

Church Matters

Keeping a link with the Sydney congregation



Living and Sharing the Gospel

August 2016

When you get this **Mark Latham** and **Rod Dean** will be up in Mt Wilhelm.

PNG Trip

Rod wrote:

We wish to thank everybody for their support. We have been so overwhelmed at the generosity towards the people of PNG from people in and out of the church.

There is definitely an historical bond that continues between Australians and Papua New Guineans. There are deep family connections through missionary work up there, Australian Government service support, World War 2 and even private enterprise. A lot of Australians have visited PNG and enjoyed the people.

But it sadly is a country that has suffered from bad government. Whatever good happens up there is at the local village level. They want to learn, to improve and go forward. But unfortunately corruption demoralizes the country.

Please pray for PNG. Please pray that men and women of good will can make a difference.

Treasuring our Treasury Team

CELEBRATING A LABOUR OF LOVE

Sydney congregation honoured the selfless and dedicated work of its financial team with words of appreciation

and a cake on July 2nd 2016.

Joie Muyargas has just completed her seventh year as Sydney Treasurer, working alongside **Jeff Callaghan** who has been involved in the finance and charity area since 1996.

Joie came to Australia in 1987 with a Bachelor of Business Administration majoring in Accounting. She was the first person to be employed in the Philippines by Lufthansa's financial department when they opened offices there. In Australia she worked for AMEV Insurance before she spent fifteen years in different roles with American Express.

During these years, Joie has been awarded 7 trophies for Customer Service and quality work. In 2004 she completed a Diploma of Management at Macquarie Business College and has since kept her mind active with courses in Digital Literacy, Business Studies and even Floristry.

Her parents had instilled in her a strong obligation to deal justly and fairly, and to work to "make things right." Her mother always said she worked like a lawyer, hence her natural tendency to be able to handle disputes with insightfulness and keen perception and to be vigilantly detail-minded.

With these skills, Joie was the perfect choice to replace **Graham Miller** who retired from the position of Sydney Church Treasurer due to ill health in 2009.

Jeff Callaghan's involvement in the finance and charity area began in 1996 assisting **Roger Louat** with the counting of monies collected for the Solomon Islands Water Project and other charity projects.

He continued as a member of the Finance and Charity Committee as the congregation's involvement in various overseas missions continued to grow and expand. When **Robert Pavlovskis** became ill in 2002 Jeff took over the role of counting and reporting the Offerings.

Jeff's thoroughness and accuracy have blended well with Joie's ethical bookkeeping skills to create a formidable team of trustworthiness and accountability.

Jeff is stepping down from this role as Joie trains **Julie Raffell** and **Brian Connors** to assist her. The Festival offerings will still be Jeff's responsibility.

How reassuring it is to know that our congregation's finances are kept under the watchful eye of a dedicated and ethical team. We are most grateful to Joie and Jeff for their loyalty and devotion and for the astuteness with which they use their skills to serve the congregation.



African Strategy

As a region we have been quite involved in the African mission. We have had a long term relationship with the Buduburam refugee church. This year we are hoping to see the completion of the infrastructure projects there with the children's hall built. We are also hoping to see more progress in the development of the school we are supporting in Kenya. We also continue to support the orphans and widows there. We wait to see how the Burundi church building progresses. We helped purchase the land for this.

Recently email communication with **Kalengule Kaoma** discussed future priorities in the African mission.

Rod: I personally believe what Jesus wrote in John 4:35. The growth was coming to them from a very unexpected place: the Samaritans. He also said in Matthew 9:35-38 that the workers are few.

I think that this is true around the world. And while some of our old congregations may be ageing and shrinking they have a responsibility to respond where Jesus is obviously working. I also believe in death and resurrection for churches. While some areas may gracefully die, the seed is planted elsewhere where it grows abundantly with new life.

There are times it seems like we are the little boy bringing his two fishes and five loaves to Jesus.

Kalengule: The focus you have for international missions is spot on. I share your thoughts heartily.

1. Africa has a lot of potential for growth. Jesus' words are true: "The harvest is plentiful but the labourers are few." The fields are ripe for harvest. People keep writing and asking for affiliation. Spending time with them, either from grassroots or national levels or from missions office needs some financial commitments. Developing congregations for church growth also require substantial financial outlay.

2. However, whichever way we look at the work in Africa, in order to do the work in Africa, my burden is to develop leaders: men and women who are committed and share the passion for the salvation of people. For some time, we have been sharing thoughts of educating our leaders through ACCM and or Grace Seminary. Unfortunately, most of the leaders in African congregations do not have access to internet. Those who have access to internet don't have the speed required for online courses.

Thankfully, more thoughts developed to use Bible Institutes/Colleges/Classes. This would be an opportunity where our leaders can receive training to run churches. GCI Africa will initially need about five hubs which would be developed across Africa. Leaders would be trained in these hubs. Costs would be kept low. Local churches would also contribute to the running of these Leaders' Training Hubs. Leaders would receive Bible courses, leadership skills, speaking and other skills.

Strategically, we need to focus on these hubs. In the long run, GCI Africa will have a trained and dependable leadership.

Rod: We have been involved with training pastors in the highland of PNG. We edit a lot of material for them so that it is simple to read. For example we have just about edited the new worship course for ACCM. Simple sentence structure. Removal of abstract words and quotes. Simple words to replace more difficult one. We don't have the internet up there. So we take hard copies and put the material on a USB. They have laptops. We then hold classes to give an overview.

This year we are especially focussing on the young people. It takes time but we have given them a lot of stuff on a lot of areas pertaining to their culture. We have had to discuss AIDS, abuse of women, the role of men and women in a Christian community, plus major theological questions.

Kalengule: What you have described is what we have in mind. We are thinking in the same direction. You are already doing it. I am encouraged that resources are available. This is the work of the Holy Spirit. ☺

ACCM transformed for use in this way will be very helpful for our leaders with local education levels.

Perhaps our experience in PNG can be shared with others.

It is quite a challenge to take the essence of an article, be faithful to its message and make it clear and accessible to a person whose English is a second language.

We will be looking at this on the present trip to PNG and incorporate our insights into our annual PNG meeting when **John McLean** joins us.

Mark Latham's many years in constructing courses is invaluable in all of this.

