

checkpoint.

MARCH 2024

CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY MAGAZINE

LEADERSHIP

IN THIS EDITION:

Leading like Christ | Start as a servant | Who will lead next?



WELCOME

Have you ever seen a leader do something amazing or unexpected?

I suspect many of us have a story about a leader who surprised others by their actions. Mine involves a fellow former CMS missionary, Charlie Fletcher, who served in student ministry in Mexico.

Charlie was (and still is!) very competent, but also very humble. While leading on a student camp, having enjoyed his dinner, Charlie went to the kitchen and started washing up. The eyes of the students were as wide as the dinner plates he was washing! How could he, a teacher, a leader, be doing such a basic job? Surely he was above that?

Charlie gently explained that as a leader he wasn't there just to do the 'important' stuff, but to serve, to walk alongside the students.

Of course, the thinking behind Charlie's actions was not original. In Mark 10, James and John come to Jesus asking to sit at his right and left, a request that causes the other disciples to be indignant. Jesus' response is a redefinition of leadership and how authority is exercised — a new paradigm. Instead of the leader ruling from above, exercising authority, the great one must be the servant. Jesus concludes, using himself as the example: "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Mark 10:45

In this edition of *Checkpoint*, there are many wonderful stories of paradigm-changing servant-hearted leadership. Give thanks to God that in Jesus, he has given us a new paradigm for leadership, and that our workers have many opportunities to both put it into, and see it in practice, as they serve around the world.



P Sholl

Canon Peter Sholl
CMS Australia
International Director

Contents

- 4 Leading like Christ
- 8 Gospel impact in Chile and beyond
- 10 Start as a servant
- 12 Cross-shaped leaders at Nungalinya
- 14 Mentoring Manoj
- 15 Equipping leaders through MOCLAM
- 16 A growing partnership
- 18 *Año Puente*: discipleship gap year
- 19 Apprentice leadership
- 20 Who will lead next?
- 22 Giving thanks
- 22 Prayer Diary updates
- 23 Missionary Spotlight

checkpoint.

© 2024 Church Missionary Society – Australia Ltd. Permission to reproduce material may be obtained from the editor. *Checkpoint* is published three times a year by CMS Australia. CMS is a member of Missions Interlink. For information and feedback, please email us at: checkpoint@cms.org.au. Please send CHANGES OF ADDRESS to your CMS branch office (see back cover). Unless otherwise stated, all Bible quotations are from the New International Version® Copyright© 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ CMS Australia contracts an independent professional to receive complaints – 1800 070 511 | helpline@smr.org.au

International Director: Peter Sholl; Communications Manager: David Carpenter; Editorial Coordinator: Naomi Jones; Editor: Gordon Cheng; Sub-editor: Chloe Bowden; Design: Meghan Sittou.

CMS is a fellowship of Christian people and churches committed to global mission. We work with churches to set apart godly people as long-term cross-cultural gospel workers. Our vision is for a world that knows Jesus. We aim to do this by:

- Reaching gospel-poor peoples for Christ
- Equipping Christians as leaders in the church and the world
- Engaging churches in cross-cultural mission.

Image (Front): Canon Ndimbirwe Bible College student Francis and his wife on a Student Practical Assessment visit in remote Bugangari Archdeaconry, SW Uganda with CMS missionary Margie Newman (centre).



Please **DO NOT DISTRIBUTE ONLINE** any articles marked with this symbol. This includes but is not limited to reproducing, emailing and uploading to a website.



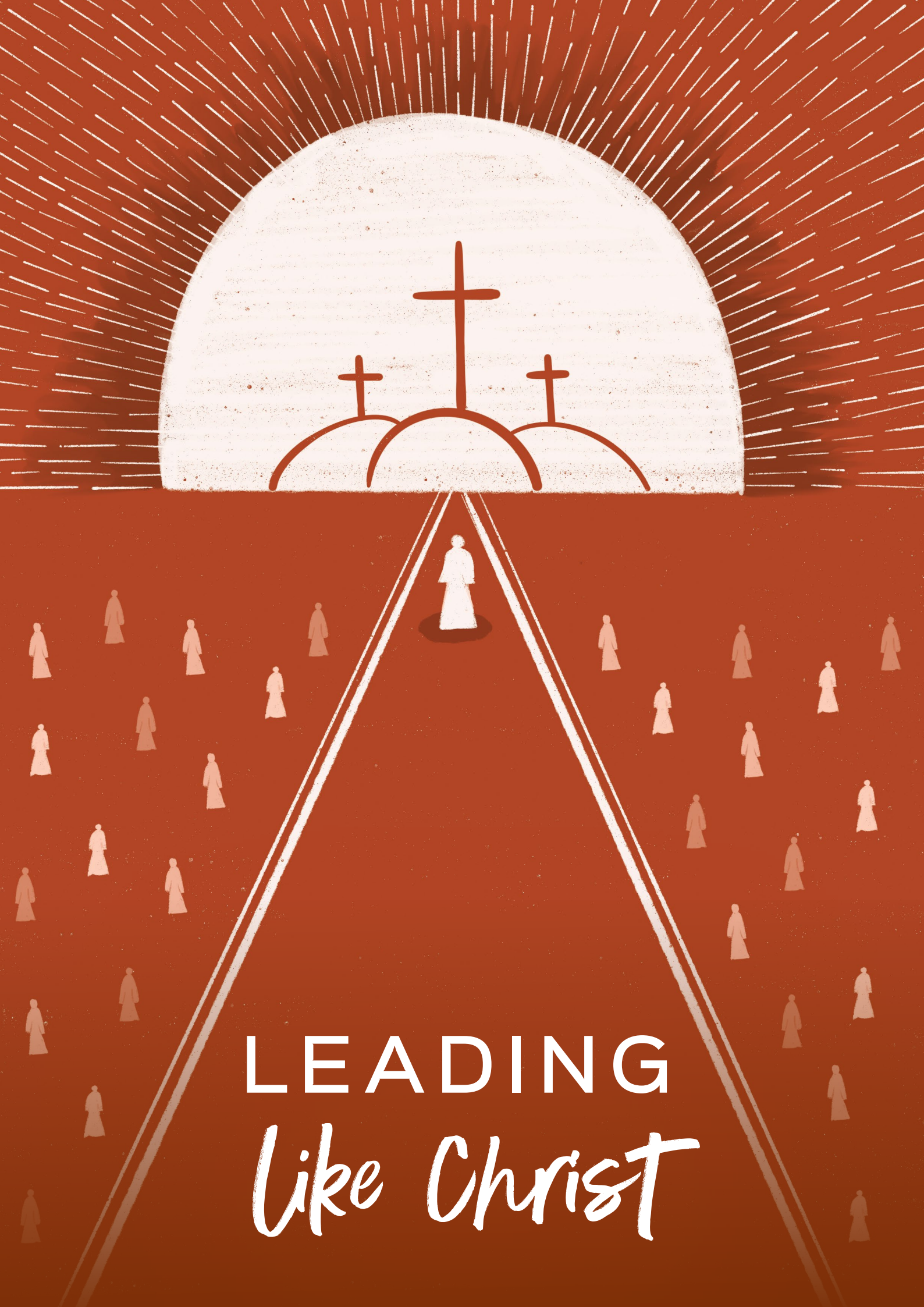
We don't have the space to cover all the wonderful stories that CMS has to tell within the pages of this *Checkpoint*. If you want to read more, scan the QR code or go to: cms.org.au/stories

DO YOU WANT TO PLAY A PART IN GROWING GOD'S CHURCH AROUND THE WORLD?



Start giving regularly to
CMS today **give.cms.org.au**





LEADING
Like Christ



CMS Australia Regional Mission Director Elizabeth Richards served as a CMS missionary with her husband Malcolm in DR Congo from 1988 to 1994 and 2005 to 2010. She reflects on why CMS aims to grow godly leaders for the church and the world:

Equipping Christians as leaders in the church and the world is a core aspect of the CMS vision to see *a world that knows Jesus*. To do this we partner with churches and Christian organisations to train and mentor godly leaders who will serve Christ with their whole lives and who will also raise up and equip others.

I have the joy of meeting with CMS partners around the world, hearing how God has prepared them for their current leadership roles. I get to meet many servant-hearted leaders who demonstrate God's love through their own self-sacrifice. For example, the pastor who willingly gives away his clothes when visiting a parishioner who has nothing, or another who goes with their family to live in a remote village to plant a church where none exists, even in the face of persecution.

Where the gospel is proclaimed, churches form and grow, and these churches need well-trained leaders from within their own culture. That is, people who understand the Bible, can teach and minister, who can share the gospel with those around them, and pass it to the next generation.

Christians who will take up leadership roles in society also need to be equipped and encouraged. Christians who are government leaders, university lecturers, medical doctors, school teachers, and other professional leaders can have enormous influence. CMS missionaries using their professional skills can have a key role in nurturing, training and supporting God's people in this way.

What is Christian leadership?

As Christians our authority for understanding leadership is the Scriptures. Healthy Christian leadership is servanthood. Our example is Christ, the suffering servant:

"To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps."
(1 Peter 2:21)

The Bible teaches that the way to be a godly leader is not the way of the world. When our authority comes from scripture, we acknowledge that all power belongs to God. A godly leader does not look for self-serving power and control. They follow Christ's example, humbly serving the people in their care, enduring opposition and seeking to live a godly and obedient life.

There are warnings in the Scriptures for those in leadership of God's people. It says in Ezekiel 34:2, "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy and say to them: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Woe to you shepherds of Israel who only take care of yourselves! Should not shepherds take care of the flock?'"

God cares about his people, the sheep. Those designated as shepherds must account for their actions before God.

Christ-centred leadership is not the norm in most cultures, and to train people in this model of leadership takes time and investment. Christian leaders need to be carefully selected and carefully trained.





Where and how we work

Many of our CMS partners have identified a shortage of trained leaders. This is often due to rapidly growing churches, urbanisation and poverty. CMS missionaries work in the areas of training and developing leaders for both within and outside the church. For example, CMS missionaries teach in Bible schools and other institutions, mentor and disciple new graduates, mentor other staff, and occasionally take on overt leadership roles while training and preparing a replacement. We generally do not send people to be the leaders themselves. To directly send leaders might seem to solve a short-term problem. But it can create other challenges such as sending unintended messages about trust, appearing to support Western dominance, and may not contribute to developing the Church.

We recognise that it is only with sound training and ongoing encouragement and support that national church leaders will be able to speak with a relevant voice which in turn teaches and equips local Christians for godly maturity and a desire for outreach.

CMS missionaries are sent to work under local leadership and to enter another culture with humility, as cross-cultural learners. It takes time to learn language and become competent in communication, relationship building and in one's assigned role. Such humility and vulnerability acknowledge that we enter someone else's culture at their invitation and without judgment, and is an expression of servanthood. Missionaries are sent to serve using the gifts and experience that God has given them. In this way missionaries are setting an example of the servanthood intrinsic to servant leadership.

Here are three ways in which CMS is helping equip Christian leaders around the world:

1. Teaching the Bible

Many CMS missionaries are teaching God's word in Bible schools, Bible colleges, and through theological courses like MOCLAM. Whether at a certificate level or a university degree level, the aim is to teach the Bible clearly with cultural sensitivity. We long to see students understand the Scriptures in a way that impacts lives and equips people to teach, preach and disciple others. Graduates of these schools, courses and colleges become evangelists, pastors, Bible school teachers and youth leaders. Some may eventually become college principals, bishops or denominational leaders, or church planters.

2. Modelling godly leadership in the workplace

CMS workers are also involved in training Christian leaders who will work outside the church but use their skills to be a godly influence in their workplaces, in turn training others and modelling godly leadership. Examples include training physiotherapists in Namibia, establishing a palliative care program in Nepal, and working with a team in Kenya involved in teaching conservation and new farming methods.

3. Study scholarships

To assist our partners to raise up the next generation of leaders, CMS offers study scholarships through the Mission Support Fund (MSF). These scholarships enable people (who would otherwise have no possibility of studying) to attend colleges and universities, and then use their new knowledge and skills to serve in their churches. Many students who have received MSF scholarships in the past are now serving in ministry as pastors, diocesan secretaries, or Bible school teachers, and having a significant impact in their churches and communities. Of one such former recipient, his Bishop said, "His theology studies have changed him in many ways. He is a confident leader, who works tirelessly. He is a good preacher and teacher—a reliable, future leader for the Diocese. He is a spiritual role model to many."¹

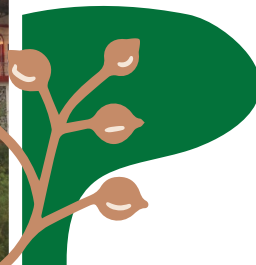
A long-term perspective

It is a great privilege to be a part of raising godly people to take on leadership roles, whether in church or in society. I have met with many people now in leadership in different parts of the world who can testify that they were at some point mentored, disciplined, taught, or influenced by CMS missionaries.

Dr William in DR Congo was trained by former CMS missionaries Graham and Wendy Toulmin and is now teaching and training the next generation of dentists in DRC. The current director of the university student ministry in Spain studied the MOCLAM course with former CMS missionary John Lovell. Many of the current leaders of GBU France were disciplined and trained by a generation of CMS missionaries including Paul and Sandra King, Libby Leach, and Owen and Catherine Chadwick. The list of similar stories is countless!

At times investing in leadership development brings disappointment and grief—people move, those who have committed to training change their minds when they count the cost, people must be asked to stand down from leadership due to ungodly behaviour, or godly leaders die.

Malcolm and I first met Desire in Goma (in DR Congo, formerly Zaire) in 1989. He was part of the youth group, attended youth conferences where we taught, and later became a youth leader. We encouraged him as he completed theological studies, married, and took on more leadership roles within the church. We were delighted when he was elected as Bishop of Goma and attended his consecration in 2016. We were deeply saddened when he died suddenly in 2020.



Such challenges and disappointments are important reminders that God's plans do not depend on just one person. God brings about his purposes in situations where our human perspective can see no solution. God raises up the right people at the right time. Our job is to be faithful in the roles God has given each one of us, including looking for, and encouraging godly leaders.

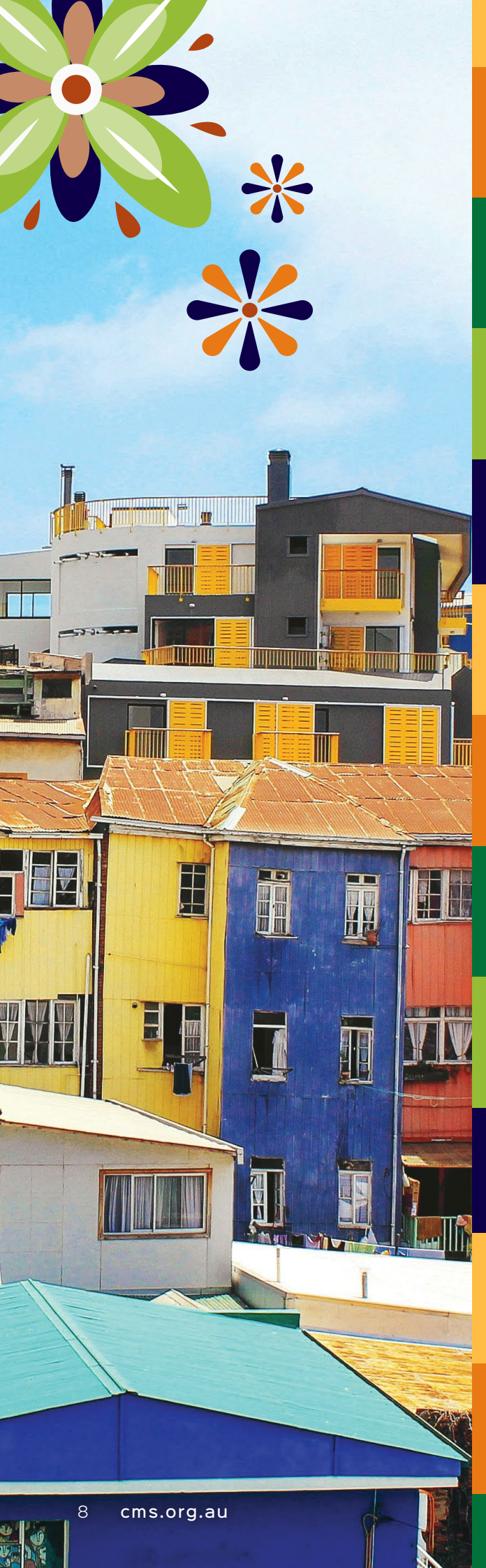
Going forward

As part of our vision to see *a world that knows Jesus*, CMS will continue to invest in leadership development. We will send workers to new and existing locations to train, teach and to mentor. We will continue to provide scholarships for further education, and we will work with our partners as they select and encourage future leaders—so that God's church continues to grow. These leaders need our prayers to stand firm and to remain godly, humble and servant-hearted amidst the challenges and joys of serving the body of Christ until Jesus returns.

pray



Please pray that God would raise up leaders who know and love the Lord Jesus Christ, and who will stand firm as they serve, teach, and disciple others so that God's kingdom grows.



GOSPEL IMPACT IN *Chile* AND *beyond*



CMS missionary Chris Overhall (serving with Stef) gives insight into our long-term partnership in theological training in Chile. He also introduces three recent graduates:

The Centre for Pastoral Studies (or ‘CEP’—it works as an acronym in Spanish, trust me!) is the theological college for the Anglican Church of Chile. For more than 20 years, CEP has trained students from Chile, Argentina, Peru, Bolivia, and even Ireland and England. Many have gone on to serve God in gospel ministries across Latin America.

A CEP snapshot

Over time, CMS missionaries, Chilean pastors, and many other Christian teachers have served as part of the CEP faculty. Their work of equipping leaders has been significant both for gospel growth, and for the formation of workers for Spanish-speaking churches and ministries. CMS (through the Mission Support Fund) has also supported dozens of students studying at CEP over the years, many of whom continue in church leadership to this day. CEP graduates have served—and continue to serve—as pastors, leaders in Christian organisations, university Bible workers, missionaries, evangelists, and youth and children’s workers.

CEP is situated in the heart of the modern, secular, and ‘hipster’ coffee-culture of Chile’s capital, Santiago. Significant gospel needs are all around: people living on the street in poverty; people serving idols or the false gods of new age spirituality; materially well-off people with high-paying jobs, who remain oblivious to the fact that they are spiritually lost. The potential harvest is plentiful but gospel workers are few, and there is clear need for the biblical training that CEP provides. To this end, CEP currently offers a two-year fulltime degree with a focus on formation in Biblical Studies, Theology, Greek, and Pastoral Ministry.

Meet some CEP graduates

At CEP I'm currently teaching Biblical Theology, the letter to the Hebrews, and subjects that cover much of the Old Testament. It is a joy to open God's word with the students as we encounter God and see Christ in all of Scripture.

I also have the delight of working alongside two CEP graduates, Alan and Francisco. I can see how deep and thorough study of God's word at CEP has trained and shaped them for leadership.

“CEP gave me the key tools to personally deepen my study of the Bible, to teach others, and to care for the church from a solid theological perspective.”

Alan, Pastor in Santiago

Alan du Belloy is leading our church in Santiago and has just completed his first year of full-time post-CEP ministry. He preaches well and is wise in leadership. These competencies flow out of the godly convictions and character formed during his time at CEP. It's been a joy to be part of his training and now to continue in the role of coaching him. Alan said recently, “CEP gave me the key tools to personally deepen my study of the Bible, to teach others, and to care for the church from a solid theological perspective.”

Francisco, General Secretary of GBU

Francisco Flores serves as the General Secretary of GBU Chile (*Grupo Bíblico Universitario*, the tertiary student Bible group). He shows steady and godly leadership and decision making in the many ways necessary to this role, and he leads the staff team with humility and love. GBU is an interdenominational ministry with students from all kinds of different church backgrounds. It's necessary to be wise and to be able to discern what issues are central to the gospel and to faithful ministry in the university. Through his initial studies with MOCLAM,¹ and more recently at the CEP, Francisco has been trained and equipped to discern such issues from the Scriptures.

Francisco says “The CEP has allowed me to develop understanding of theology and doctrine, something that has helped me in the exercise of my role within an interdenominational organisation, where different expressions of faith coexist, and where I have needed to point to the teachings received. My studies in CEP have helped the way I approach biblical counselling, and have

enabled me to be a model to other leaders who are part of the organisation where I serve.”

Nicolas, Assistant Pastor in Santiago

Another student from CEP with whom I have a close friendship is Nicolas Ojeda ('Nico'). When we first arrived in Chile, Nico helped us as our language teacher. After a ministry apprenticeship and studying at CEP, Nico is now starting a new role as an assistant pastor in Santiago. Nico says: “CEP has been vital in many areas of my life. In particular, it has been important in my understanding of the Scriptures so that I can share the message of the gospel clearly and faithfully—in counselling, teaching courses, and in exposition in the Sunday gathering.”

God's gracious work

Under God, CEP has been greatly used to train leaders for the church in Chile. CMS missionaries have been privileged to be involved in this work in many ways. We give great thanks for the ministry of CMS missionary Frances Cook, who recently finished serving in Chile, including with CEP, after more than 30 years. Our hope is that CEP will continue to train and form godly men and women to serve the gospel of the Lord Jesus in Latin America. Like all ministries, CEP is completely dependent on God's gracious work. Will you join us in praying for the ministry of CEP?



Thank God for the long-term partnership between CMS and CEP, and pray that it will continue to enable more gospel workers to be trained for the church in Latin America and beyond.

¹For more information about MOCLAM refer to page 15.



CMS missionary **Amanda Jacobson**, serving with **Maurice** at **Elim Bible School** in **Cambodia**, introduces **Lork Gru Chann**, the principal of the school, who suggests students shouldn't focus on becoming leaders.

A principal who serves

Sitting under his six-metre square wooden hut, Lork Gru Chann, principal of Elim Bible school, looks out into the darkness. A few metres away is the cashew plantation he's been working in all day. Now he's contemplating the question I've just asked him, "What did you mean when you said you don't want our students at Elim to become leaders?"

“The most important thing is not to focus on becoming a leader, but becoming a humble servant who is willing to work at any task their master calls them to.”

By way of answer, Chann tells me a little of his story.

“When I first heard the Good News myself, I had no intention of becoming a leader. But I did want to study everything I could, to get to know my God, who he was, and what he desired for me and from me. As I studied, it was like the words from the Bible were speaking directly to me, showing me how Jesus lived his life, and encouraging me to live my life the same. The more I lived this way, the closer I felt to God, and my love for him grew and grew.

“As my life began to change, my church fellowship noticed the fruit being produced, and they wanted me to become their pastor. They encouraged me to study leadership subjects. I still didn't want to be a leader. I know others aspire to be leaders because of the title and honour that comes with it. For me, I knew if I could just be a good servant, that would be enough.

“When we look at the example of Jesus calling Peter, we see that Jesus asks him to feed and care for his sheep (John 21:17). This is the kind of thing a master would ask of their servant. The point we want to make to our students

is that if they strive to be true disciples of Jesus, and true servants of Jesus, they will begin to produce fruit. Maybe one day they will become leaders. But the most important thing is not to focus on becoming a leader, but becoming a humble servant who is willing to work at any task their master calls them to.”

One Elim student's story

Alongside Chann, Maurice and I have the joy of teaching many wonderful young Cambodian Christians, who will one day be leaders in their churches and communities. People like Darany,* who is 25 years old and comes from a tribal village in northeast Cambodia. Like many in that region, Darany's tribe still has their own language and customs, and formal education is given little importance.

Darany shares, “I had been attending church with my parents for forever, but when I was about 14 years old, I prayed to God and asked him for a ‘moto’ (motorcycle), like my friends had. When I didn't get one, I decided God didn't listen to me, and it was no use following him. Then my friends ended up in all sorts of trouble riding in moto gangs.

“Studying at Elim has helped me to understand the will of God. When I look back now, I see that God protected me from getting into that kind of trouble. Now I know he does hear me. I can't wait to go back to my village and share with my old friends about how my life has changed, and theirs can too.”

Under God, with a passionate and humble principal, the students of Elim are being equipped to serve. We are so thankful that God has allowed us to play a part in this work.

care



At the time of publication, the Jacobsons are on Home Assignment (HA). There are practical ways of caring for CMS missionaries on HA, including hearing about their location, and praying for the people there (such as Darany and Chann). Contact your CMS branch through cms.org.au/contact-us to find out more.

*For even the Son of
Man did not come to
be served, but to serve,
and to give his life as
a ransom for many.*

MARK 10:45



*CMS is looking for Christians who can
share God's grace across cultures.*



Where will you serve?
cms.org.au/opportunities



Cross-shaped LEADERS AT NUNGALINYA



CMS missionaries Ian and Jenny Wood serve with Nungalinya College in Darwin, where they teach ministry and theology. Here, Ian shares how God is raising up servant-hearted leaders through the college:

For 50 years, Nungalinya College has equipped Indigenous men and women for leadership roles in churches and communities. CMS has a long and deep history with the College, which goes back prior to its formation. In the mid-1960's, CMS and the Methodist Overseas Mission discussed joining together to set up theological education in the Northern Territory. Nungalinya College was established in 1973, with former CMS missionary Keith Cole serving as the principal. Many CMS missionaries have since followed, bringing their teaching experience to the College after serving in remote communities. Jenny and I currently serve here as teachers, alongside James, Mandy, Marlene and Hannah, who are also supported by CMS.

Nungalinya runs courses on foundational literacy and numeracy, art and faith, Bible translation, chaplaincy, faith and family wellbeing, and ministry and theology. All courses use the Bible and aim to help believers grow in Christian living. The Certificate 3 and 4 in Christian Theology and Ministry courses particularly aim to help Christians lead their churches and communities well.



Being cross-shaped

Leadership in Indigenous communities looks vastly different to leadership in mainstream Australia. It is underpinned by discussion, consensus, deep listening, family connectedness, knowledge and experience, language, obligation and status.

The contexts in which Indigenous Christians lead are also different to mainstream Australia. In remote communities, the lines between congregation, family, and community are often blurred. What makes for a church meeting, and who comes, as well as senses of time, family duties and ritual obligations can create challenges for Christian leaders. Financial stress in the community adds an extra layer of complexity.

Before each graduation, we invite students to choose a Bible reading for the ceremony. The most common request is for Mark 10:45, where Jesus proclaims, “The Son of Man did not come to be a slave master, but a slave who will give his life to rescue many people.”(CEV) This passage encapsulates the type of leaders that students at Nungalinya desire to be: cross-shaped servant leaders. We spend a lot of time reading the Bible together and thinking about how it applies to our lives and ministries. Our students are prayerful and intentional in working out how to be leaders in their own contexts.

Servant leaders in action

God is using many of our students in powerful ways in their communities. The following three students are studying a Certificate 4 in Theology and Ministry, while also serving as leaders in various ministries:

Bundurr Rami serves as an ordained minister in the Numbulwar church in Arnhem Land, where he works

alongside CMS missionaries Josh and Steph Mackenzie. Bundurr is eager to understand the Bible well, and for his community to have opportunities to learn from the Bible too.

Darryn Farrell is an ordained minister in the church at Minyerri in Arnhem Land. In 2022, Darryn was the driving force behind a Bible camp at Minyerri, which gathered people from communities across the Roper Valley for three days of Bible study.

Alanga Nganbe serves in the church and the community in Wadeye. She works alongside CMS Short-Term Worker Hannah Harper in the translation course at Nungalinya, and serves on the College board.

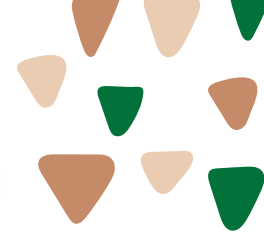
In addition, James Woods (who is a Co-Mission Partner with CMS) has been teaching at Nungalinya since he finished his Certificate 4 in 2017. Last year, he was ordained in Urapunga. James is eager to work alongside Bundurr, Darryn, and other leaders in serving their communities.

God is faithfully raising up many Indigenous leaders for gospel ministry across Australia. Please pray that he would help students at Nungalinya College to understand his gospel more deeply, and see how it transforms life and leadership.



You can support the ministry of Ian and Jenny and other CMS missionaries in the Northern Territory by prayer and regular financial giving. Go to give.cms.org.au to be involved with God's work in raising up Indigenous leaders for gospel ministry.

MENTORING Manoj



CMS workers Bruce and Libby serve the Lord in Nepal. Bruce supports Christian leaders and doctors, and Libby works as a teacher and principal. Here Bruce shares his experience of mentoring Manoj, a Christian leader who is himself training leaders for ministry:

Manoj's story

I, (Bruce), have the joy of mentoring and equipping Christian leaders in Nepal with CMS. One man who has particularly encouraged me as a mentor is Manoj. After coming to faith in Christ at 17 years old, Manoj has committed his life to serving the Lord and seeking opportunities to be trained and train others.

Manoj became an evangelist and pastor in a church in his hometown in eastern Nepal, in 1992, where he served for five years. After this, he married, and served with Theological Education by Extension. Manoj was then invited by the National Churches Fellowship of Nepal (NCFN) to undertake a Bachelor of Divinity. Following his studies, he taught at Ebenezer Bible College, before coordinating missionary and informal training with NCFN. Since then, he has completed a Master of Theology (supported by CMS-A), and served as the Director of the Leadership Training Department of NCFN.

Sharing life and ministry

Since July 2021, I have been privileged to meet monthly with Manoj to share life and ministry. We encourage, support and pray for one another. In Manoj's words:

"I was prayerfully looking for a mentor after I lost my mentor in 2015. I wanted someone who really understood the value of mentoring, could walk along with me in difficult times of my life, and hold me accountable. Finally, a missionary 'didi' (sister) introduced me to Dr Bruce. Dr Bruce's warm care has helped me and my family to go through some recent difficult times, including the deaths of my sister-in-law and father-in-law, and family mental health issues. I feel very comfortable sharing my life and ministry with him. I am really touched by his humility and simplicity. I feel so fortunate to have him."

An example of true servant leadership

Manoj and his wife, Anjiila, support Christian marriages by offering retreats and keeping pastors accountable. In his personal life, Manoj continues to grow as a loving husband and father, while maintaining a good work-life balance and trusting God for all financial needs. He has recently led NCFN through an important strategic review, seeking to maintain direction through post-COVID changes and growing hostility towards Christians in Nepalese communities.

As Manoj encounters new and difficult challenges, I appreciate his humble dependence as he patiently trusts God for wisdom and guidance. He is a rare example of a leader who cares for his colleagues and their personal development, while also leading NCFN faithfully. It has been a blessing to see true servant leadership, and I give thanks for the way God has used Manoj to impact the lives of so many others in Nepal. I pray that we can continue to encourage one another in our walks of faith.

go



CMS partners with churches and Christian organisations to train and mentor godly leaders who will serve Christ with their whole lives and equip others. Could you offer to serve with CMS to disciple and encourage Christian leaders? Learn about long-term mission with CMS.

cms.org.au/long-term-mission

Image: Bruce and Manoj, with CMS-A Regional Mission Director Chris Mitchell and his wife Jeni.



EQUIPPING LEADERS THROUGH MOCLAM



Jim and Tanja French are serving the Lord in Spain, where they teach MOCLAM courses to leaders from evangelical churches and the GBU. Jim tells some of the story here.

MOCLAM's training partnerships

MOCLAM offers courses to Christians in Latin America and Spain. The three certificates focus on reading the Bible as one whole plan of salvation from Genesis to Revelation, where all God's promises are fulfilled in Jesus.

MOCLAM España (Spain) currently has 35 students. We have two large groups studying in Gran Canaria through two evangelical churches. The pastors and teaching elders from these churches teach the course. The MOCLAM España team provides materials, support, and intensives. It is our hope and prayer to see the model these two churches use multiplied throughout Spain.

MOCLAM España also has a strong partnership with a Christian University fellowship, *Grupo Bíblicos Unidos* (GBU), which seeks to evangelise, train and disciple university students. We currently have five GBU advisors studying with us. One of our students, Juan Pablo Serrano, has taken on an important role in training and overseeing the GBU workers in Spain.

Students equipping others

This year in MOCLAM España, we started a small Intermediate Certificate group of students who have completed the Preliminary Certificate. The group has some exceptional students, who reflect the goal of CMS to train godly leaders that serve God and equip others.

One student, Susi, edits and manages 'Vertical Vision'—a Christian website that seeks to reach out to people across the world with gospel resources. Another student, Juan, (mentioned above), is training another GBU advisor who is also undertaking a MOCLAM course. Samuel is an elder at an evangelical church in the Canary Islands, where he preaches, leads and runs the youth group.

Ronaldo Santana, another student, is the coordinator of *Grupo Bíblicos Estudiantiles* (GBE), the Christian high school student fellowship in the Canary Islands. Ronaldo was



introduced to MOCLAM material by John Lovell, former CMS missionary and now the CMS NSW & ACT Executive Director, and then invited his sister and his church to participate in the course. He says, "my desire is to continue studying with MOCLAM, to learn more about the Lord, grow in his Word and in my relationship with him, and thus be able to serve better and be a help and blessing to the GBE students and to my church."

Raising up servant-hearted leaders

The Bible is clear about the importance of training godly leaders. God desires to raise up leaders who share his servant heart. This is why CMS aims to humbly train and equip godly leaders, placing missionaries in locations where they will show love by learning the culture and language, and training locals to evangelise, disciple, and equip their own people. We do this so that God may answer the Lord's Prayer through us: that his kingdom may come on earth as it is in heaven.

Tanja and I serve as MOCLAM International team members alongside several other CMS missionaries: Adrian and Anita Lovell in Bolivia, Chris and Stef Overhall in Chile, and Lauren Raiter, also in Spain. Please pray for our team, and that God would raise up more workers to continue and expand the MOCLAM work both in Latin America and in Spain.



Give thanks to God for the MOCLAM students, the GBU, and the two churches in Gran Canaria using MOCLAM material. Pray that God would continue to raise up many servant-hearted leaders in Spain and Latin America, who will in turn equip people in their local contexts.

A growing PARTNERSHIP



CMS has a new partnership with the Anglican Province of the Indian Ocean (including Madagascar, Seychelles and Mauritius). In January 2024, we welcomed **Archbishop James Wong** from this province to Australia, to speak at CMS Summer Conferences. We share some insights from Archbishop Wong, as well as observations from our new missionaries on the importance of training leaders:

“**Our life is a witness; a testimony... based on a solid biblical foundation...**”

When James Wong, now Archbishop, began his ministry in Seychelles in 2009 as Bishop, he noticed that the Diocese was only holding two or three weddings a year. He also met a family where each of the woman's seven sons had different fathers. The family fabric in this small nation was weak. Many said, “Why marry, if I will probably get divorced?” James and his wife Doreen decided to hold hands whenever they were walking together in public. This was, for him and Doreen, a statement about the importance of marriage: “Our life is a witness; a testimony. It needs to be based on a solid biblical foundation and we need to act in accordance with what we are sharing.”

Today, by God's grace, marriage preparation is a regular aspect of ministry in Anglican churches throughout Seychelles, and there are around 15 weddings per year in the Diocese. It is common to see Seychellois couples walking down the street holding hands. Archbishop Wong says the family fabric is slowly improving.

A strategic partnership

CMS missionaries Ryan and Lynne Verghese have been serving in Seychelles since April 2023, under Archbishop Wong's leadership. Adam and Avril Friend began serving in Madagascar with CMS in January 2024. The relationship with the Anglican Church in Madagascar is a wonderful example of cooperation and collaboration which started when Bishop Peter Tasker visited in 2009. It was strengthened through visits from Rev Alan Lukabyo,

from the Parish of Croydon (NSW), who first visited to teach a short Bible course in French in 2012. He returned every year, with others, up until COVID. From these initial beginnings, CMS is now committed long-term to equipping leaders for the churches in Madagascar, and Seychelles.

Training leaders for Madagascar

The population of Madagascar is growing at the high rate of 2.68% per year. Many live in poverty. But amidst extreme drought and famine in recent years, God's Church has also been growing rapidly. The gospel of grace is bringing true hope to people who are suffering. There are hundreds of thousands of new believers. Praise God!

With quick growth, there is a severe shortage of trained church leaders—which brings challenges. CMS missionary Adam Friend says, “For most churches, when they don't have a minister visiting and preaching, it is a new believer who will lead and preach. When pastoral issues come up through the week, it is a new believer who will intervene the best they know how.”

Adam continues, “There is danger in all of this, that new believers might return to the traditional, animistic, pagan religion they have converted from. Or they may hear and turn to Islam, or distortions of the gospel.”

There is a critical need to equip leaders for the Church in Madagascar. Adam explains: “The church in Madagascar needs leaders who will demonstrate in their life and teaching that Christ is entirely sovereign and wonderfully sufficient.”

In locations like Madagascar, missionaries can play an important role in teaching and serving alongside local leaders. As Adam shares, “Avril and I are preparing to serve the Church in two ways. First, at a theological college, by training new leaders to know Christ deeply from the full testimony of Scripture. Second, by training current church



leaders to be involved in reading and listening to the Bible one-to-one within their parishes.”

Working with the church in Seychelles

In Seychelles, according to missionary Ryan Verghese, there are currently just enough ministers to ensure Sunday services happen each week. He explains, “These current clergy have varying approaches to some fundamental aspects of Christian ministry: the importance of godly character, the handling of the Bible in teaching and preaching, and the Christian leader’s ministry to their own family. Within the next few years, most of these ministers will retire.”

Ryan continues, “There is a great need for faithful teaching in Seychelles. As Lynne and I serve here with CMS, we have a significant opportunity to shape and influence current and future Christian leaders to be Christ-centred in their life and ministry.”

A challenge for us all

Through our growing partnership with the Province of the Indian Ocean, CMS is committed to developing leaders in these nations who are grounded in God’s Word, and can bear witness to his grace in their churches and communities. The needs are vast, yet we know that our sovereign Lord is powerful to change lives.

We look forward in hope as we consider the potential for the growth of God’s kingdom in the years to come. How will you play a part? Would you consider serving in Madagascar or Seychelles? Please join with the CMS fellowship in praying that God would enable Christian leaders in these nations to stand firm in the Lord, grasping him tightly in the knowledge that he is sufficient for all they need.



Archbishop Wong said there are many opportunities to serve the Lord in Madagascar. Would you prayerfully consider using your gifts and skills to help grow God’s Church there? Go here cms.org.au/contact-us to start a conversation.

Año Puente:

DISCIPLESHIP GAP YEAR



Martin and Julie Field are serving with CMS in Argentina. After many years in university student ministry, they are starting '*Año Puente*', a discipleship program for school leavers. Julie shares how they hope to train and mentor godly servant leaders through this new program:

Challenges for university students in Argentina

Argentina is a naturally beautiful and well-resourced nation, but has significant economic, political, and social challenges. As a result, many young Argentines seek university education to achieve stability. However, for most students, the transition from high school to tertiary education is not smooth, as they don't have the necessary skills to enter university and progress assertively. Many students change career paths at least once due to a lack of vocational guidance. Others are buffeted by the challenging worldviews they encounter on campus. These challenges lead to a huge dropout rate, and slow progression through their degree (taking on average 8-10 years to finish). For Christian students, it can also be a potential threat to their faith.

“Our desire is for *Año Puente* to enable young people to discern God's plan for their life, so they would be a blessing to others.”

Introducing *Año Puente*

After witnessing these challenges for Argentine university students over the past 16 years, we are commencing a new gap year project for school-leavers, called '*Año Puente*'.



Jorge Camandona is our neighbour, friend, and youth pastor of the evangelical church down the road. He has embraced *Año Puente* with great enthusiasm: “How special it would have been if I could have enjoyed a year like this when I finished High School,” he shared, “but I have a son, and I know of many other young people who could benefit from this program, so together with my wife Laura we are praying for *Año Puente*.”

Currently, the *Año Puente* program is gathering its first cohort of students, including Jorge's 18-year-old son Timoteo. The students will engage in full-time study of Scripture through the MOCLAM courses, receive ongoing vocational guidance and study skills techniques, worldview and ethics training, and encouragement in Christian service.

We are delighted to offer this course alongside our long-term friends Esteban (Tebi) and Constanza (Conti), who we met through the university ministry of ABUA many years ago. Tebi is a psychologist with a special interest in career guidance, and Conti is an English translator. They are both theologically trained, and eager to see God equip young people for university and beyond. It is a joy to encourage and train local leaders like these friends of ours. We are so thankful for their initiative in promoting and developing the course while we were on Home Assignment recently.

Equipping young people for life

Our great desire is that *Año Puente* be a locally led and sustained ministry that enables young people to confidently discern God's plan for their life so that they would be a blessing to others. The skills acquired in *Año Puente* have the potential to equip a student for life as a servant of God in the church, family, and workplace. Would you join us in praying for these precious Argentines?



Give thanks with Martin and Julie for the group of students and their families who have committed to *Año Puente* in 2024. Pray that this program may train and equip godly leaders for a lifetime of serving Jesus and his people.

Image: The 2024 *Año Puente* students with Martin and Julie (right, back) and their friend Tebi (front).

APPRENTICE Leadership



CMS missionaries Keith and Marion Birchley recently ended an unanticipated period in Australia. Here Keith tells how in their unexpected absence from

serving in Papua New Guinea, God faithfully used the ministry apprentices they'd been training to keep gospel work growing.

At the end of 2022 Marion and I returned to Australia for a supposedly brief time, so that I could recover from pneumonia under medical supervision. However, on Christmas Eve I learned that I'd been diagnosed with prostate cancer. Other health issues emerged. That meant that most of 2023 was spent dealing with health matters I was not expecting, in a country where we had not planned to be!

“**...what particularly delighted us is that in all their reports, the spiritual welfare of many people was uppermost in the minds and hearts of these young apprentices!**”

This is not the place to dwell on the real spiritual benefits that came through this prolonged period of waiting (deepened trust and communion with God, enforced self-examination and confession of sin, lifting our eyes beyond the boundaries of this world).

However we want to pay tribute to our great God, who continued to work amongst the Christian university students from the Tertiary Students Christian Fellowship (TSCF) in PNG, by the power of the gospel, especially through our three ministry apprentices Joey, Juliette and Barnabas.

Gospel ministry continues

During our absence we prayed regularly, and led weekly staff meetings with the apprentices via WhatsApp. We were greatly uplifted by their regular reports of caring for university students in many different contexts. Here are a few quotes from our apprentices as they reflected on God's work in this period:



“On Saturday I had Bible study with 13 students, and we did the second part of John 1, Jesus calling his first disciples. It was so uplifting because [the] students were really seeking. We saw the need of a witness, that it's important to read the word of God, and we also saw that those who hear it should in turn follow Jesus and not us.”

“[One member of TSCF] said most of the people she knows put their faith in materialism and not really in Jesus; they believe a wrong idea about Jesus and that leads to frustration.”

“On Monday, as we drew the study year to a close with my Bible group and one-to-one students, we reflected on Luke 9:62: “Jesus said to him, ‘No one who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.’” (ESV) We reflected on how many times we have put our hands on that plough and looked back, but the Bible reminds us that only one person in history has put his hands on the plough and ploughed in a straight line.”

As you can imagine, not all the work was easy. What particularly delighted us is that in all their reports, the spiritual welfare of people was uppermost in the minds and hearts of these young apprentices! They continued to pray and persevere in bringing God's word to many students. But it is also true to say that their effectiveness *now* is the fruit of eight years' work by senior TSCF staff, training them in Bible truth and persevering alongside them.

What a joy to see that when the drama of an unexpected long absence unfolds, God remains faithful to use the servants who are still in place to grow his kingdom.



The Birchleys hope to see more gospel workers like them serving with the TSCF, helping raise up apprentices like Joey, Juliette and Barnabas. Could you go? Contact your branch to start a conversation cms.org.au/contact-us

WHO WILL



CMS missionary Dave McIntyre (serving with Beck) reflects on the challenges of developing new leaders in Japanese churches.

At a church in Japan, Mikiko felt it was time to hand over her leadership of the Sunday School, particularly given her advancing age. She thought that Ikuko would be a good replacement, given her commitment as a Sunday School teacher and her love of the kids. Mikiko consulted with the senior pastor and leadership committee and then had a conversation with Ikuko.

Ikuko was reluctant. She felt ill-equipped to lead the other teachers. Not only this, but Mikiko had led Sunday School for well over a decade. Ikuko felt her own lack of experience keenly.

“**One challenge is that there are simply fewer people to choose from than might have been the case in the past.**”

Ikuko eventually said yes, and is now doing an excellent job of leading the Sunday School ministry. But this handover to a new generation highlights some of the challenges of finding and training Christian leaders in Japan.

Finding the next leaders

One challenge is that there are simply fewer people to choose from than might have been the case in the past. Whether it's looking for the next pastor, or for a Sunday school teacher or a finance team member, many churches have trouble finding leaders. Who's next? There's often no one obvious to take over, and numbers in many churches have plateaued or are shrinking.

There are both cultural and church reasons for this. Culturally speaking, Japanese people are less willing to participate actively in *any* religion, not just Christianity.

Nozomu Oimatsu, a lecturer at Osaka Bible Seminary, notes that there was a time up to about the 1980s when many churches got bigger. That is no longer the case. There is also now a problem of retaining young people at churches. Fewer young people attending means that there are fewer potential future kids' and youth leaders, which increases the difficulty.

Those who are available to lead can be reluctant to do so, because of their anxiety around getting things right and meeting expectations. This is not just an issue within churches. Japan is a country where accuracy and having the right information is highly valued. Kids are encouraged to aim for 100 per cent in tests from an early age. 80 per cent is often the required pass mark in a test or exam. As well as this, Japanese people are concerned with licencing leaders and 'experts'. Teachers need good qualifications and are held to high standards, which means that to take on such a role is—and is perceived to be—a weighty responsibility.

Teaching and leading: more than information transfer

This sense of responsibility plays out with ministers and church workers, who fall under both the 'expert' and 'teacher' categories. The word 'church' in Japanese, *Kyōkai*, means 'a place of teaching'. The sermon and other forms of teaching are highly valued, possibly to the detriment of seeing church as the place where believers gather to be God's people, encouraging and modelling the Christian life to one another (as opposed to relying mainly on expert input from leaders).

This point is reinforced by Fumikazu Chito, senior pastor at Crossroad Church Nishinomiya (where we are serving),

Lead next?

who suggests that there can be an overemphasis on the ‘information transfer’ of the gospel, potentially at the expense of living out gospel implications. Fumikazo has suggested to me that pastors in Japan tend to be academically qualified leaders who can prepare sermons well. Other people at church feel they lack such qualifications and knowledge, and this can seep into a general attitude of “I can’t teach others.” Yet, even for those who *have*, for example, taught kids for a while, (think of Ikuko above) stepping up to leadership responsibility is daunting. Furthermore, could they then end up stuck in a position where they fail to meet the high standards and expectations of others?

Nozomu Oimatsu, from Osaka Bible Seminary, also mentions the Japanese attitude of *Ninjū* (patience and submission). “You’re expected to respond to expectations as much as possible and not disappoint those, particularly those of the people above you,” he says.

For Japanese over the age of 60, submitting in this way made sense. People over 60 have experienced Japan when it was growing economically, and in many other ways, post-World War Two. Life was getting visibly better for everyone. For Christians in this older generation—often under the influence of missionary input—this sense of growth and success has had an impact on the manner of choosing church leaders. There was commonly an emphasis on a personal ‘call’ from God to be a pastor, and (having received this sense of call) ‘putting your hand up’ to volunteer for such a role. In a country that encourages many years of training under a master to perfect a trade, ‘putting your hand up’ because you felt you had the ‘call’ comes with complexities. It cuts across the common Japanese approach to becoming a leader.

Missionaries in Japan encouraging young people to put themselves forward in this way could not have foreseen such long-term complexities. In addition, it is helpful to consider the ‘call and volunteer’ approach in light of New Testament models. Jesus *chose* his disciples deliberately, not by calling for volunteers. Paul, following the example of Jesus, *chose* men like Timothy to take the gospel to the next generation of believers.

It would be fair to say that many younger Japanese Christians simply do not have any sense of a ‘call’. For reasons already mentioned, they remain reluctant to enter what they rightly see to be an extremely demanding role. The upshot is that there are fewer pastors in Japan than there were previously.

The importance of discipling

What next? Nozomu Oimatsu says that diversity of leadership really matters, which means encouraging different people in church to lead, who may not fit the mould of what leaders have looked like in the past. He says, “We need to talk about what the aims of church are, so that we can scrap the things we don’t need and start rebuilding.”

Fumikazu Chito believes the problem is a failure of discipleship, which he suggests is the main purpose of the church. “We need to take care of the people who come to us as disciples, then ‘unwrap’ them, finding the ones who can lead,” he says. Such a change of emphasis, argues Fumikazu, would be a fundamental shift for most churches in Japan, which currently emphasise the Sunday gathering and particularly the sermon, as the main way that the word of God is taught.

As things like the pastor shortage force change, all leaders (not just pastors) are being pushed to think about how to raise up and mentor a new generation of leaders. Change, even healthy change, is often difficult. However, what leaders like Fumikazu and Nozomu are encouraging is a Bible-based vision. By considering the examples of Jesus and Paul, Christians in Japan and everywhere are able to re-evaluate the ‘why’ and ‘how’ of growing faithful disciples, who can in turn become leaders after God’s own heart.

give



You can directly support CMS missionaries as they disciple and mentor Japanese Christians, to help raise up new leaders. Go to cms.org.au/give and find out how to give financially to this work.

GIVING *thanks* TO GOD

LESLEY STONE

We thank the Lord for the life of Lesley Stone (formerly MacKenzie), who died on 18 October 2023, aged 96. With her first husband Ian MacKenzie, she served with CMS in the Northern Territory from 1964-68, then in 1974-75 and 1977-80. After Ian's death in 1988, Lesley married Morrie Stone (died 2020). Lesley and Ian are remembered within CMS for their sense of fellowship and good humour, for the warm hospitality of their home, and their zeal to share God's kingdom. Pray for comfort for Lesley's extended family.

MARION SHAW

We thank God for Marion Shaw, who died in Perth on 30 November 2023, aged 86. Marion wrote of her conversion: "Some Christians at the Salvation Army hostel, where I was staying, took me for a walk and explained how they loved and served Jesus. I thought, 'This is a gamble' and in faith I took that 'gamble'. That evening I knelt by my bed and asked the Lord to be my Saviour. It was the start of my Christian life." Marion qualified as a pharmacist and did six months' locum work in Pakistan. From 1974 to 1982, Marion served with CMS at Mvumi Hospital, Tanzania, and later ran the diocesan chemist shop. She returned and settled in Western Australia, where she served faithfully in her local church. Pray for her nieces Gill and Cat, and other family and friends.

EARL HUGHES

We praise God for Earl Hughes, who died on 9 January 2024, aged 95. Earl and Julie served with CMS in North Australia until 1972, Earl from 1956 and Julie from their marriage in 1969. Earl served as chaplain of the Rose River Mission and became rector of the Church of the Holy Spirit from 1970, when the mission became known as Numbulwar. Later he and Julie ministered in Irian Jaya (Indonesia) until 1982. They were chaplains and linguists with the Nggem tribe at Kobakma, and did initial work translating the New Testament into the local language. We ask God to bless Julie and the extended family.

PRAYER DIARY UPDATES



DAY 13

L from CMS VIC is on Home Assignment for the first half of the year before he leaves for the Middle East in July.



DAY 21

ZOE CREELMAN from CMS VIC finished her service with CMS in January 2024.



DAY 17

MATT & JEN LIM from CMS NSW & ACT finished their service with CMS in February 2024.



DAY 24

CoMPs **BRYAN & SARAH HARO LEON** from CMS TAS welcome their son Eliot (Teko) who was born in October 2023.

SAH 2024 COURSE 1 ATTENDEES



M

CMS SANT
Planning to serve in the Middle East



LACHLAN & CANDY GRICE

with Beaumont
CMS NSW & ACT
Planning to serve in Taiwan



S & B

with H
CMS VIC
Planning to serve in North Australia



BILL & LINDA COLYER

with Amy and Gwendolyn
CMS QNSW
Planning to serve in Vanuatu



EMMA PAYNE

CMS VIC
Planning to serve in France



S & D

CMS NSW & ACT
Planning to serve in Central Asia

MISSIONARY spotlight



Chris & Julie Dean

Read more here:



Each year, Australian pastors (on behalf of Australian Presbyterian World Mission) conduct a ministry conference in Timor-Leste. The ministry conference in August 2023 was a wonderful opportunity to strengthen relationships with pastors, evangelists, and other EPCTL leaders, which we pray will bear fruit in the long-term. In addition, for the evangelists, the training at the conference served as a

pilot program for more intensive, non-formal theological training opportunities in the future.



Image: One of the small groups of leaders at the ministry conference in Timor-Leste.



Gillian Law

Read more here:



Manuel, a CMS Co-Mission Partner (CoMP), is in the early stages of a ministry apprenticeship with the GBU in Italy. He is eager to one day serve in cross-cultural mission, especially in the Muslim countries of South Asia. For now, Manuel's apprenticeship is a two-year plan, and his future is in the Lord's hands—whether that future is in South Asia, Rome, or somewhere else. Whatever it will be, I am convinced it will be a blessing to the people he serves and to GBU. It would have an enormous positive impact on GBU Italy if we sent one of our own into cross-cultural ministry.



Our vision is for *a world that knows Jesus*.

We work with churches to set apart godly people as long-term cross-cultural gospel workers.

OUR MISSION



OUR VALUES



Read the full CMS vision: cms.org.au/vision

GET INVOLVED



pray

Visit cms.org.au/pray to find out more



care

Visit cms.org.au/care to find out more



give

Visit give.cms.org.au



go

Visit cms.org.au/go or contact your local branch (see back page) to talk to someone about becoming a missionary.

Update

Checkpoint will now be published **THREE** times each year.

For weekly stories of God's global mission go to **cms.org.au/stories**



CMS (Church Missionary Society) works with churches to set apart godly people as long-term cross-cultural workers. Our vision is for *a world that knows Jesus*.

CMS NSW & ACT

Level 5, 51 Drutt St SYDNEY NSW 2000
PO Box 21326 WORLD SQUARE NSW 2002
(02) 9267 3711 nswact@cms.org.au
cms.org.au/nswact

CMS QNSW

Level 1, 80 Petrie Terrace
PETRIE TERRACE QLD 4000
PO Box 220 RED HILL QLD 4059
(07) 3171 3020 qnsw@cms.org.au
cms.org.au/qnsw

CMS SANT

37 Angus Street ADELAIDE SA 5000
(08) 8212 4838 sa.nt@cms.org.au
cms.org.au/sant

CMS TAS

PO Box 501, SANDY BAY TAS 7006
0438 590 559 tas@cms.org.au
cms.org.au/tas

CMS VIC

Level 2, Building 2, 630 Mitcham Rd
MITCHAM VIC 3132
PO Box 2150 RANGEVIEW VIC 3132
(03) 9894 4722 vic@cms.org.au
cms.org.au/vic

CMS WA

31 Acheson Cr WOODVALE WA 6026
(08) 6209 9159 wa@cms.org.au
cms.org.au/wa

CMS Australia

Level 5, 51 Drutt St SYDNEY NSW 2000
PO Box 20095 WORLD SQUARE NSW 2002
(02) 9284 6777 cmsa@cms.org.au
cms.org.au

St Andrew's Hall

190 The Avenue PARKVILLE VIC 3052
(03) 9388 1663 sah@cms.org.au

cms.org.au