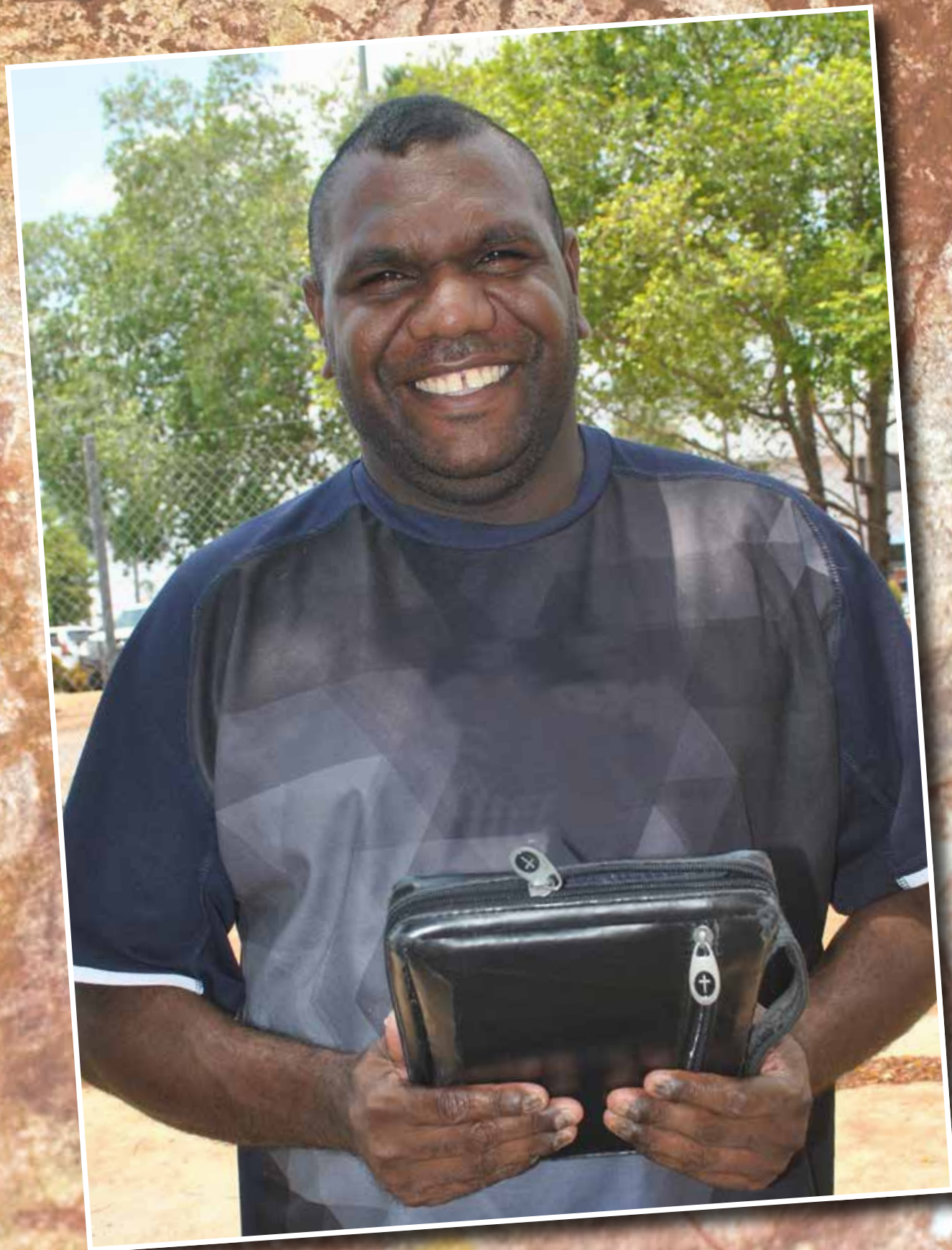




December 2018— February 2019

AUSTRALIAN INDIGENOUS MINISTRIES

Planting — Partnering — Participating



Keeping On in Katherine

see page 10



Back to Borrooloola

by Michelle Lyon – team leader

Day 1: Sydney — Darwin

It's that time of the year again and the long awaited trip begins! Since 2012 when a relationship between Caringbah Baptist Church and Borrooloola Community Church was established with the help of AIM, teams from CBC have regularly visited BCC. We've been preparing for our visit for months and we are pretty excited...and maybe a little nervous. Half of the team are youth who are coming without their parents. The 'non-youth' team members are a mix of first timers and people who've been before. And so we begin by flying from Sydney to Darwin.

Day 2 & 3: Darwin-Kakadu

We saw crocodiles at Cahills Crossing and then got to admire God's creative work, watching the sunset from atop Ubirr rock before camping at Kakadu. The next morning we went out on an Indigenous cultural boat tour. The team were really struck by the botanical knowledge our guide had, as well as by the number of crocs we saw! As we set out on the long drive to Borrooloola we're very thankful to have Rob Alley facilitating the trip for us again.

Day 4 & 5: Borrooloola

It was a joy to finally arrive in Borrooloola and catch up with the church leader Vincent Charlie and church

member Muldoon Noble. We visited the Borrooloola museum and enjoyed spending time with locals in a communal area and playing on the oval.

Day 6

Today we joined our brothers and sisters at Borrooloola Community Church. It was a blessing and encouragement for us to see how 'real' the church members were, sharing with each other about their lives and what God is doing. We were really challenged to model this in our own church community — risking being 'real' about our lives and faith and ignoring the pressure to look like we have it all together. Evening church was in Garrawa camp and we were encouraged by many people coming and hearing Vincent preach the gospel and sharing in songs and testimonies.

Day 7 & 8

We've really enjoyed catching up with local people, sharing stories and photos and having an impromptu evening of sharing, singing, praying, and reading the Bible together. Within the team, we have been having lots of deep conversations about how we are seeing God at work, what we can learn from the church here, how we can be an encouragement, and how God is growing each of us individually through this experience.

Day 9 & 10: Robinson River

We were privileged to go with Vincent and Muldoon to visit Robinson River. We felt warmly welcomed and enjoyed swimming in the river with the local kids. The highlight was worshipping Jesus together with the Christians. We started out with a puppet show of the prodigal son and then Vincent explained the story, followed by lots of singing and testimonies. Next time we hope we can stay longer.

Day 11 & 12: Borrooloola

One of the men from the town offered to take some of the team fishing, so we sent the boys out early in the morning. It was a great time of relationship building, though the barramundi eluded them! In the evening, we were prompted by some church members to put on the puppet show in a nearby playground. They were right, loads of kids turned up! After the puppet show and singing Vincent explained the story. The kids seemed to really enjoy it and we invited them to Sunday school.

Day 13

Our final day of fellowship at church — the kids from last night didn't come for Sunday school, but we caught up with some at the pool later in the day. Evening church was in Mara camp, and then we said our farewells. It was quite an emotional time. It has been a privilege to get a glimpse of how God is at work in Borrooloola and Robinson River.

Day 14 & 15

There was a sense of sadness as we left. We'll miss our brothers and sisters, but that feeling was mixed



Charlotte and Muldoon



Jacob and Vincent

with thankfulness and awe at the way our shared faith in Christ has brought a bunch of Sydneysiders into a growing relationship with the Borrooloola and Robinson River mobs. We hope our time has been an encouragement to them. It certainly has been a blessing for us and we look forward to sharing more years of mutual encouragement and fellowship together.



What Impacted Me Most

by Cliff Letcher – Member Care

With Christmas just around the corner it's good for us to pause and remind ourselves what an incredible gift God has given us in sending His own Son to live in this world. He came to proclaim the Kingdom of God breaking into this world and so showed what that Kingdom looks like by declaring that He came to serve and not be served. Jesus' death on the cross is the ultimate act of service. He served us by giving us an open door into the very presence of His Father.

As I write this it is not long after returning from our trip of visiting and encouraging the AIM family in the NT, and being encouraged by them. How does one reflect on two and a half months of travelling and visiting those centres in a short magazine article? Not, I think, by a travelogue of our trip but by highlighting a few of the things that impacted me most.

Firstly the **commitment to service** demonstrated by so many in the AIM family. Both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people are actively serving our Lord throughout the NT. There are people in isolated places who faithfully continue in the service of our Lord regardless of how many or how few people share in the life of the church in those places. But even with that faithful service, there is often a deep desire for some outside support and encouragement.

Needs like that highlight what I mentioned in my last article — there is a great need for God's people to be praying for new workers to be 'thrust out into the harvest field' — which includes someone/a couple to replace us in this role of member care. Along with this, there is a great need for God's people to be praying for the existing workers and Church Leaders who face the constant challenges of ministry. Please will you commit to praying for these people and their situations on a regular basis.

Another thing evident to us was the **spiritual warfare** that is involved in the work of the Kingdom. Seeing people who have been soundly professing faith losing their way among the many pressures they experience within their communities and families dragging people into violent conflict and into alcohol and gambling are examples of the way this warfare is evident.

Over time we have built connections with people in other Christian organisations working in the NT with substantial involvement with Indigenous people. This year we had several of those people who talked about the consequence of bad leadership in their organisations — bad leadership that damages people and results in workers being lost to the work of the Kingdom. We need to be praying for the Gospel work to continue despite the spiritual warfare. Pray specifically for leaders to exercise their leadership with humility and grace as they model the life of their Lord — a life of service.



Kangaroo cooking at Canteen Creek



Warren Laylin teaching at Epenarra

Finally — **encouragement**. There was a great deal that encouraged us during this trip. We are encouraged as we share with the many groups of faithful people around the NT. It is always encouraging to be able to listen to people sharing how they are seeing God at work in many different ways. We often heard testimonies of what God is doing in people's lives, which is one of the features of the Indigenous church in their sharing times. We were encouraged to see the church at work. We were encouraged to find people for whom AIM has been such an important part of their lives.

It was also encouraging to be able to spend some time with the new General Director *Roy Hatfield* in a couple of the centres. He was visiting most of the NT places where AIM is working and his enthusiasm was infectious. He expressed great delight in seeing what God is doing in many people's lives. Please pray for

Roy as he works with the Council in exploring the way forward for AIM as the Holy Spirit leads.

When Jesus came into our world He entered into a challenging and difficult environment. He experienced opposition and challenges that were hard for Him to face. He expressed anger at ungodly behaviour, wept in the face of death, and agonised at the prospect of being separated from His Father.

Jesus did not seek for a comfortable life for Himself, and He calls us to take up our cross and follow Him. Jesus did not come to give us an easy comfortable life but to give us eternal life. He gave us the command to make disciples of all nations and made it clear to us that that involves teaching the new disciples to live in obedience to Him. This can only happen as we pray and work together as God's people united to our Lord like a branch to a vine.

Farewells

by John Keane

On a recent Saturday afternoon, AIM Council members and their wives/husband and children, together with representatives from the Queensland Church Council, met to farewell *Trevor Leggott* and *Arthur Nicolson*. As mentioned last issue, both have retired from AIM after many years of faithful ministry.

It was a great afternoon of fellowship, food and 'catching up', during which time plaques were given to both men and roses to their wives. These two couples have made a great contribution to AIM and while they will certainly be missed, we wish them God's richest blessing in retirement.



Trevor and Pamela



QCC Reps: Jandalyn Mitchell (treasurer)
Lesley Power (chairperson)



Arthur and Betty



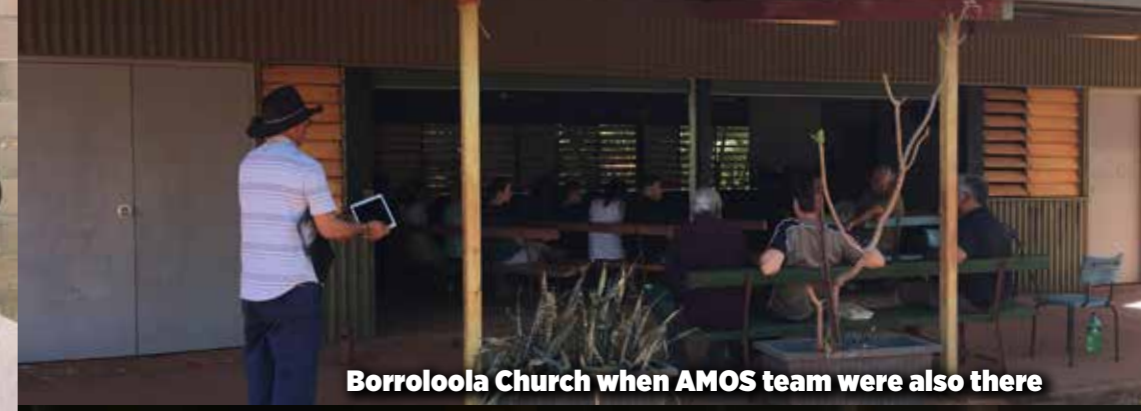
TC Camp meeting



Canteen Creek meeting



Anita, Jocelyn, and Roy



Borrooloola Church when AMOS team were also there



Canteen Creek mob with Kevin, Ike, and Andrew

CEO Update

from Roy Hatfield

When I was younger I spent a lot of time in the north, especially Northwest Qld. I did my apprenticeship at Mt Isa and worked in Darwin and so had travelled across the Barkly Highway and up and down the Stuart Highway from Darwin to Alice Springs a bit. I had been back a few times over the past 40 years and now I was returning in a new role as the AIM CEO/General Director.

I left home (Grafton NSW) 10th September heading for the Tennant Creek Birthday Weekend. I would have attended this celebration anyway to meet church members and staff in that region, but I had reluctantly accepted the invitation to take the studies on the topic 'Growing in Faith'. In addition to attending the celebrations, the trip north would also give me the opportunity to visit other locations in the Territory and get a sense of the work and issues facing the ministry up there.

Because I'm a Queenslander and now live in NSW and have spent a little time in the NT over the years I have an appreciation of the diversity in culture (both Aboriginal and mainstream), language and Christian

cultures across the States and across the AIM work. There is a lot in common but also there are a lot of differences. In the Territory I could see the changes over the longer distances and then changes that would occur in a very short distance from one area to another. An example of this was the different bible versions used from the Good News version, NCV, Easy to Read Version (ERV), Kriol, KJV and others as well as translations in various languages.

I travelled with *Ike Gordon* from Brewarrina and *Kevin Slabb* from Tweed Heads. We caught up quickly with *Cyril Anderson* in Camooweal and planned for a longer stay on the return trip to catch up with both he and his wife *Thelma*. We arrived in Tennant and met up with *Peter Dixon* in the morning. The first meeting of the weekend was at a town camp where I met *Michael Jones*, *Richard Driver* and old friend *Cedric Tennyson*. Cedric and I met at an AIM conference at Yeppoon Qld some 35 years earlier. Over the three days we met a lot of the people and saw the good work that had been done over many years. Being a musician I appreciated the music and singing and that by itself was impressive. I was humbled by the hospitality and fellowship and

encouraged by the witness of the church within the community. There were a number of meetings over the weekend and we saw rededications of both young and old people for the Lord.

We then travelled to Epenarra and Canteen Creek where we caught up with *Andrew Bob* whom we met in Tennant Creek. We had a great outdoor meeting where we had young people singing choruses, testimonies and the sharing of God's Word. Pray for *Aaron*, *Rebekah*, *Dorothy*, *Marlene*, *Estelle* and *Andrew*. Next day we travelled to Alice Springs and caught up with *Alice Schroers*, inspected the AIM property and then went to Elliott where we met with *Michael* and *Jorna Jones* and *Cliff Letcher*.

Next day we went to Katherine for a couple of nights and met *Noel McDonald*, *David Hughes* and *Edward O'Connor* from the Katherine AIM Church. We also met up with *Rhonda Coats* who had travelled down from Darwin, and she and I paid a visit to the community of Barunga and met with *Anita Painter* and *Jocelyn McCartney*. I inspected the church and also the manse which had seen better days. On the following morning we headed for Borrooloola where on the Sunday *Vincent Charlie* led and shared God's Word and *Muldoon Noble* shared his testimony.

The next morning we left for Camooweal where I planned to stay the night. We had been travelling for two weeks, it had been 39 degrees in Katherine and Borrooloola and the guys were missing the comforts of home and a bed as we had slept on the floor for a lot of the trip. We arrived in Camooweal on sunset and I met with *Cyril* and *Thelma*. We were strongly encouraged to travel onto Mt Isa for a guaranteed bed for the night and so we moved on. Several more days of travel and a bit of a rest and we made it to Gilgandra for the Labour Day Weekend meetings with *Henry* and *Maria Louie* and the Gilgandra Church.

When I arrived home we had travelled 10500 kms in three weeks. It was an informative trip which was our intention with Darwin being the only NT centre we did not visit. There are many needs in both personnel and resources for the work that is ahead of us.

In the next few months there are some major decisions which need to be made by the AIM Council, we have the Annual Conference at Wyee in January 11-14, along with the independent assessor's report to be considered. **We value your prayers for knowledge and wisdom concerning these matters and that we are centred in His will and calling.** 'Now unto him that is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think according to the power that worketh in us'. Ephesians 3:20

Birthday Weekend

by Peter Dixon and Richard Driver

September is Tennant Creek's month for celebrating the anniversary of the AIM Church building — the Birthday Weekend. This year the 34th birthday was marked on the 14th-16th.

It actually started earlier with lots of planning, singing practice and banner creating by the ladies. There was also a working bee the weekend before under the leadership of *Ron and Sandra Morrison*. The church had readily adopted *Richard Driver's* theme suggestion: 'Growing in Faith', and looked forward to listening to new AIM CEO *Roy Hatfield* as the main speaker.

The celebrations began well with outreach sharing at Tingkarli Town Camp on Friday night led by *Jameson Casson*. In introducing himself, Roy was able to join in the reminiscing as he recalled visiting TC in his youth, back in the time when meetings were held under the Mission house. Many testimonies from near and far were shared of God's power to change our lives.

On Saturday morning in the church building *Geoffrey Shannon* led the meeting with the choir again opening with their theme songs, 'How Great Thou Art' then 'He is Lord' in English plus Warumungu, Alyawarr and Warlpiri. This was followed by the worship songs 'We Are Gathering' (also in those languages) and 'The Steadfast Love of the Lord'. Roy began his focus on the life of Abraham and everyone was blessed.

Jorna Murphy and Karen Dixon with the help of *Nellie Morrison*, had a great session with the kids in the bus shed on the theme of 'God Makes Everything'.



Roy Hatfield

Mobs were here from Epenarra and Canteen Creek, as well as *Richard and Sue Davies* heading back to Cootamundra after doing some translation work in Darwin. The fellowship was rich around the barbecue.

In the evening we had a powerful Sharing Night at Dump Camp under the leadership of *Ronald Morrison*. *Marlene Waistcoat* shared a canvas, *Andrew Bob* from Canteen Creek a testimony and many people shared songs and Bible words. Roy was accompanied on his trip by two mates. *Kevin Slabb* from Tweed Heads shared his very relevant testimony and AIM Council member *Ike Gordon* clearly presented the Good News. Many responded to the invitation in stepping out with Jesus and in recommitment.

On Sunday morning the gathering was led by *Jimmy Brodie* and Roy completed what he had time for on the life of Abraham as the kids continued in the shed with their leaders.



BBQ time



Geoffrey Shannon



Jimmy Brodie

In the evening things were wrapped up in the church building with *Cedric Tennyson* leading. In addition to the sharing from locals, the three blokes from the East Coast enjoyed sharing some music with Kevin using his ukulele. The kids had a final session in the shed and those who drive the bus have been encouraged by their artwork ever since.

Other TC News: On Sunday 4th November Tennant Creek Church met at Mary Ann Dam to rejoice together in the baptisms of *Darren, Nellie, and Harrison* from Tennant Creek, and *Edward* from Elliott. *Geoffrey Shannon* led the baptismal service while *Michael Jones* played the guitar.

The first draft of the Warumungu translation of the Christmas Story has been completed. Please pray for success with the community checking stage.



kids artwork



Marlene Waistcoat

Keeping On in Katherine

It's that time again when temperatures are rising across the Territory – and at times so are tempers. Recently the news was filled with details of a violent outbreak in a Darwin youth detention centre in which a couple of people were taken to hospital and the facility closed for several days due to the damage. Then in a community south of Tennant Creek a fight involving up to 100 people broke out resulting in a death.

Grief and funerals can add fuel to tensions that have been simmering causing them to suddenly boil over into strong and hurtful verbal exchanges that can go on and on and on or escalate into physical fighting. It is hard for entire families not to be pulled into it all.

In recent times, tensions have been rearing their heads in a number of places including Katherine. Some of those involved in the arguing are related to those in the church. Typically, there is the attempt to involve all family members — including those who are Christians.

But the believers are keeping on in their faith. They are refusing to let the family arguments pull them down in their Christian life or pull them apart as God's family. The leaders have said, *"We are strong in the Lord. We are not letting this business stop us from coming together to worship and praise the Lord. We still meet together and share together. We are not letting all that problem worry us or stop us from following our Lord Jesus."*

It was very encouraging to recently see them gathered together, singing songs of praise and worship, and learning together. *Bruce Lake* (pictured on front cover) one of the newer Christians shared from God's Word. There were 30 adults at the service, and nearly half of those were men. The bright and smiling kids shared some action songs before going out for Sunday school.

Seeing how the Katherine Christians are keeping on for the Lord, working well and sharing together in worshipping and serving Jesus truly is encouraging.

Please pray that they keep on standing strong in the Lord against the temptations and pressures around them.

Pray that they will keep on in their faithfulness and commitment and will keep on growing 'in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.' 2 Peter 3:18



Bruce, Monica, Akeima and Adele



Lazarus and Akia shared the Bible reading

Ancient Symbol – Modern Witness

Alfie May is a deacon at Darwin Community Church and has been ministering in the jail for many years now. He is a bus driver for the huge ICHTHYS gas plant project where all workers have to go in and out by bus for safety and security reasons.

The bus drivers recently received the safety award at the project. They have maintained an outstanding record working six days a week starting their day at 4am on split shifts. The company calculates that the drivers have clocked up enough mileage to have circled the globe over 600 times and have transported 14 million passengers.

Because Alfie is the longest serving driver he was chosen to receive the award with some of the 'big bosses' there for the occasion. He saw this as more than a privilege — he saw it as an opportunity. So when he received the award, he turned it into a witness for the Lord.

Alfie had been interested in the meaning of the name ICHTHYS. He was very excited to discover that in Greek it means fish — and that ichthys in the Greek letters **ΙΧΘΥΣ** has been used for centuries as an acrostic for **Jesus Christ Son of God Saviour**. The fish was an ancient symbol used by Christians to identify each other, especially during strong opposition and persecution.

And so, upon accepting the award he shared this information about the ancient symbol and its meaning. He uses this information whenever possible to witness to people about Jesus.



Alfie not only plays the didgeridoo but also makes them. He paints the ancient fish symbol along with the eagle onto them and then uses it to open doors to witness to others about Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour.

Thank God for his faithfulness in his work and in being a witness for Jesus.



To our Supporters

Our heartfelt thanks to each one of you for your faithful prayer support for the work and all those involved with AIM throughout this past year. A big thank you too for the financial support for which we are also very grateful.

You are a vital part of the ministry of AIM. Thank you

for partnering with us as we seek to share Jesus, teach His way, and train up Christian leaders among the Aboriginal people.

We pray that you will be blessed as you reflect and rejoice again at God's great gift of Jesus being sent into this world for us all. May you know His blessing throughout the New Year.

Retiring To Serve

After 18 years on the job, David Hughes has recently retired as a Katherine Community Patrol Officer where he has been the assistant manager for some time.

Originally from Tennant Creek, David was hired on by the manager Noel McDonald back on 2000. Noel said he was looking for someone who was 'switched on and reliable — and someone well known around the region.'

Being able to speak four languages has really helped David in this work. As he said, 'If you can speak the language you can really help and make people feel comfortable. Once that language barrier is broken down, people see us as being there to help. Because I can talk to people in their own language, they feel safer.'

His Christian faith as well as his language skills has helped him mediate issues in the community. David is a member and leader at the Katherine AIM

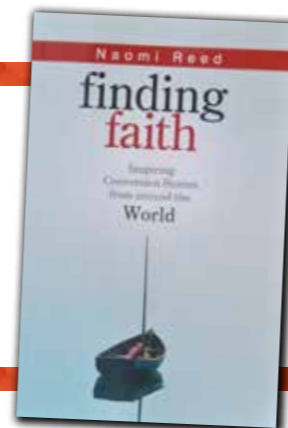


Noel and David

Church, and also serves on the Katherine Christian Convention Committee. He is regularly on the preaching and leading roster at the church, and is one of the bus drivers who picks up people from several outlying communities as well as from around the town for services. David says he plans to stay in Katherine to look after his wife and family, and to spend more time serving the Lord in the church.

New Book

'Finding Faith' is a new book by Australian author Naomi Reed which shares stories of people coming to Jesus from around the world. It includes the story of AIM Tennant Creek church leader, Richard Driver and is available from Koorong.



Peace On Earth...

As mentioned, there has been fighting, arguing and disruption in a number of Aboriginal communities and among family groups. Those outside the church often try and drag the Christians into the fighting, or even make them the target of the verbal attacks by directly aiming at them with their anger and accusations. Sadly, such things are not isolated to the Territory. And quite tragically, in some cases it is Christian against Christian.



- Please pray for strength and protection for the Christians.
- Pray that the believers will support one another especially during these times.
- Pray that they will stand firm in their faith, maintain a good witness for Jesus, and continue to share God's love and message with those around them.
- Pray that the hearts of those involved will be humbled as they reflect on God's great gift of Jesus during this Christmas season.
- Pray that they will be willing to offer as well as accept true forgiveness and so bring honour and glory to the Lord through their lives and their churches.
- Pray that each follower of Jesus will seek to begin the New Year with a clean heart, clear conscience, and be at peace with one another in the family of God.

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