wanting to move into his retirement for some time and had planned to do so in May. I am pleased to report that, at the right time in His planning, God has answered our prayers in providing one who is interested in joining AIM in the role of CEO, with the formal application and interview process moving forward. Trevor will now be staying on for a further three months to prepare a manual of operation for the new CEO and Council, and to transition the mission into the potential new leadership.

Please join us in giving thanks to God for how He has been providing for us — and please continue to pray as the Council meets on the 2nd Tuesday of each month and consider important matters.



# Member Care

by Cliff Letcher

With the cold weather coming on it's time to think about our trip north to the Northern Territory. Well it's not the cold that takes us there. It's the need to be with workers and Church leaders offering pastoral care and encouragement in isolated places - people who are a long way from their supporting churches, family, and friends.

In reflecting on this need I'm reminded that there is a vast array of needs in our world. I was recently challenged to look at these needs and the awful troubles and suffering we are constantly buffeted with, and think about how our God feels about all these. In 1 Samuel 15 Samuel grieves so deeply (or is so angry — I suspect both emotions are present) over God's rejection of Saul as king that he cries out to the Lord all night. I was challenged to bring the things that grieve me or upset me before the Lord and am now trying more to think about the news items, or whatever is concerning me, with reference to our God and Father and to tell Him how I'm feeling about these situations.

Probably the most pressing need that I see is for God's people to increasingly take up the challenge of the work of God's Kingdom. We pray *'Your Kingdom come...'* and it seems to me that God's Kingdom comes as we live out His values; as we, as it were, turn the world upside down; as we struggle to turn our backs on the values of the society around us seeking to serve rather than be served.

Jesus implored us — no commanded us — to pray that the Lord of the harvest would push workers out into the harvest. He told us that there is plenty of work to do but there is a lack of workers. We are being challenged by Jesus to express the heart of our God by passionately praying that people will take up the challenge of the work of the Kingdom. While that applies to the broad spectrum of everyday life it also has a specific focus of reaching those who have never heard the Gospel. How often do you pray that God will send workers to particular places in His world?

In recent years AIM has been facing the difficulty of recruiting workers. While from a human perspective



we may need to be more creative in how we seek new workers, **we desperately need people to join with us in following our Lord's command to pray for worker.** It may be necessary to look at seeking the help of other organisations who are good at recruiting, but **prayer needs to be top on the list of what we need to do.**

Going back to my starting point I want to share with you my personal deep desire for more workers to stand with the AIM churches in the NT. As we travel north each year we see this great need. In particular I want to share my burden for someone (preferably a couple) to take over this role that Carolyn and I have been involved with in what is often termed 'Member Care'. Age is catching up with us. It would be good to be able to introduce our replacements while we are still able to travel. I'm thinking that a couple who could live in the NT would be good. **Will you commit to join with us in this request to the Lord of the harvest?**

# Working in Western NSW

Over the past five years, *Henry and Maria Louie* have been traveling up to the small country town of Pilliga to hold Kids Club during school holidays. The Bible stories, games and activities have been much appreciated and anticipated each year. Relationships began to form and the Lord was putting a growing concern on the hearts of Henry and Maria for the adults as well as the children of this area.

While they considered going up there to minister on a more regular basis, Henry was concerned about the needs at Gilgandra. The Lord has helped him work out a plan that sees both groups regularly being ministered to.

Three times a month Henry and Maria go up to Pilliga on Saturday to visit with folk in the area. As the Anglican minister only gets there once a month, he makes the church available for Henry to use for services. *Mark and Neville Naden* from Dubbo and *Tommy Sloane* from Wellington take turns sharing God's Word in Gilgandra when Henry is away.

Henry is back in Gilgandra for the weekly meetings held in the church such as prayer meeting, Bible study, and cottage meetings. Well known members, *Kathy (Naden) Bird and Phyllis (Naden) Morgan* help him with Scripture in the school, and carry his responsibilities there when he has to be away for Council meetings or other matters. As he says, 'We are all workers together for the glory of God in Gilgandra'.

The Christians of Gilgandra joined together for a week of prayer in May. Each night people would meet in a different church and pray together for their town, for one another, and as a witness to the community.

At the end of May there was to be a special event in Pilliga. Those who offer services to the community such as the visiting dentist and various health workers, government agencies, etc. were to gather over a 3 day period to share their information with the people of the district. Henry was asked to share God's message during this time and was eager to take up the opportunity.



**Henry, Joshua, and Maria Louie**



**Tommy Sloane, Kathy Bird, Stella Sloane, Phyllis Morgan**



**after church in Pilliga**



**fellowship in Pilliga**



**enjoying fellowship in Gilgandra**



## Wright Adjustments

**T**he *Wright family* have just survived the first wintry blast of the season while on their year of sabbatical in Rutherglen Victoria.

In January, Jono arrived there with the last load from Camooweal feeling completely exhausted. They assumed it was simply the result of the previous month of packing, farewells, and moving all catching up with him but it never seemed to lift.

They shared the following: *Intense joint pain was an indicator that things were not all as they seemed and a diagnosis of Ross River Virus followed.*

*Although things are a lot better than they were there is still a potentially long road ahead to recovery as his body does battle with the virus and the many ups and downs that involves.*

*We cannot help but smile at God's timing for all of this. It would have made things a lot more difficult in the heat and stress of ministry in Camooweal. Once again God proves Himself to be a very good God, all the time!*

*The kids are settling in quite well to school in Rutherglen. Elijah and Tjanara seem to be especially enjoying new things and new friends. Manoah is struggling in some ways to get used to the new world he suddenly finds himself in.*

In being back down south they have been reminded that:

- Church starts at a specific time and they do not wait for everyone to arrive before it starts
- Everything runs to times and calendars and not so much by word of mouth
- White faces are the majority
- Everyone talks a lot more
- Summer does not equal virtual death, but winter just might!
- People seem to be defined by their job rather than who they are as a person...etc., etc.

The kids are also getting used to a church where dad is not sharing every week and there is regular Sunday School. Elijah also has the benefit of a Youth Group. **Pray that the children will grow in grace and faith in Jesus.**

Jono is currently working on bringing his NT Greek up to standard and will be doing further studies as well. **Pray that the studies will be helpful and that he can process the information. Grace would appreciate prayer as she develops relationships with the women both in and outside of the church.**

Although away from the mission field Jono is still able to contribute to the ministry by attending the monthly AIM Council meetings and has been able to travel up to Sydney by train most months since arriving in North East Victoria. The field workers are very grateful for his willingness to regularly attend as their representative. **Please continue to pray for the AIM family as we seek God's way for the future.**



Home sweet home in CC

## Back In Canteen Creek

**R**ichard and Sue Davies arrived back in Canteen Creek late in April after a safe and trouble free trip from NSW. They plan to spend the next several months there.

The little tin house they lived in for 10 years has been made available to them again, and they were so grateful for the groups of people who had gone in and did an initial clean-up of the house and yard. A huge snake track deterred any further visits from the helpers though!

The house has been used for temporary accommodation, and is unfurnished now, so Richard has been busy manufacturing basic furniture from scrap steel. They are grateful that *Tim and Jane Letcher* from Epenarra have offered the use of a small fridge, and anything else they need. The Letchers are spending extended time in Perth for health reasons.

One night shortly after their arrival, a sprinkle of rain fell across the community and surrounds. Richard found the smell of the desert grasses intoxicating and stood outside at 3am just to breathe in the desert.

There weren't many people in the community when they arrived. Royalty money negotiations were taking place on a Sandover Highway community. There are many things that take people away these days.

One Wednesday night Richard and Sue sat at the church in the dark and eventually 5 ladies and a couple of kids came for a meeting. There was no singing, just talking about Jesus and reading the Bible together.

One young girl mentioned that she had given her life to Jesus at the Easter weekend meetings held in Canteen Creek. The Lord is working quietly calling people to be part of his family.

On Sunday morning a 12 year old girl opened the church meeting with prayer. About a dozen children had come to Sunday school along with 6 adults. Richard explained Matthew 6 on the prayer Jesus taught His disciples. Sue taught Sunday school that week as the church leader had been away and only returned late the day before. With people returning from meetings and training, the usual routine will soon be back in place.

Richard has been busy translating and is making good progress through the Gospel of John. Please pray that he will be able to get a lot of that book translated and road tested before the Mini Bible comes out later in the year.

Pray that both Richard and Sue will enjoy good health and strength as they renew friendships and seek to encourage and build up God's church both in Canteen Creek and Epenarra communities over the next few months.



Translation checking

# Newspots



## New Council Member

The Aim Council welcomed *Yane Damanik* as a new member at the May meeting. She brings important experience not only as a field worker, but as a member of a council.

Yane has had experience serving at a board level. From 2000 until 2006 she was active on the Board of Directors for World Hope Foundation of Indonesia, a Christian relief and development organisation. Yane served as the Chairperson until 2014. She also has had experience in senior management. She held the position of Executive Director of HS Micro, a micro-finance ministry which she co-founded with World Hope International. As a director she was responsible for all aspects of the operation: strategy, portfolio for growth, human resources, and financial stewardship.

No doubt Yane will be a very valuable asset to the AIM Council as they prayerfully seek God's way forward for the future.

The Damanik family have settled into life on leave from ministry with AIM. They are currently living at Bethshan in Wyee NSW where Roni is a maintenance worker. *Ryan and Edith* have settled in well at school. Yane is working part time as a student learning support officer at a Christian school and continues to work on her research study project.

## Tennant Creek

In Tennant Creek the Indigenous Language and Program is growing in both the Primary and the High Schools. Not only is *Karen Dixon* a part of this on the school side but it also relies on Warumungu people like *Annie, Sandra and Ronald Morrison* from the AIM Church. A recent highlight was an excursion to Mary Anne Dam learning Warumungu names for birds. A trip was also made to the newly developed Juno Farm youth training facility to the east of the town.

Karen's class has been looking at farming and *Peter* helped *Richard Driver* visit the classroom to talk about his days as a stockman. Richard has a granddaughter in the class and that was a really good supplement to a family visit day.

Karen is thanking Kampaju ('Father') for healing an infection in her toe. Also, following further staff changes, she is beginning to help the school singing group prepare for a festival in Alice Springs in Term Four.

The Church was asked to share at a family gathering on May 12 to dedicate a gravestone at their outstation for a church leader who went to be with Jesus in 2009. Those who were able to go testified to the opportunity to share the good news and are praying for those family members. Michael Jones was able to join them for this time and shared the Bible story about the Prodigal Son. He hopes that it challenges those who used to walk with the Lord to turn back to Him.

## Alice In The Alice

After some time in Dubbo NSW followed by a short stint at the Royal Darwin Hospital, *Alice Schroers* has returned to Alice Springs to continue on in her medical training. She has found that tracking down the ladies from the Bible study group from before has been

difficult. A number have moved out of town, but she has had a happy reunion with a couple of them. She would appreciate prayer for clarity regarding ministry direction as this group will not operate the same way and she is aware of the many needs in Central Australia — even among non-indigenous people.



She has started visiting prisoners in Alice Springs Correctional Centre with an aim to practice preaching to the women as well as glorifying God and growing their understanding and love of Him. She has also had a few good opportunities to share with non-Christian migrants from China, Taiwan and Korea so please pray for wisdom in how she should best use her gifts and time.

There have been some complications with paperwork and getting recognition for past work rotations. Pray that the process will go smoothly and that a fair outcome will prevail. Alice is now preparing for her final exams which will take place in about 12 months time and would appreciate our prayers for this as well.

## Darwin Doings

Recently *Rhonda Coats* answered the phone to a very quiet voice. It was a young lady from Lake Nash who had arrived in Darwin for medical treatments. She has been enjoying getting to know *Karin* and trying to encourage her walk with Jesus during her time in Darwin.



There have also been good opportunities to spend time with from Katherine, Elliott and Tennant Creek when they have been in Darwin for training, various meetings, and getting kids settled into boarding schools.

Recently when entering the hospital to visit a friend she came across a lady from Borroloola. Then as she was leaving she was pleasantly surprised to find another 6 people from there whom she knew. She enjoyed catching up with them all and had a wonderful opportunity to have an in-depth talk with some about their walk with the Lord. Please pray that people in Borroloola will be willing to walk with the Lord and stand for Jesus as social problems deepen in that community.

Rhonda often receives phone calls from various places around the field. Sometimes it is people like *Michael Jones* ringing to share about his ministry in Elliott and to ask about various resources that will help him in that work. Others ring to share needs and even encouragements of what the Lord is doing

in their lives or that of their family or community. She enjoys these opportunities to encourage and pray with them, even though separated by such vast distances.

## In Tassie

After the wrench of having Woolanin Christian School suddenly closed last year, *Marian Quinn* returned to her home in Tasmania.

Jobs are not that plentiful right now in Tassie, and so Marian has enrolled in a TAFE Certificate 4 course in Community Studies. She is finding the course and those involved very interesting and appreciates the support of the staff.

She was recently encouraged as she read a book telling that God's plan is for us all to live in community. She shared, *'Sometimes when I feel lonely I remember that In Christ I'll always have community — the community of Father, Son and Holy Ghost.'* Please continue to pray for Marian as she studies, adjusts to new relationships while missing others, and learns more of Jesus.



## Death

*Merv Topp* went to be with the Lord in early May. He first became known to many in AIM through association with Mission Publications while he was serving with United Aborigines Mission.

For a number of years he served in the role of AIM Victorian Representative. He was a faithful and enthusiastic promoter of the work and the needs for a number of years, especially at the Belgrave Heights Convention. The sympathy and prayers of the AIM family are extended to his wife *Elizabeth* as she adjusts to life without Merv.





## Tennant Creek mob giving an item at Katherine Christian Convention

### Elliott

What a thrill when *Michael Jones* responded in faithfulness to go to Elliott for ministry in late February. He and his wife *Jorna* have been many trips back and forth to TC for various land meetings and family business. Several members of both their families have had serious health issues.

But when they are in Elliott Michael takes the opportunity to share from God's Word, both one on one with people as well as in camp meetings that get organised in town or out at the Marlinja Community where *Raymond and Thelma Dixon* live.

There has been disappointment as some who had once followed the Lord are going their own way for now. But a few others have stepped out in faith and have made commitments to Christ. Michael is spending time helping them to grow in their faith.



### Rockhampton Church Camp

The Rocky fellowship took advantage of the holiday weekend in early May by having a Family Camp at Mapleton Qld. For some, it was their first time to attend a church camp and the report was '*they thoroughly enjoyed it!*' Earlier this year *Vanessa Conlon* (pictured) was baptised. She and her brother *Selwyn* both attended the camp. The following week she had the courage and confidence to lead the Sunday Service in Rocky.



A number of children went to the camp and *Jandalyn Mitchell* had a special program for them while the others shared together as well as meeting in men's and ladies groups. They all had a blessed time and hope that others from the Qld AIM Churches will be able to join them next year.

# Century Celebration

**D**espite ill health for many years, former worker *Harry Kleinschmidt* will celebrate his 100th birthday on 20th June.

Before joining AIM, Mr K (as he is known by many in the mission) attended the Bible College of Queensland where he entered as the first of three foundational students. It was reported that he finished the course 'very satisfactorily' even though he only had a 6th grade education. He was described as having a 'steady character' and being 'very earnest' during his college days.

He was accepted into the AIM way back in December 1949 and his first place of ministry was Woorabinda. He went out as a single man, then soon after married *Audrey Harvey*. Together they returned to minister in Woorabinda and stayed until their eldest was ready to begin school.

They then moved to Moree NSW where they ministered for the next five years. It was a busy time holding Church services, Sunday school, cottage meetings, open-air meetings and visiting many of the outlying towns. Among the places Mr K visited was Pilliga where *Henry Louie* now visits regularly (see page 5).

There were some lean financial times for the Kleinschmidts during their Moree days. They were encouraged on several occasions when *Mrs Draper*, one of the Aboriginal Christians would arrive with a box of groceries for the family. Only God had known that their cupboards were empty. Her husband was *Bert Draper*, a well-known and very faithful local Christian at that time.

On another occasion Mr K had been asked to share about their work in a local church. The next day as he parked his old car in town, another one pulled in alongside him. It was a lady from the church where he had spoken. She asked him to visit her the next day for a chat. He remembers joking with Audrey that she probably had some old used clothes for them. When he went to her house he got quite a shock. She wanted to help them in their work and did so by giving him enough money to buy a brand new car — the first new car he ever had! It was a real blessing and asset as he travelled

around to take God's Word to as many Aboriginal people in country towns and communities as possible.

From the northwest of NSW, Mr K and his family then moved to Townsville where they were to spend the next six years. During this time his ministry included visiting Charters Towers and would often see him on the boat crossing the rough waters to Palm Island. He also got involved in jail visitation while in Townsville.

Sometime later he had a heart attack and had to 'retire' from full time work. They moved to Inala where he began the AIM work. For some time he enjoyed the help and fellowship of *Maurice and Judy Kuss* and (the late) *Irvine and Dauhne Kuss* in the ministry there. When *Aunty Nellie O'Chin* and (the late) *Aunty Viola Hill* took on the leadership at Inala and they were always keenly supported by Mr and Mrs Kleinschmidt.

Eventually Mr K (and Audrey) moved into the Baptist /Carinity Care Brookfield Village (Haven Lodge, 139 Gold Creek Road, Brookfield Qld 4069). He continues to be interested in the work of AIM and is a faithful prayer supporter.



**Harry, Audrey and family**

# With the Lord

**O**n 19th June *Lelean Pattemore* went home to be with her Lord. She had entered the AIM in 1950 as *Lelean Stewart* and was first sent to Palm Island. There was no one in Townsville to meet her and get her to the boat for P.I. as had been arranged — and her suitcase was missing! But she trusted the promise *‘Be not afraid neither be though dismayed for I the Lord thy God am with thee.’* Her case was soon located and she got to the boat just before it set sail. She was greeted on P.I. by the local missionary who listed the 12 meetings held each week — six of which *Lelean* was to take. She had no time to freshen up before heading off for a children’s meeting followed by an evening meeting at the church!

In July 1951 she and (the late) *Merv Pattemore* were wed. After a short time of ministry in Belyuen they and their firstborn (*Joy*) were headed for Borroloola where she arrived to find her new ‘home’ was just some makeshift roofing with a partition down the middle. This was shared with two single men missionaries for 6 weeks while better accommodation was constructed.

There was never a complaint from her about conditions or anything else she faced. She rejoiced through the years at how the Lord always supplied all that they had needed — and often at Borroloola it was through the generosity of the local people with whom they shared a deep mutual love. She counted it all joy to be in the service of her Lord.

At their first Borroloola Christmas celebrations, Mr Pattemore ran a spotlight from the truck battery while she taught them using flannelgraph pictures. During the rainy season they held four adult reading classes each week for those in from cattle stations.

After 9 years of faithful and fruitful ministry, they moved into Darwin where Mr Pattemore became Superintendent of Retta Dixon Homes. Besides caring for her own large family (which grew to 8) Mrs Pattemore showed love and concern to both staff and RDH residents alike. Having a leading role in Girl’s Brigade, helping with camps for the RDH residents as well as students from Kormilda Boarding school, and holding ladies meetings were among her ministries. She found much joy in serving the Lord in each opportunity.

When her own children were grown she loved visiting the AIM NT centres with Mr Pattemore. They also made regular trips to Humpty Doo Station as well as around the Darwin Harbour for meetings in Belyuen. This continued long past their official retirement.



A former worker said of Mrs Pattemore, *‘her hospitality was not just inviting people in for a cuppa, but her whole personality was hospitable. She seemed to always welcome a person with open arms and always had a ready smile for everyone. She radiated love.’* Others remember her as *‘gentle and caring’, ‘empathetic’, ‘consistent’, ‘constant in faith, love, and faithfulness’, ‘always trusting the Lord’, ‘one who never spoke a harsh or negative word to or about others’.*

Her gentle caring way endeared her to all. To Christians she was always supportive and encouraging, and to non-believers always caring and ready to speak a word regarding their spiritual need. She was the matriarch of a very large family, and was always ready to welcome others into her circle of love. A wonderful example of Christ Jesus — she will be deeply missed.



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