



In Partnership

In the Face of Disaster

It is difficult to find words to give a sense of the disaster unfolding before us. Harrowing stories are told on TV and then in come the emails from people directly affected. The experience of making decisions about what is an emergency or a disaster and what is not, is compounded by there being more than one at the same time. Should we care for one place more than another?

The images of people suffering, with little help available in the chaos after the disaster, is then accompanied by the sad and tragic stories we hear of Australians caught in the turmoil. Some of my friends were caught in one of the disasters. When we know someone personally the disaster becomes all the more real. Our friends are safe, hurt, have lost everything they had with them for their holiday and are on their way home.

What about the many unnamed people? The individuals and those who love them represented by a number in the tally of those injured? Each number has a name. Each one an individual and each is deserving of the focus and concern showered on those whose names and stories we know.

It is clear that God looks beyond numbers and sees

each one. Jesus sets up the contrast with a powerful saying when he comments,⁶*“Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God. ⁷Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.”* (Luke 12:6-7) In Matthew 25 the moment of judgment is described as being based on what we do to the unnamed ‘least of these’ for our response to them is our response to Christ.

So here is our challenge – each person who dies, who is in pain, who is made homeless in a disaster, is someone known to God. They are loved, created and embraced in the compassion and grace of God. It is not a case of playing favourites – some loved and some not. In the same way as disaster does not respect people of faith and punish people without faith, all are impacted in the terrible consequences of the disaster. Could this be what Jesus means when he says the *‘rain falls on the just and the unjust alike’*?

So then what choice is there? Can we say we care for some and not for others? In the end the answer was clear. We are being called to care for people, in situations of great need – in Samoa, Tonga, American Samoa, the Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia, Cambodia and Laos. Our giving then is part of God’s response of compassion and care for people who are vulnerable, without choice and totally reliant on resources that come from outside of their community. This is partnership with God, with each other and with those providing care and support in the face of this great disaster.

Such turmoil and tragedy never comes at a convenient time. It struck as we were preparing the mail out of the COCOA Great Gift Catalogue for 2009-2010. It was a good reminder of the scope of the ministry we share – one a response in emergency and the other a response to the challenge of aid and development. We appreciate your partnership in this ministry of care.

- John Gilmore, Executive Director

The remnants of home



Linking People

Fantastic Fiji - Peter Berry, NSW

Pastor David Reddy, the local pastor, had organized opportunities to minister in Lautoka the moment I arrived. We drove from house to house to pray for people and shared together about the work as we travelled. My first Indian meal provided by my host family was two big platefuls of different curries and rice (eaten with fingers of the right hand) and washed down with chai tea.

So began a pattern of visitation and prayer and an evangelistic outreach meeting each evening (and the invariable table full of curries, rice and rotis). The meetings were a mixture of both lively and a traditional service style, mostly spoken in Hindi with some English for my benefit. Choruses were sung without musical accompaniment, testimonies were shared and it was an all-in together style prayer with spiritual warfare being a common theme. The night services were opportunities to teach, encourage and pray for individuals. I was grateful to God for the culturally appropriate illustrations that came to mind to help explain the scriptures.

Testimonies of answered prayer started to flow during the week. One gentleman had been to the hospital for treatment on his eye and was told to come back in a week. He went back to the hospital the day after we prayed together and the hospital staff asked him how his eye got better so fast.

The Lord had been challenging one man to become an evangelist. He spoke about it publically in church for the first time and we were able to pray and encourage him to develop his leadership calling.

It was also good to be able to help in a practical way with renewing the sign writing on the pastor's vehicle so the church name and scripture verse could be read clearly. I was amazed how the Lord led and blessed. It was full-on.



Peter dedicating Karen to God

A Valuable Lesson – Greg Illingworth, VIC



Ash, Greg and cooking class friends

Being able to travel to Thailand for five days in September and see Urban Neighbours of Hope (UNOH) in action in the Klong Toey area of Bangkok was a blessing. UNOH is funded and supported through

Churches of Christ Overseas Aid (COCOA). It was a privilege to see the ministry COCOA makes possible, including the soccer program for young men at the community centre and most recently small businesses, a cooking school and transport service.

The Australian families based there work tirelessly to see the Gospel of Jesus expressed in the community to which they have been called. I admire greatly the commitment of Ash, Anji, Chris, Jodie, Rod and their families in their ministry to the people of Klong Toey. Providing employment, entertainment activities and hope are vitally important in a culture where many survive through prostitution, crime, and drugs.

It was a reminder as to how privileged we are to live the lifestyle we do in Australia. It also brought an awareness once again of the responsibility we have to spread the Gospel of Jesus' love and His desire for us to be godly stewards of the earth He created.

Ash Barker is very quick to point out that although they have chosen to live in the slums they are not the same as the local Thai people because they have an "out clause". They could return to Australia or move onto something else if that was what God led them to do. The UNOH families however know they are called to Thailand and will stay until God moves them on.

Ash gave me a great tip on how to break the ice with the Thai people...smile! It works! Westerners have a habit of looking very serious. At times this means people of Asian cultures feel intimidated and communication then becomes more difficult. A smile opens the door for understanding to flow and relationships to be nurtured.

My time there in the slums of Klong Toey included a valuable lesson for me. It inspired me again to ensure I preach and publicly display a desire to be the best steward I can be of God's earth.

Linking Churches

Leadership Training in Kenya

— Rod Cousins, WA

Two years ago Subiaco Church initiated a High School Scholarship program. This was especially created for children from a Kenyan orphanage who had excelled in primary school but had no options available to them to continue on to further education. These young people were seen to have the capacity to be influential leaders in the future if given the opportunity to develop the appropriate skills.

In July 2009 the church sponsored a Leadership Training weekend for the eleven scholarship students in nine regional schools in Western Kenya. Two staff members from *Outdoors Africa* conducted the experiential training. Topics included leadership styles, working as a team, communication and time management skills, establishing priorities and setting goals, self awareness, sexuality, critical thinking and self direction.

Outdoors Africa is a top-shelf coaching consultancy firm from Nairobi and the team combined African and Australian expertise. Staff members were engaged to provide the major input to the students. Other local input came from a medical doctor in Nairobi and a former Kenyan school principal, both of whom have had oversight and involvement with these students from the beginning of the project. Two Australians, a clinical psychologist and a human geographer, completed the team.

The program was expertly run and growth in the students was clearly visible. Students thoroughly enjoyed themselves. They bonded as a group and with the team; they were stretched spiritually, intellectually and interpersonally, but not overwhelmed; and, at the conclusion of the program, they were able to clearly articulate strategic and important self-learning along with areas of personal growth and challenge from the training.



God's blessings — Allen Cox, QLD

In 1992 Lyn and I were challenged by a pastor who said, "If you truly allow God to take control of your life and follow His lead, then you had better hang on really tight." I can testify that life in the will of God is challenging and exciting. Thankfully God perseveres with my detours and leads me back into His will for my life.

In 2008 and 2009 our offer was accepted as Resource Administrators at Londua Technical College, Vanuatu. We spend on average one week at Londua and six weeks back home during the school year. Our role is to assist with both financial and practical guidance in an effort to raise the level of training for students.

I could fill a book with those "Just In Time" blessings that have come Londua's way. We have been blessed to see God working through many of His faithful servants in assisting Londua both from Australia and in Vanuatu.

This year the college has 97 boarding students from the Year 9 and 10 academic stream and Year 11 vocational course. Construction, Mechanics, Agriculture and Tourism are the four vocational subjects being taught. Business Management and Computer Studies are taught to all students and staff as they seek to raise up Christian entrepreneurs. Londua has the capacity for up to 200 students next year.

Thank you to the multitude of work team supporters from Tasmania, New South Wales, South Australia and Queensland who have assisted at Londua. Thank you especially to those who have been praying for Londua and supporting it financially. It is through the obedience and actions of God's servants that His work at Londua is moving ahead.

This year alone 97 students plus staff have been impacted with the love of God through the actions of His church. Where is God leading you?

Linking Resources

Launching COCOA Great Gifts

The face on the cover of this year's COCOA Great Gifts catalogue is one of the 88 children at Khayelihle Children's Village in Zimbabwe. The name 'Khayelihle' means beautiful home. On a 270 acre farm 12 miles from Bulawayo many children, who have been orphaned or abandoned due to the devastating effects of HIV/AIDS, have found a welcoming home where they receive loving nurture and a positive future.

This year's catalogue has many ways to give joy and hope to adults, children and communities across the world as we share the resources with which we have been so abundantly blessed. Educational and medical supplies, livestock, food, clean water and blankets are all wonderful gifts bringing health and life.

A new feature this year is the COCOA Kids selection of gifts. From basic socks and jocks to books and soccer balls there are a variety of individual gifts and gift packs at very affordable prices which will transform lives and bring smiles to many faces.

By giving COCOA Great Gifts we share with others our abundance and God's love and compassion. A gift from the Great Gift catalogue is always the right gift! Your family and friends will have a great feeling knowing that someone on the other side of the world is receiving something they really need.

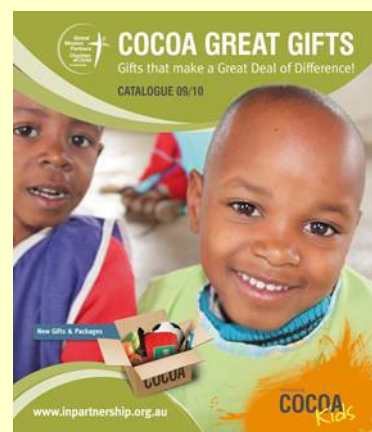
The COCOA Great Gift catalogue will be available from your local church or by contacting Global Mission Partners, PO Box 6454 Halifax St, Adelaide 5000 or info@inpartnership.org.au or ring 08 8212 4446.

COCOA Great Gifts 2009 - 2010

For a gift that will make a great deal of difference, why not give a COCOA Great Gift this year. You can select from healthy life gifts, top class education, medical care, community building and fabulous farm gifts.

And someone on the other side of the world will receive something they really need.

A gift from the COCOA Great Gift catalogue is always the right gift!



It's Never Too Late – Laurie Stafford, SA

For people of any age who have the time and desire to serve God, who wish to broaden their outlook as well as contribute to the spiritual development of others, there are exciting possibilities just around the corner.

As an agricultural specialist I have found service in overseas projects to be a most rewarding experience in such places as India, China, Indonesia, Vietnam and Zimbabwe. If you can couple this with Christian ministry then the rewards are even more satisfying. Many who have done this over the years in mission work testify to the life-changing nature of their involvement, the effect on one's outlook on materialism; on what is of most value in life. Working alongside people of other cultures in such a way gives them the sense that you also are learning from their systems and beliefs and brings to them a real feeling of self-worth and confidence.

Laurie with pastors in Zimbabwe



There are a number of opportunities through GMP for retired or semi-retired people to use their skills either in short or long-term projects in one of our mission areas. Younger people who are contemplating a break in their studies, couples or individuals who wish to experience a cross-cultural adventure while exercising their professional skills, or people of any age who wish to consider joining an OnEARTH team to grow in their faith all have a place in mission.

You might like to adopt a project and raise funds to see this project become a reality or you could support a less privileged child overseas. There is always the need to uphold all those working in cross-cultural mission in our prayers. You can encourage and bless those serving overseas by corresponding with them and promoting their work among church and friends.

God always has a work for those who have a heart for mission.

Asia Pacific Emergency Appeal

Latest News

Indonesia – West Sumatra

Reports indicate that the death toll is now 588 with 483 seriously injured, 343 missing, 736 displaced and an unconfirmed number of people still trapped. There are 179,629 houses damaged, including 83,172 heavily damaged, 32,312 moderately damaged, and 64,145 slightly damaged.

The West Sumatra Regional Council of Churches has distributed 500 kg of rice, 100 kg of sugar, 500 cans of fish, 100 tea boxes, 300 cases of mineral water, 300 cartons of instant noodles, 100 litres of cooking oil, 100 packs of soy sauce, 50 cartons of salt, 100 packets of vegetables, 200 packets of baby food and 800 packets of crackers and biscuits. Distribution of non-food relief items include 100 hygiene kits, 250 women's hygiene kits, 100 sets of baby clothes, 10 tarps, 100 blankets, 10 mattresses, 100 litres of kerosene, 50 lamps, 100 mats and 250 family packages of kitchen and household supplies.

Philippines

The National Disaster Coordinating Council in the Philippines reports that 3,084,997 people (629,466 families) from communes all over Luzon have been affected. The death toll has reached 293 with 42 still reported missing. Around 10,203 houses are partially or totally damaged.

Rescue operations are progressing slowly and some areas could not yet be reached. Communication in disaster stricken areas is difficult in particular where electricity remains cut off. Immediate needs are food, drinking water, bedding, personal hygiene kits, clothes and house construction material.

COCOA through the local Churches of Christ is providing basic food support for several hundred families. Ross and Cheryl Wissmann are coordinating the distribution of this aid. They report that they are turning families away and are in need of further support.

Samoa, American Samoa and Tonga

In Samoa, more than 146 people are reported to have been killed, the majority of them children, elderly and women. Homes and villages have been destroyed, mostly in rural areas and along the seashore, leaving thousands homeless. The Samoa Council of Churches has highlighted the need for food, drinking water and clothes.

(Details from ACT International reports)

Philippine Emergency *Ross Wissman, Manila*

Ross Wissmann, working with the International Christian College of Manila (ICCM), reports that, while their house was high enough not to be adversely affected and the Bible College suffered only minor localized flooding, all around them is major devastation. The worst affected areas are within a 10 mile radius of ICCM where water was up to 20 feet deep. The husband of the Registrar tied himself with his backpack to a second storey railing for 19 hours with water at times up to his neck. Many fellow missionaries have spent 3-4 days living in the second level of their homes without electricity and water while the flood waters swept away their possessions on the ground floor including their cars. As the flooding subsided other families have gone downstairs to find everything ruined by thick mud.

Several local Churches of Christ have been completely inundated by flood water and all Churches of Christ in the region have members seriously affected by the floods. ICCM students have donated clothing to the Parola Church of Christ where every member lost everything. In all more than 300 church families have lost everything they own.

Relief requested for distribution through ICCM includes building materials, clothing, and food. The aim is to give each affected family a food parcel containing rice, canned goods, milk, coffee, sugar, and nappies for the babies. A truck of rice has been organized from a neighbouring province and the other goods are purchased at bulk rates at the supermarket next door to ICCM.

This aid is being distributed through the local church so that they can ensure that it is given to the people who actually need it. It is given without prejudice of race or religion. (Protestants seem to often miss out on government relief which seems to be channelled to those of the majority religion in the Philippines.) ICCM distribution is controlled and strictly accounted for.



ICCM Relief Workers

Global Mission Day

Allen Cox
& Londua
friend



Suz Turner & happy
Tanna kids



Sue Sanders & team at Waterfall



Steve Blacket & Joseph
Mawien in Sudan



Risks Worth Taking!

Based around the theme 'Risks Worth Taking' Global Mission Day will be an opportunity to engage in deeper conversation and learn from others who have practical mission experience.

Newest Partnerships

This will be the occasion where we introduce the newest GMP partnerships. Nathan Nhan and John Gilmore will introduce the new ministry in Vietnam and Steve Blacket and Joseph Mawien will provide the latest update on the work in Sudan.

Elective Discussion Sessions

During the morning a number of people will lead a series of discussions exploring how local churches can be engaged directly in global mission. Presentations will be made by:

- Allen Cox and Sue Sanders on Vanuatu
- Suz Turner on a local church in short term mission
- Steve Blacket and Joseph Mawien on opportunities in Sudan
- Nathan Nhan on church life in Vietnam today
- Scott Vawser with new OnEARTH resources for local church global mission involvement

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting will be held in the afternoon and will involve

- elections to the GMP Board
- consideration of the Annual Report
- the audited finance statement

Christmas cards and giftlines will also be available with the proceeds going to mission projects.

All are warmly invited to

Global Mission Day

Theme: Risks Worth Taking

Date: Saturday 31 October

Time: 10:30am — 3:30pm

Venue: The Market Place

Cnr Vinrace St & South Tce, Adelaide

(including the Annual General Meeting commencing at 1:30pm)

A wonderful opportunity to learn and be in conversation about mission.

Looking forward to seeing you there!

You can support the **COCOA Asia Pacific Emergency Appeal** through your local church or by contacting the GMP office. Payment options are available on the GMP website www.inpartnership.org.au under the Donate / COCOA page. Please send through an accompanying email to info@inpartnership.org.au notifying us of the intended recipient of this gift. See page 5 or check out the website for the latest news in these regions.

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