



September — November 2022

AUSTRALIAN INDIGENOUS MINISTRIES

Strong Aboriginal Churches



'Look at the fields. They are ripe for harvest.'
John 4:35



Front L to R: Karen Dixon, Maria Louie, Yane Damanik, Carolyn Letcher, Fay Chambers
Back L to R: Paul Badman (Treasurer), Peter Dixon (Chairman), Henry Louie, Roni Damanik, Cliff Letcher, David Chambers, Roni Parlindungan

Conference 2022

by Chairman Peter Dixon

A number of Council members, Field Workers and Team Partners grabbed the opportunity to meet together over the June Long Weekend at Wyee in the Central Coast district of N.S.W. Though some found the weather a little on the cool side, nothing beats being face to face, especially after so many zoom meetings! It was very good to meet our newest member *Roni Parlindungan* who came up from Melbourne.

As well as sharing from God's Word and breaking bread together there were lots and lots of discussions as to how we can bring A.I.M. into a good place to face the many many changes, especially in the realm of administration.

All organisations and charities are confronted with increasing scrutiny which requires more and more complex procedures and documentation. In an increasingly post-Christian society regulatory bodies have new attitudes to Mission organisations, and we all have to run things differently.

The overarching framework is the distinction between governance (the task of the Council) and management which requires a large number of skills.

In grappling with those issues we do not want to lose focus on the purpose of AIM:

Our Vision

Strong Aboriginal Churches

Our Mission

We aim to Biblically disciple Aboriginal believers and develop their leadership for gospel ministry

Strategies

- Partnering with churches/fellowships and like-minded organisations to facilitate Aboriginal leadership
- Supporting the ministry team to achieve our mission
- Promoting mutual relationships between the Aboriginal Church and the wider Church

The AIM Council need your ongoing prayers and support as we seek to guide AIM in fulfilling all of the above.

As part of the weekend program we were extra blessed and inspired to listen to a presentation from *Yane Damanik's* D.Min Studies on Theological Education in Indigenous Contexts.

Another blessing was that the Bethshan Conference Centre was also being used by the Aboriginal Evangelical Fellowship's Ladies Convention. This allowed us to have a special time of fellowship with *Kathy Bird* and *Lois Towney* from the Gilgandra AIM Church.

On Sunday morning we were all welcomed at the Bethshan Community Church service where *Cliff Letcher* had the opportunity to bring greetings and updates from us.

Our final barbecue meal featured fish caught by *Roni Damanik*. Well done brother!

Mission Co-Ordinator

by chairman Peter Dixon

Following the attempts to appoint Directors for AIM, last year the Council sought further help from a Christian consultant in Canberra. During that work it became clear that the Mission was not in a position to provide for either a General Director or a Field Director. The suggestion was that we needed to look for a person who was already in the Mission and could lead the development of our vision.

At the Bethshan Conference over the June long weekend, the Annual General Meeting of AIM was held. During this time the constitution was changed to remove the positions of General Director and Field Director. To provide greater flexibility, no staff positions were placed in the constitution so that the structures for the Mission and management can be worked out by the Council in all the circumstances.

In the light of the consultations the Council had undertaken, it felt led by God to appoint *Yane Damanik* to be the Mission Coordinator. She has been

acting as Field Director for some time. Yane confirmed that God had also laid this on her heart. So we now commend her to your support and your prayers.

After a long awaited visit to family in Indonesia, Yane is now working from Wyee to develop this vital role for AIM.

As well as the urgent task of re-forming the appointment of leadership, the constitution was also changed to allow for more ways of having formal meetings of the Mission association as a whole. The Council continues to work on further changes to the constitution. We value your prayers as we work on such matters and seek to walk in the will of God to bring the mission and vision statements to reality.



The Harvest

LOOK! *The harvest is ready!* (John 4:35) Thank God for those in AIM who are working on the harvest — seeking to bring Aboriginal people into God's family and see them grow in the grace, knowledge and likeness of Jesus.

PRAY for the Council. There has been a heavy load of administration hindering their desire to work on matters relating to field ministry. PRAY as they work out clear principles and guidelines in updating the Practices and Procedures Handbook for workers, and develop an effective and useful orientation program for new workers. These matters are of some urgency as we seek to move forward and ask the Lord to provide new workers to send out into the *'fields ready for harvest'*.

PRAY for AIM missionaries, TEAM Partners, Church leaders and Aboriginal Christians going out from their churches to reach and teach others, that they will share God's message clearly and in appropriate and understandable ways. AIM ministry is very diverse, from working in cities to country and outback towns, to Aboriginal communities near to towns or cities, and those in remote and isolated areas. PRAY that Lord of the harvest will bring spiritual fruit in each place.

ASK God to call out servant-hearted people to help AIM biblically disciple Aboriginal believers and develop their leadership for gospel ministry. *'There are many people ready to harvest but only a few workers. Pray to the Lord, who owns the harvest, that He will send more workers to gather His harvest.'* Matt 9:37-38





Sue and Henry Bob outside new van

The Plain English Bible

Why do we need yet another translation of the Bible?

by Richard and Sue Davies

There are so many versions of the Bible available today, we're spoilt for choice by a real smorgasbord of translations. But for many people, even our Good News Translation is too hard.

Nearly 30 years ago, we realised that the English we use is often very different from the way our Aboriginal brothers and sisters use English. And so we began to question whether there could be an easier translation. At the time, the emphasis, understandably, was on traditional languages translation, and there was no place for another English one. And while it is vitally important to make sure traditional languages are transcribed, there are many people who will never read their own language.

So it has been exciting in the last few years to see a small group of people working to produce the Plain English Bible. A mini Bible will soon be published

containing Genesis and much of the New Testament. You can look at this online: aboriginalbibles.org.au/english-plain/ or please just use this QR Code.



However, we are working to one side of that team which is focussed more on the English spoken in the Top End of the NT.

In the Barkly region there are some differences again in the way people speak English, so we were encouraged to translate Mark and other books of the Bible into a form of English that is spoken here. We are not linguists, but have been working with AIM in this geographical area for 37 years. Our purpose is to write in correct Plain English with the hope that it will also be useful to people who have English as a second language, and who are not necessarily accustomed to 'Church' words.

So, if you look at the passage in Mark 1:21-22 (below) the challenge is to write this without using words such as synagogue, authority, taught, sabbath, and others. As you read on, there are so many words



Harry Rubuntja doing checking with Richard



Richard with Brenda Thompson



Richard with Janet Thompson



2022 departure from CC

such as evil, destroy, commanded, violently, sternly, shriek....just to name a few, that are not used, and need to be replaced.

We don't want this translation to be childish, it is still God's Word and goes through all the same SIL consultant checks that any other translation goes through.

This year we have spent three months in Canteen Creek, reading and checking through Genesis and Mark again with local people, and now the books will need to go to the consultant to check. Please pray that a consultant will be available and these books can be printed and distributed. We also have seven more books in draft form that need to be community and consultant checked, but that will be done next year, Lord willing.

Text Comparisons of Mark 1:21-22

KJV

²¹And they went into Capernaum; and straightway on the sabbath day he entered into the synagogue, and taught. ²²And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes.

NIV

²¹They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. ²²The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law.

Plain English Version — (PEV-Barkly Edition-Draft)

²¹Jesus and his followers went to a town called Cap-ern-ium. On the next Saturday, the Jewish rest day, Jesus and his followers went to the Jewish meeting house and Jesus started to teach the people about God. ²²When the people heard him, it was like they were listening to God talking to them. Jesus said strong, and straight words, and the people were really amazed. You see the Jewish law teachers didn't teach like that.

PS. We are incredibly grateful to God for the provision of the new off-road caravan that we have lived in for three months. The wind has been horrific and without the van we wouldn't have been able to stay in community and work.



Remembering Norm Wall

Norm Wall went to be with his Lord on the 14th May. Our love and sympathy is extended to his wife *Lola* and family.

AIM is grateful for the faithfulness of Norm in serving our Lord as a house parent at the Retta Dixon Home in Darwin for many years. He and *Lola* continued their provision of care to some even after the official closure of the Home while Norm also worked tirelessly to keep the 10 acres of property in pristine condition.

During his Darwin days he travelled out to East Arm Leprosarium for ministry, and was a tremendous help to some when they made the transition to living in Darwin. He and *Lola* maintained lifelong friendship and support with many of them.

When people from all the AIM NT centres used to meet for the annual Barunga Bible School, Norm and *Lola* carried out a faithful ministry to the children, or would help with the meals — or both!

In 1986 the Walls moved to Alice Springs to begin their long and faithful service there until retiring in 2005. They gave themselves wholeheartedly to the work and the people in this area. One lady who was originally from Borroloola was in Alice when her son met with a terrible accident. She still remembers with deep gratitude the ministry of support and kindness shown to them by Norm and *Lola* at that difficult time and beyond. Countless others would have the same story to tell of the help and support received from them.

They faithfully taught RI at the boarding school for Aboriginal students in Alice. Norm also taught and encouraged many folk through the church meetings and personal outreach around the town. They supported people like *Alan and Jane* as they would come in from their bush community for fellowship, teaching and encouragement then return to minister to their own people in communities.

Richard Driver, one of the leaders in Tennant Creek is still grateful for the time Norm was the speaker at their Birthday Weekend, and for the clear and helpful Bible teaching he shared with them.

Norm was always ready to lend a practical hand in any way he could, whether it was to someone he knew, or a stranger he saw in need. Through this, he would look for an opportunity to share a word about our Lord and leave a tract or Scripture portion with each person.

Many across the field received words of encouragement, tracts and other Christian literature from Norm via the post, and he remained a faithful prayer supporter of them and the work of AIM until his homecall.



Lynne Allen from Adelaide passed away earlier this year. He had gone to work at the Retta Dixon Children's Home in 1959 and was the building supervisor of the new Home project. This included eight prefabricated cottages consisting of 6 bedrooms each, a recreation hall, food store, clinic, and superintendents' house. Before construction could begin there was the tedious work of liaising with government departments for approval of one kind or another. Lynne did it all faithfully and worked well alongside the tradespeople and volunteers who helped with this enormous task. When and where possible, he would also involve himself in the day

to day life of the Home alongside his wife *Valerie* to whom we extend our sympathy.

Lynne became the AIM Representative in Adelaide and worked faithfully and tirelessly in the role for many years. Countless missionaries had the opportunity to share in prayer meetings, churches, and even on radio stations through Lynne's organisation for deputation meetings in that area. He faithfully kept in touch with field workers through personally penned encouraging letters. There was always the assurance of interest and prayers for them and the work they were undertaking.



from Peter Dixon

The church has started the planning for the Birthday Weekend (23-25 September) on the theme of *'How much to follow Jesus?'* (the cost of discipleship). I am looking forward to sharing some teaching in the two morning services as well as the opportunity to support the evening outreach meetings.

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Strong Aboriginal Churches

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Sharing Fellowship

by Jandalyn Mitchell

Rocky AIM Church has been very blessed to have *John and Sandy Fonmosa*, helping out with music (drums, ukulele and guitar), leading, and preaching. They are formerly from Fingal Head and are now living at Kabra near Rockhampton.

When they came up this way they began attending the Gracemere Baptist Church. Then one Sunday early this year they popped in for church with us as they were feeling led to help and encourage the Indigenous people of the area.

John shared with the Gracemere Church that he was helping us out from time to time and invited some of them to come and fellowship with us which they did. Then the Pastor of the church was prompted to see if we could meet and work out having a combined service.

Pastor Shaun and Lisa Mills of the Gracemere Baptist Church and their congregation do their fifth Sunday as an Outreach meeting and it was decided that they would like to come and join with us. So on the fifth Sunday in July they came and fellowshiped at Rocky AIM. They took the whole meeting with musicians, singers and about 30 of their congregation. They quickly had to learn some new songs. Being the Rocky AIM music lady, I gave them a crash course on some songs new to them just before the service started!

The church was packed and a great time of fellowship and encouragement was enjoyed by us all. Pastor Shaun spoke from Romans 8. He shared from his life story how he was raised in a Christian family, then finished school and moved to Brisbane to work then started doing his own thing. But through all this God's hand was still on him until he surrendered his life back to the Lord. He married and he and his wife were later encouraged to take up a Pastoring role by none other than *Pastor Maurice Kuss*, retired AIM worker. (It has been an abundant blessing to have Pastor Kuss helping us. He has been coming once a month, sharing God's Word and encouraging us in our walk with the Lord.)

Gracemere Baptist Church would love to be able to meet like this again with us, and we would love to welcome them back!

What a mighty God we serve.



australianindigenousministries.org.au