

July 2020



BELONGING PEOPLE



*Newly baptised believers at Yuendumu Baptist Church
with Leaders and family members*

51st Assembly of the Baptist Union of the NT

Date: Friday 18th – Saturday 19th September 2020

Venue: Cross Roads Christian Church

**Guest Speakers: Pastor Mark Wilson
and Karen Wilson**

Mark Wilson is the Director of Ministries with
Baptist Churches Western Australia

Due to current restrictions on gatherings, more
information will be sent to Churches when they
become available.



LIFE IN LOCKDOWN

*For this issue of **Belonging People**, Churches and individuals were
invited to share their experiences of **Life in Lockdown**.*

May you find their stories an encouragement and an inspiration.

The Editor

Belonging People, Newsletter of the
Baptist Union of the NT
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President's Message

Mal Sercombe



In about 1969-70 Joni Mitchell released her song “Big Yellow Taxi” with the memorable lyric,

*Don't it always seem to go
That you don't know what
you've got 'Til it's gone.*

Over the last few months, we have had many restrictions in our lives because of Covid-19. There have been limitations on visits with family and friends; those who enjoy going out for a meal haven't been able to do so; sports fans have been going through withdrawal because they can't play or even go to watch a game. Even shaking hands or hugging has been restricted. So many restrictions and limitations ... and those are just a few of them.

Perhaps one of the most counter-cultural messages of this season has been, “I love you, so stay away from Me.” That doesn't sound like a Christian message – but these have been different days.

Very high on our lists of things we have missed is meeting with our church family. I know some of us have had on-line services and zoom home groups and we are so grateful for the technology that has allowed us to meet in this way. However, it isn't the same is it?

This is a good time to consider and appreciate the value of being able to meet. It is a clear instruction from the Bible. Hebrews 10:25 says “Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another ...”. As we look back over history, we will see that meeting has been of such high value to Christians that they have found ways to meet even when it has been very dangerous to do so.

We know that early Christians met in the catacombs and used the symbol of a fish to secretly point the way to their meeting places. Today, in some countries, Christians meet in secret even when it is against the law, because to them, it is so important.

Continued on page 4

Presidents Message continued:

Acts 2:42 keeps motivating Christians to meet...

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

We have had a small taste of what it feels like to be prevented from meeting. I pray we will make sure we keep a high value on our freedom to meet, make the most of the opportunities we have and keep encouraging each other.

It is also a good opportunity to think about the creative ways we have been able to stay in touch. As we do, remember people who can't always come to meetings and brothers and sisters who are spread out all over the Territory. Let's make sure we remain socially and spiritually connected, even though we may be physically distant.

Mal Sercombe

A PRAYER FOR THESE TIMES

Lord in times that are unruly and uncertain,
We pray that we would be Your light and share Your love.
For the unwell we pray for health,
For the lonely we pray You draw near,
For the fearful we pray Your strength,
For the anxious we pray rest in Your promises.
Help us to remember that in all things,
You are good and You are God.
Help us to share what we have and love with the love You have shown to us.
In Jesus' name, Amen.

Baptist World Aid



Farewell from Bill and Pauline Morrison

There is such a lot of change in the nation and globally at present resulting in adjustments in families, workplaces schooling and many other areas. Worry, fear, pressure, isolation depression all have been a part of reality for so many. Our prayer has been for all to find a peace in God that sustains, gives hope and life. In this time of transition and isolation for us we have constantly been reminded that God has a plan. He does love us. He knows us by name.

What have we been up to?

Up until recently we have been looking after our daughters boys in Beaconsfield (Victoria) three days a week then spending weekends down at San Remo near Phillip Island.

Its refreshing to be near the beach enjoying walks and up until the lockdown - cappuccinos at the beach. Our time with Global Interaction comes to an end on 1st July. What is ahead? We still wait for God's direction.

Our time in the Northern Territory has changed us both in so many ways. Our love and appreciation to those especially in Lajamanu and Kalkaringi who came alongside and helped us to adjust to life on community.

Our thanks to all of you who have supported and encouraged us over the years. May God Bless you and keep you safe each day.

Photo above: Lajamanu friends pray for Bill and Pauline at their farewell.

Life in a COVID-19 World ...

We're sure you've all noticed that we are living in a world we hardly recognise these days! The main changes for us have been Home Education and Travel.

Like many of you we've been schooling from home recently. We have decided that we will keep that going even when the threat of the pandemic settles down. This way we will be able to continue to give our kids more academic input and continue some of the great relationship growing we've seen happening in our family while in isolation. We really value the local school and the friendships our kids have there, so we still plan to send Beth and Peter to school once or twice per week.

Also like many of you our travel plans have been quite disrupted due to the virus. We normally shop every 6 weeks in Alice Springs. But, we are not allowed to do this in order to protect Yuendumu.



While the community stores are quite expensive we are fortunate that they have maintained a good supply and we can get all the groceries that we need here.

Footnote: With the easing of restrictions in June, The Anderson family have been able to enjoy a trip to Alice Springs to connect with family and friends.

.....with the Anderson Family in Yuendumu



Easter on the Radio at Yuendumu

The Coronavirus restrictions meant that Yuendumu was unable to host the annual Easter convention this year. Church and community members had been very excited about the Easter gatherings so it was hard news for many when it couldn't go ahead.

As an alternative, Mat organised for people to record Easter messages, readings and songs. PAW radio (local radio station) played these recordings over the Easter weekend for people to enjoy from home.

AT YUENDUMU



Yuendumu recently celebrated the baptisms of **Isaac Jupurrula White and Ashley Jangala Robertson** on the 17th of May. It was exciting for some of the leaders Eddie Robertson and Clancy Watson along with Mat to be involved in meeting regularly with the men leading up to the baptism, hearing how God has been speaking to them both, and looking together at what God says in the Bible about being in his family and following Jesus.

It was a wonderful occasion with many people from the church and community involved on the day to make the special event happen. On the same day a number of families decided to dedicate their children.

Please pray for those who were baptised, and for those who were dedicated as well as their families.

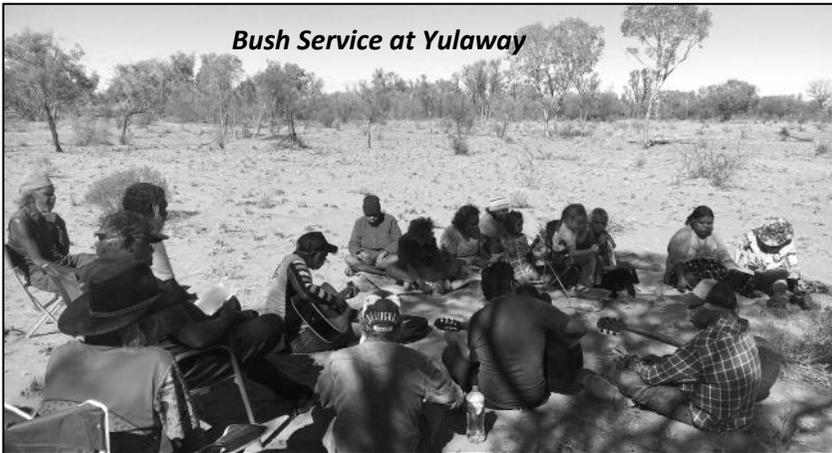


*Isaac Jupurrula White and Ashley Jangala Robertson
after their baptisms, pictured with close family members.*

Pray that God would continue to grow each one closer to Jesus each day through the ups and downs of life and discipleship, and pray to for the church as it seeks to help them grow strong in following Jesus.

It was exciting to do something a bit out of the ordinary and meet out bush for this service at Yulaway near Mission Creek.

Mat and Shannon Anderson



Experiments of Church Online With Alice Springs Baptist



YOUTH MINISTRY

The last four months have been a time of wild adaptation, adjusting to three (so far!) iterations of church, each with their own complexities and learning curves. Every six weeks it felt like you got into a groove, only to have the rug of familiarity pulled out from under you again! But in spite of all these changes I've been so impressed by the way our church has responded to the disappointments, the waiting, but also the opportunities to serve and support others in Jesus' name.

There was understandable disappointment with the cancellation of our yearly Easter Camp, but thankfully we were able to take EPIC Youth online immediately following the gathering restrictions. Each Friday night. I was incredibly impressed by the youth team and families for their willingness to adapt and learn at such short notice. With ongoing relationship being such a high value for us, it was wonderful to see approximately two-thirds of our regular youth choose to engage in some way over this online period,

and in addition to this, we were able to reconnect with youth who had been previously part of the community but had since travelled abroad.

CHURCH ONLINE

Likewise, after a quick lesson on Twitch we were able to take our evening service online via live stream. It was very much an experiment in not trying to imitate church in a building but create a more personal and accessible face-to-face broadcast. We quickly discovered that those joining the live stream were not just locals, but people from across Australia and internationally which is a wonderful testament to the reach of the online model. Our auditorium has now been set up to live stream our complete services.

KIDS AND PARENTS

While we love our Sunday Kids Church program, partnering with parents and equipping them as the primary discipler of their kids has always been a key value for us as a church. This was the heart behind the Parents Portal on our website, so when gatherings were restricted, we kicked this into a new gear with “Church as Family” weekly updates. We knew that if parents could engage with their kids without a program, this would both strengthen their faith and the faith of their kids!

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Zoom at Noon with Casuarina Baptist

It was with great sadness that we were forced to shut our church doors on March 22nd and move to online services. Yet what could have been a negative experience came with some tremendous blessings. One such blessing was the Zoom at Noon catch-ups. Each Sunday lunchtime, Pastors Mal and Chris hosted an open Zoom session, which church attendees were invited to join.

These times became great occasions of catching up with the happenings in each other's lives, the sharing of praise and prayer points, and the praying for one another and our world. Many of our connect groups shifted to online Zoom meetings too during this time. We are thankful for the technology that enabled this and our services to continue as well.

We are now back meeting together and are so thankful to God. For as great as technology is for maintaining connectiveness, there is nothing like actually worshipping and being together, even if it is from 1.5 metres!

The last few months have highlighted that the church is not a building, the church is people. People from every tribe, tongue and nation, coming together to praise and serve our wonderful God.

Church is about people, God's people, people of hope, broken people, who acknowledge their dependence on the God who is above all gods, Jesus our Saviour. We are a people of joy and praise, even in the midst of struggles and uncertainties

Pastor Chris Good



Continued from Page 11
Alice Springs Baptist

Accessible COVID support and assistance forms for practical needs, The Studio for creative expression, a series of COVID messages in indigenous languages, weekly YouTube church service playlists, Zoom home groups, weddings with limited numbers...there have been *many* experiments and *many* lessons along the way! But most of all, this season has highlighted for me that as a church we are far more than services or programs, but truly a

living body who finds their direction, courage and peace in Jesus, not an institution.

As things slowly return to a form of 'normal' I hope we can meditate on this and not lose the perhaps unexpected "access" we have created in our isolation to those who don't yet know Jesus.

Grace and Peace,

Pastor Gavin Brown

LAJAMANU CHURCH

Faithful in Prayer and Witness

The Lajamanu Church was encouraged to keep meeting during the lockdown time while the community was closed off to outside visitors.

During this time, the community experienced a time of great blessing where the people saw Wapirra change hearts and lives.

In a joyful message, Church Leader, Lynette Tasman tells of nightly Singalongs and Prayer times in the lead up to Easter. Unable to travel and meet up with other communities for the annual Easter gathering they shared God's Word together. On Easter Sunday about 25 people gave their lives to the Lord while over the Easter weekend there were a number of Baptisms in the river and also several families brought their young ones for Dedication.

PRAYER CHANGES THINGS

Lynette describes some wonderful healings that have taken place earlier this year amongst the community when the Church folk prayed.

A lady was sent home from Darwin Hospital because 'nothing more could be done for her'. She was very ill and preparing to die. Church Leaders visited her at home, prayed for her and laid hands on her. This lady has now recovered and walking around the community.

Another time, a little girl, 8 years of age, was bitten by a snake and was very ill as a result of the poison in her body. She was airlifted to Darwin for treatment. The Church prayed earnestly for her healing and Wapirra has restored this child to the community, well again. Praise God!

YOUTH GROUP

More recently, a new Youth Group has been started by three of the younger women,

Delbeon, Donnelly and Loretta.

On Tuesday and Thursday evenings, A mob of keen children come along to enjoy games, fun and to learn about Wapirra's way.



*Three faithful Lajamanu Church Leaders,
L-R, Narlita Patrick, Lynette Tasman, Robyn Paton*

PLEASE PRAY

- Pray for all those who have turned to follow Jesus, and those baptised in recent months. Pray that they will be disciplined and encouraged by fellow Christians and the Holy Spirit will keep them on track for Jesus.
- Pray for Church Leaders as they make decisions, encourage, teach and disciple the church.
- Pray for Steve Patrick who has flown to Adelaide for medical treatment for a heart condition.
- Pray for the Youth Group, the leaders and the children attending, that they will all grow in the Lord.



Arthur Payne

16/11/39 - 24/5/20

A Tribute

It is with sadness we acknowledge the death of Arthur Payne on 24 May 2020. Over the years Arthur and his wife, Jane, have contributed substantially to the Baptist Family of Churches in the NT.

In the 1990s and early 2000s, Arthur and Jane made regular visits to the NT. Arthur was pastor at Karratha in WA at the time and, in addition to his normal pastoral responsibilities, he supported other remote pastors in WA and the NT. He was a 'Pastor to the pastors'. Arthur and Jane were an integral part of at least two of the Remote Areas Conferences, held in Batchelor, for Baptist Ministers, Missionaries, church leaders and their families serving in the outback. At one of these, Arthur was guest speaker.

I remember Arthur preaching at Darwin Baptist Church not very long after Ellen and I arrived in Darwin, just over twenty-eight years ago. I wasn't the pastor, but I recall having a conversation with Paul King, the pastor at the time, and hearing

what an encouragement Arthur had been. I remember his almost continuous smile. It wasn't false, he was always welcoming and friendly.

Shortly after I became pastor at DBC, the Annual Assembly of BUNT was held at Alice Springs. Arthur was the guest speaker and I got to know him a little better. On the way to Alice Springs he had stopped and picked up quite a lot of small stones along the way. He used the stones in his talks and concluded with the story of the woman caught in adultery.

When challenged by Jesus, her accusers all dropped the stones they were intending to throw at her. Arthur's challenge to us was, "What stones do we need to let go of?" And he invited us to come thoughtfully and prayerfully to take one of the stones he'd brought and symbolically drop it into a bucket of water. For many of us, it was quite a powerful moment.



During the latter part of 2011 Arthur and Jane undertook a ten-week interim role at Casuarina Baptist Church, working with the leaders and members towards the call of a new pastor. I know it was a helpful and encouraging time for Casuarina and for me, it was another opportunity to reconnect with Arthur and Jane.

Just a couple of weeks before he died, I accidentally phoned Arthur. It was a brief but serendipitous phone call and we chatted briefly. He asked if I was still at DBC and, in his typical style, he took the opportunity to offer words of encouragement.

Along with churches in other parts of Australia, the Baptist Churches of the NT have been blessed by the faithful ministry of Arthur and Jane Payne. Arthur has now passed from death to life and though we mourn, we also celebrate that he is now in his true home, in the presence of his Lord and Saviour to whom his life was devoted. Our condolences go to Jane and the rest of his family for whom we pray the palpable presence and comfort of the Holy Spirit.

Mal Sercombe

ALI CURUNG CHURCH ALIVE AND ACTIVE

As restrictions have eased the Church at Ali Curung has been very active.

Arana and her husband Jerry are Church Leaders and have given a great description of the Church Week with something happening every day.

A Working Bee Roster has been drawn up to involve as many as possible in looking after the church building.

Bible Studies

Both Men's and Women's Bible Studies meet early in the week. Encouraged by Debbie, a local Christian friend, the women gather and read the Bible to each other, talk about it and plan ahead for the next week, On Wednesday evening there is a church service in the church with worship and praise and sometimes a singalong.

A Women's Prayer Meeting is held in the late afternoon on Thursday when prayers are made for women around Australia, for those who are sick or caught up in fighting. People in the community often come asking for prayer for family problems and it is always a privilege to pray for them.

The Op Shop, held inside the church, is open every Friday afternoon and the church women are there to run it. Not only locals, but people from other communities visit the Op shop.

The Community Feed every Saturday night is always a popular event with the ladies bringing dishes they have cooked at home. This is followed by a fun evening of Action Dances by the children and sometimes the adults too.



On Sunday morning the main **Church Service** is held and in the evening a shorter service with a Sharing Time and a Singalong. **Praise God for the Christians at Ali Curung, for their faithfulness during lockdown time and for their energy and eagerness to make the Church part of everyday community life with Jesus at the centre.**



Children and adults join in Action Songs after the Saturday evening Community Feed

Darwin Baptist Church

Meeting the Challenges



Like so many organisations around the country, Darwin Baptist Church moved its regular Sunday services online as part of the government's COVID-19 precautions.

The experience has resulted in an almost-seamless service for our congregation. Week after week we have been able to worship, pray and listen together, while still apart.

In fact Zoom has allowed most of our ministries to continue to function during this shutdown period including Mainly Music, Pearl Aged Care Services, Youth Group, Kids Church and many of our Connect Groups.

“Though we are restricted on how we as a Church can worship together, let's never stop loving God and worshipping Him. Paul praised God in a jail cell and continued to serve Him with what he had, resulting in letters we read and live by today.”

Darwin Baptist Church understands how much of a community we are as a Church and how we as God's children long to be together and connect, so each Sunday we worship and lead through the technology God has blessed us with.”

Darwin Baptist Church

While live-streaming seems like a simple and easy process, our IT volunteers have worked tremendously hard to shift our church online.

They have spent many hours researching compatible hardware and peripheral devices; audio and mixing equipment; content delivery networks and subscriptions to appropriate platforms.

They have also reconfigured the church hall into a production studio, using their weekends to troubleshoot and overcome the technical obstacles that often present when new technology is introduced into an existing system.

Thank you Iain and Neal. We appreciate the amazing job you have done over this period and the time you have given to ensure the greater Darwin region and beyond continues to have the opportunity to see, hear and respond to the good news of Jesus.

Kate Woods



Introducing Vivian Grice

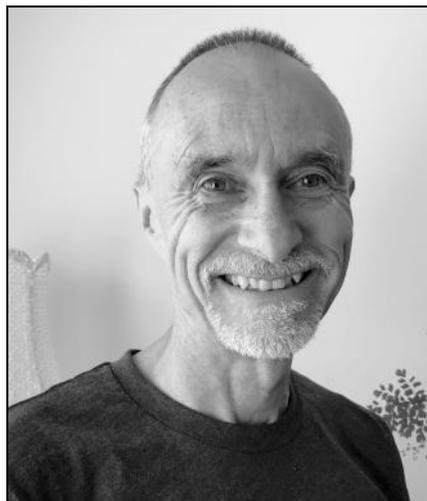


Vivian Grice is the new Global Interaction Team Leader for our Outback Australia Team.

Based in NSW, he will offer leadership, pastoral care and strategic planning to the team through visits and video conferences.

Hi, my name is Vivian Grice, and, although Vivian is often noted as a female name I am male! Rhonda and I have been married since 1978, blessed with three children and five grandchildren, with one more on the way.. We live in NSW, and our home church is Menai Baptist.

. Although most of my life as a minister has seen me engaged with urban and western-based ministry settings, from early on in my Christian experience there has been a conviction about our responsibility to take the gospel beyond our own cultural boundaries. I sought to ensure this emphasis was part of the local churches I led. I also took the opportunity to engage in cross cultural exposure opportunities, in Africa and Indonesia.



My work with Global Interaction will be to support the Outback Australia team, centered on connecting with the Gurindji and Walpiri people.

The team at this stage consists of the Anderson family, Mat and Shannon, and their four children. They live in Yuendumu, northwest of Alice Springs. With travel restrictions due to COVID-19 they have been, until recently, largely confined to that township, and I have been unable to visit them or the other remote communities in the Territory.

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**BAPTIST
WORLD AID
AUSTRALIA**
Be Love. End poverty.

COVID-19 EMERGENCY GLOBAL APPEAL

Our world is facing unprecedented times... and in the face of these challenges, Baptist World Aid is acting urgently, and on a larger scale than ever before.

Due to conflict and violence in the Middle East, Syrian refugee families are already under great stress. But your generous gift will help to provide five health clinics with extra medical equipment and staff, as well as protective equipment for frontline workers... so they can continue to protect vulnerable refugee families from coronavirus throughout this crisis. Thank you!

Your most important gift also means our existing Christian partners can receive small grants to help with the following:

Materials to tell children, women, and men living in poverty about the great importance of thoroughly washing their hands... to keep them safe from coronavirus.

Water and water sources for communities who currently have none... so they can their hands stay clean from germs.

And protective equipment so that frontline workers can keep safe from coronavirus and caring for those who are sick.

To Donate: Phone 1300 789 991

Vivian Grice continued

However, we are connecting weekly via Zoom or phone. A great need for the communities is leadership development. As a team we are praying for more workers to be called into this work with Global Interaction.

The needs of Australia's indigenous people are great; what we can learn from them is important; and the gospel of Jesus is the transforming power that we all need. It's a privilege to be a part of the Outback team

CORNERSTONE COMES THROUGH COVID-19

Like everyone else it has been an interesting time for us during the restricted period due to "The Virus". It has been a blessing in some ways as people commented on the paring back of busy to something more manageable which has led them to connect with God in a new way. We had to start recording services which was also a good shove for us and we are now in a position to be able to keep that going as a regular thing.

One other fun thing for me was the start of a podcast with Matt Kernick during which we discuss the week-end's message for 15 - 20 minutes. If you are interested check this out by looking through the media section of our website. www.ccfnt.org.au.

Now we are back at church. What a relief. We have seen a good number of new people coming and a lot of the regulars returning and we are in the process of working out connection again





One ministry that has just started up is with the young adults. They are meeting socially at this stage and we saw that the need was growing so have welcomed this.

Youth is on again as well and they are having their first combined meeting with other youth groups around Darwin. It is called Merge.

Food for Life is being restructured and is a work in progress. We have been seeing consistent attenders but we are wanting to see this ministry area explode and connect people with food and people who love God.

We have applied for and received a grant for capital works which is a major praise point so hopefully work on a few different projects will start soon. It gives us the chance to finish off some of those incomplete jobs.

If you are praying for us, pray that we see an increase in discipleship and growth in all the areas of the church and that we see the lives of those without Christ transformed.

Pastor Neil Wright

CrossRoads Christian Church

Caring

If the first half of the year is anything to go by, the second half will make for an interesting journey!

Obviously the whole virus issue and everything that came with it seriously disrupted our 'normal' and launched many of us onto a steep learning curve as we all attempted to navigate 'doing church' on-line, the many and varied zoom meetings which suddenly sprang out of the blue, trying to get used to 'staring down the barrel of a camera' while preaching, being aware that, if so inclined, pretty much the whole world could see and listen to the latest message from our sphere of influence.

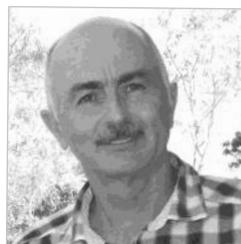
In the midst of it all we had a real tragedy when a CrossRoads family lost their 21 month old precious little girl. Such a difficult, heart-wrenching time for us all but especially so for her family.

The love and concern shown by Church family was absolutely amazing – never before have I seen such an outpouring of love, help and support. For the prayers out there, please pray for the little girl's family – it's a hard road.

One of the things people said they missed most was being able to worship together so, as soon as we could, CrossRoads began meeting together again, experiencing some amazing times of worship. Sometimes we take things too lightly and don't know what we've got till it's gone. Right now, there are so many freedoms which we've pretty much taken for granted being eroded through legislation, by mob rule and by activist bullying – we need to take a stand, stay strong and make our voices heard. Leave you with a Maori phrase of affirmation meaning -

Stay Strong:
Kia Kaha!!

***Pastor Bruce
Clow***



Global Interaction and Covid-19

COVID-19 is etched in our vocabulary. Since March a 'new normal' has emerged. Global Interaction at home and abroad is not exempt. David Turnbull's trip to Darwin has been postponed and May Missions Month required delivery changes. Cross-cultural workers' travel has been paused until 2021, affecting both the Griffiths and the Haydens. Global Interaction staff on home assignment, have also had to abandon their travel plans to NT.

Global Interaction colleagues are actively responding in regions already under pressure through poverty and religious discrimination.

In Malawi and Mozambique, with so few ventilators, poor health facilities, crowded living conditions and no stimulus packages, team members are engaged in developing education programs and linguistically appropriate materials to encourage vulnerable communities to stay safe. They have also developed Tippy Taps (*see photo overleaf*) to assist people washing their hands more, made facemasks, and filmed short educational videos.

The Cambodian team are in lockdown and home schooling their children. Businesses are affected by the significant loss of tourism. The farmers are preparing for planting but are not sure if they will succeed. Scarecrows and effigies are appearing outside houses around Siem Reap, to protect family and houses, as they seek the power of spiritual intervention in their lives. A longing for peace is stirring deeply below the surface.

Let us continue to pray, knowing that workers remaining during testing times will gain credibility. Pray for workers to discern community needs, and for the conversations around God's hope and peace to occur despite social distancing. May we be challenged to lift our eyes to see the world with God's compassion and sense of justice.

David Turnbull

State Director NT and SA





Tippy Taps in Malawi and Mozambique encourage hand washing



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