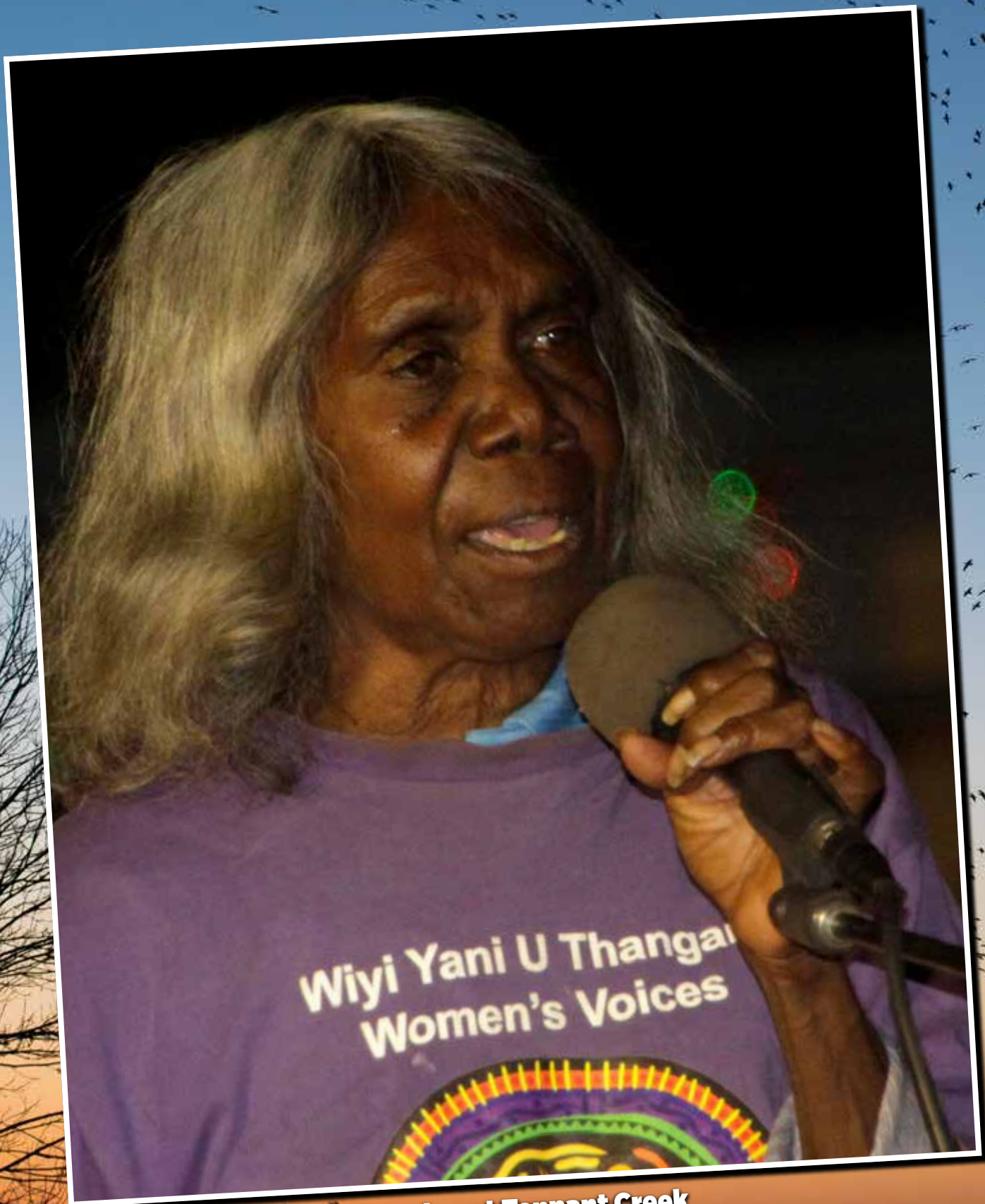




# AUSTRALIAN INDIGENOUS MINISTRIES

Strong Aboriginal Churches



**Sharing at Tennant Creek**



# The Challenge of Change

by **Cliff Letcher**

Change is a challenge isn't it? Sometimes we love it, sometimes we hate it but we all have to face it. This year has brought about a lot of change for me personally with my changing role in AIM as I am no longer a worker, just a member of the Council. More change is coming as *Carolyn* is retiring from her teaching position at the end of this School year.

AIM has also been going through a long process of change. Some of that change is exciting such as the appointment of *Yane Damanik* as Mission Coordinator. This has involved some structural change for AIM but we are already beginning to see some very positive outcomes. This change has come from a very carefully and prayerfully thought out process which has taken some time.

However, now AIM is faced with some changes that we have no desire for, or control over. We live in a world where governing authorities put increasing regulations in place to try to prevent people abusing the system. Our Auditor has brought to our attention changes that have been occurring in the requirements of compliance for organisations such as ours.

This is bringing about one very major change in how we operate. If you are one who has been supporting some of our missionaries this change will also affect you.

Throughout its history AIM has never formally employed its missionaries. They have been supported by churches and individuals giving either directly to the missionary or by sending money to the AIM Office designated for particular missionaries. Each month those gifts have been forwarded from the Office to the missionary. This has been a common practice followed by many mission societies.

**However, to do so now would be regarded as pay for employment and AIM does not have the financial or the administrative capacity to employ missionaries.** If we did, then they would

need to be paid from AIM funds even if the support level fell below minimum wages requirements. This would also include the need for AIM to provide the usual superannuation and leave benefits and have tax deducted as appropriate. All of this is out of the financial reach of AIM.

**As the Council had very limited options in this matter, it has made the decision that we will not be handling missionary support funds after the 31st December, 2022.** We are therefore asking all who are supporting our missionaries to continue to do so by sending your gifts directly to them. Please do not send any gifts to missionaries via the AIM Office.

Therefore, as of 31st December, 2022 AIM will no longer pass on any gifts as they would be regarded by the Taxation Office as payment for work done and understood as AIM employing the missionary. (*Gifts for the general operations of AIM can still be made to Head Office*).

The Council will send out letters of explanation to all our missionaries and their supporters. Missionaries may wish to make their account details available to you for direct banking deposits for their support, or cheques can be sent directly to them.

Our Auditor has insisted on these changes, warning that if we do not make them we are in danger of being audited by the Taxation Office with the result that all our Council Members could be liable for a substantial fine for non-compliance.

We hope you will understand this major change in how AIM now has to operate. Change can be very challenging. This is one of those challenging changes but one that is outside our control. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you desire further information.

**On behalf of AIM and all our missionaries, I thank you for your faithful part in this ministry through your financial gifts to them and the work of the Mission, and your prayers to our unchanging God.**

# Resignations

It was with sadness but understanding that AIM Council has accepted the resignation of *Jono and Grace Wright* as missionaries and his resignation from the Council.



They shared: *God has us in a place where we are currently content with the ministry opportunities in front of us, as opposed to those in Aboriginal work. This has not been an easy point to come to for us.*

*When we left Camooweal we always intended to return to the field, but God seems to have laid out other plans for now and it has taken us a long hard road for that to sink in. We will continue to have a keen interest in AIM and pray for everyone involved.*

*God has opened up more and more opportunities to engage people with Jesus where we are. Through our connections at church, school ministry opportunities and through God's Squad things are pretty full in terms of service for the King. Then there is all the family 'stuff' with three teenagers and seeking to be there to guide and direct them while we can.*

AIM is thankful for their ministry at Mission Publications and Borroloola (Grace), then the 11 years in Camooweal and outlying communities. We are also grateful for the years Jono was a valued member of the Council. Please pray for the Wrights as they serve Jesus where they are and grow their family in the ways of Jesus.

*Bob and Lucy Quinn* were seconded to us from Pioneers and Bob has been the AIM Training Co-coordinator Eastern Area. They feel God is leading them in a slightly different direction and therefore should be under the sole oversight of Pioneers. This has led to their recent resignation from AIM.



They shared: *We have appreciated all that the AIM Family has added to our lives, and the fellowship with missionaries and many first nations believers. We remain committed to the building up of God's kingdom especially among Indigenous Australians.*

We pray Bob and Lucy know the Lord's guiding and strength for whatever ministry is next.

## AIM Address List

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# Connecting Our Stories

by Yane Damanik

With Christmas fast approaching, it is good to pause and reflect on the greatest love story ever lived and told. The story about God who so loved us, that He humbled Himself and entered our world. *John Stott* explains this well when he writes, 'He laid aside his immunity to pain. He entered our world of flesh and blood, tears and death.' The gospel is a story of a God who suffered in order to heal a broken and hurting world, and who invites us to join in on His redemptive story.

In thinking about God's story and our part in it, I am reminded of a story I heard earlier this year during the AIM Annual Meeting in June. The morning began with a lovely time of fellowship as we listened and shared about our ministry. One particular story stayed with me long after it was told. It was a beautiful story, vulnerably expressed. A story of love and commitment but also of heartache. This was a story of a teacher working in an outback town, one who views her profession as a service to the Lord. In the story and in the way it was told, I heard a deep love and commitment for her students. At the same time, I heard a heartfelt pain. There was a sense of deep sadness in the story as the real struggles of her students and the awareness of her limitation to do more to help were shared. Certainly, grief is the price of love.

I was deeply touched by her story. In thinking more deeply about what she shared, three things occurred to me. Firstly, her story brought to the fore the paradoxical reality of serving God within AIM. There is much joy of serving Christ in this context, particularly in seeing God at work in different ways in the lives of people. At the same time, this is also a ministry that is prone to grief, discouragement, and loneliness. Our workers are confronted

daily with these life realities.

Secondly, her story highlights to me the need for more workers to join in our ministry and I am particularly burdened about Indigenous youth. The words of Jesus, 'the harvest is plenty, but the workers are few,' has never been as true as it is today, particularly in youth ministry. Whether living in remote traditional-oriented communities, country towns or urban areas, Indigenous youth are facing enormous challenges from every direction. They need support, encouragement and people to walk alongside them and show them Christ's love. They are the future of the Indigenous church and a crucial part of our ministry to God.

Lastly, for me her story is a reminder that AIM is blessed with faithful people, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, who are serving the Lord in difficult circumstances. As such, we need people to be praying for them on a regular basis.

We also need someone in the role of a pastoral carer for our workers. In the face of many challenges, our workers need encouragement and support, and pastoral care is a key that enables us to survive and thrive in long term service.

I am so thankful for her sharing and showing me God's story within hers. I invite you to join in on God's story with us as we seek to make His story known among the Indigenous people. Have a blessed Christmas!



# Happy Birthday Lesley

In late November, family and friends gathered to celebrate the 80th Birthday of *Lesley Power*. It has been quite a journey of life so far — and one she looks back on with thanks to the Lord.

Lesley grew up on a farm in a small town called The Caves north of Rockhampton. She knew once she was a born again believer in Jesus she had to fully surrender her life over to Him and she did. As a teen, her desire to serve Him through Sunday school was fulfilled at the local Methodist Church.

Lesley worked for some time as an assistant nurse at Westwood Hospital, then as Aboriginal and Islander Counseling Liaison Officer at Rockhampton and Mt Morgan High Schools. Through correspondence she obtained a diploma in Child Care just prior to her next big move when she applied and was accepted into Singleton Bible College. She shared that she claimed Philippians 4:13 before every exam and testifies *'I proved that verse as true then as in my present life's journey.'*

After completing her studies she was accepted as a full-time missionary with AIM. During her orientation course at La Perouse NSW (then the home of Mission Publications of Australia), she gained 'unforgettable memories' while visiting in Redfern with an older missionary.

What have been some of her happy memories of being in the AIM family?

## **Serving AT and WITH:**

- Dubbo with Phyllis Naden (now Morgan)
- Normanton and Townsville with Esther Mackintosh Travelling with Esther and elderly saints to mission conferences was a blessed experience!
- Palm Island with Esther then Elizabeth Ham (where we had riotous fun!)
- Tennant Creek with Elizabeth Ham
- Brisbane with Rachel Lacey
- Dajarra with my husband Robert Minniecon
- Palm Island with Bill and Pat Seaton, Kathy Tarpaulin and Pena Geia
- Queensland Church Council with Bill Power
- Rockhampton AIM Church with Bill Power

There have been disappointing and sad times along the way. Her concern for non-believers is great and so when people reject the Good News she is very

burdened.

Whether hurts and concerns in ministry or her personal life, Lesley has learned to forgive them, love them, and quickly commit them to the Lord in prayer asking God to bless them.

She allows her faith to help her maintain a positive outlook as she trusts the Lord

*'to sort us all out'* and so often brings a smile with her catchphrase *'well friend, we're still winning and grinning! It might be a bit lop-sided, but we're still winning and grinning with the Lord!'*

Lesley has been a faithful member of the Rockhampton Church for many years and continues as one of their leadership team. She faces difficult situations with prayer, truth and love, realising it is always best to get things out in the open and dealt with carefully and prayerfully. She shows a concern for all ages and continues to encourage the small band of believers here to share the love and message of Jesus with others in the community.

The Queensland Church Council is still benefiting from her involvement too. She serves as Chairperson and seeks to get matters dealt with swiftly and appropriately. She did a wonderful job of organising Ladies' meetings for the churches over many years. Lesley continues to be faithful at keeping in touch with many folk, encouraging, challenging if needed, and always praying with and for them.

She holds onto the truth that OUR GOD IS ABLE and will *'build His Church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it'* Matthew 16:18.

To a wonderful sister in Christ, a woman of great faith, faithfulness, and prayer, we congratulate you on your 80th birthday, thank the Lord for you, and pray that God will continue to strengthen and guide you in your coming years.



# Birthday Weekend

This year marked the 38th anniversary of the opening of the Tennant Creek Church building. Again in September as over most of the previous years, the members worked together and put on a special 'Birthday Weekend'.

Peter Dixon was asked by the leaders to do the teaching and share on the subject of 'The Cost of Discipleship: How Much to Follow Jesus?' The first session held the challenge from God's Word that to be a follower of Jesus it will cost me EVERYTHING — not just my money and things, but my life — my time, my heart, my will. He shared from God's Word how a true follower has to be different and:



- speak Kampaju's (God's) truth — Matthew 10:16-20
- let family go — Matthew 10:21-22; 34-36
- give — Matthew 6 : 19-24
- do love — Matthew 5:43-48
- don't payback — Matthew 5:38-42
- follow Jesus — Matthew 10:24-25
- respect Kampaju — Matthew 10:26-31

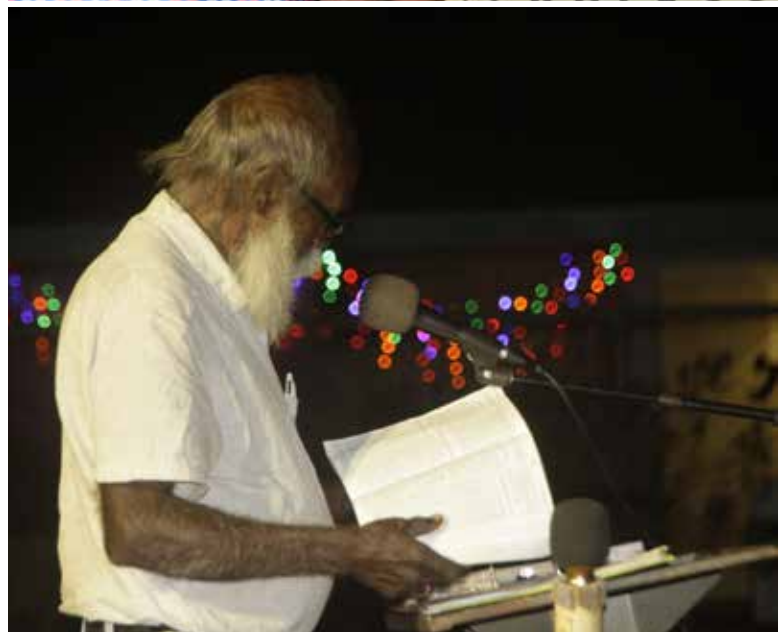
These are hard things for any believer and some are extremely hard for Indigenous Christians as they cut across their ingrained culture. The church leaders recognise that 'family first' is something that makes it so hard for many in the church to keep going for the Lord. The demands and needs of family often get in the way of serving the Lord and putting HIM first.

God used the message on this to speak to Michael Jones' wife Jorna. He shared: *'Jorna was really touched by that message about family. God spoke strong to her that she's gotta put God first — even first before family. And it has really changed her! I've seen the change and I see her getting stronger and stronger as she puts God number one over family.'*

Birthday Weekend is also a time of sharing the Good News with the community. Camp meetings are held in the evenings and people there gather around to listen to the songs, testimonies and Gospel messages shared by the Christians.



Fellowship is enjoyed over a barbeque and kangaroo tail lunch at the church. The anniversary cake has become a real highlight of the weekend. It is a real blend of cultural treats shared and enjoyed by all. There was some disappointment that very few came from the other communities and churches. Please pray that more Indigenous Christians will gather with the Tennant Creek believers next year for this special weekend of fellowship, teaching, and outreach.







**AUSTRALIAN INDIGENOUS MINISTRIES**  
Strong Aboriginal Churches

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## **Subscription**

The Aim Magazine subscriptions are \$15 a year (inclusive of GST). Please send to AIM Office.

The requested amount of \$15 per year helps fund the printing and posting of this quarterly magazine.

# **Opportunity to Serve**

AIM is seeking a committed and servant-hearted Christian with strong administration and accounting skills to help ensure the smooth operation of the organisation and its program.

Initially, this will be part time voluntary work from home with the intention of it becoming two days per week paid work based in our new office in the Central Coast, NSW.

This job requires the candidate to have basic computer literacy skills and an ability to communicate effectively, both verbally and in writing.

Some of the main tasks include:

- day to day financial accounting including banking and bookkeeping, (knowledge of or the ability to learn to use appropriate accounting software is essential)
- complete Business Activity Statements for Taxation Office at appropriate intervals
- maintain payment of day-to-day expenses for AIM
- mailing of monthly prayer points
- handle phone calls and emails as people contact AIM

The Office Administrator will work closely with the Treasurer and Mission Coordinator.

For more information or to apply for this role please email Yane Damanik at: [yane@theaim.com.au](mailto:yane@theaim.com.au)

## **Newspots**

### **Health**

Please remember *Martin Ebel* as his health continues to deteriorate. At the time of writing he was in palliative care in Melbourne. Please uphold *Rose and Najwa* at this difficult time.

In mid-November *Fay Chambers* suffered a bleed on the brain after a fall, then a heart attack upon arrival at the hospital. She has slowly been making progress following surgery. Please pray for both Fay and *David* as they wait for God's outcome in her recovery.