

# checkpoint.

JULY 2024

CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY MAGAZINE



## REACHING THE NEXT GENERATION

IN THIS EDITION:

Passing on the gospel | Mission minded: reaching young people around Australia | Small conversations on the stairs

 CMS



# WELCOME

One of the privileges I and the Regional Mission Directors have is to travel the world visiting locations where our workers are involved in a wide variety of ministries. As well as hearing about their life and encouraging them, we always spend time with the local partner, under whose leadership and wisdom our missionaries work.

As we talk with local leaders, two questions frequently arise. 'How can we better engage with young people?' and 'Where is our next generation of leaders?'

These questions are of course related. As we see demonstrated in the relationship between the apostle Paul and Timothy, for the church to be engaging, equipping, and encouraging a new generation of leaders for growing and serving the body of believers throughout the world is of critical importance.

In this edition of *Checkpoint* our contributors will explore these issues, with a particular focus on reaching children and youth. May the articles and stories that you read be a great encouragement and fuel for your prayers for the next generation, as we seek *a world that knows Jesus*.



*P Sholl*

**Canon Peter Sholl**  
CMS Australia  
International Director

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## checkpoint.

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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): Enjoying morning tea fellowship with Andrew and Margaret Newman in Uganda.



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](https://cms.org.au/stories)

# Leave a legacy of life and hope for the next generation

## GIVE A BEQUEST TO CMS



To find out more about making a bequest in your will, go to [cms.org.au/bequests](https://cms.org.au/bequests)





# Passing on THE GOSPEL

**Glen, with his family, served with CMS in Tanzania for many years. As both schoolteacher and principal, Glen saw firsthand the eternal value of teaching the gospel to future generations. Here, he helps us see why such work matters.**

I recently read 2 Timothy, and was struck by how Paul recognised that Timothy’s faith had been passed down from his grandmother Lois to his mother Eunice, and now lived in Timothy also (see 2 Timothy 1:5). That in turn made me grateful that this very same faith had been passed down from my grandparents to my parents, and on to me.

Now as a parent, I too have the responsibility to pass the gospel faith to the next generation of my family, whether it be “walking on the road”, “when I get up” (see Deuteronomy 6:6-9), when I’m doing the soccer run, or as we sit around the dinner table.

## Pass the gospel on

The Scriptures clearly call on us to pass our faith to others—not just in our biological family, but to all generations. Like Timothy we have been given the gospel as a “good deposit” (2 Timothy 1:14). Like Timothy, we need to entrust and teach it to others (see 2 Timothy 2:2).

Psalm 145:4 states that “One generation commends your works to another; they tell of your mighty acts”, so that “... the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children. Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget his deeds but would keep his commands.” (Psalm 78:6-7).

## Start young

The obvious starting point for passing the gospel message on to the next generation is to begin with children and youth.

Part of my own story involves attending an international missionary kids’ school. I was under the care of godly Christian teachers who were passionate about raising up Christian children to then serve in the church and the world. Their care inspired me to think about how I, too, could use my gifts in service of our Lord. In God’s kindness, I ended up serving as a teacher in a rural school in Tanzania with the goal of raising up the next generation of Christians.

## Why children matter

CMS is involved in many different types of ministries that reach children and pass on the message of faith: teaching in local schools, equipping Sunday schools, developing kids’ resource, caring for the needs of vulnerable children, educating the children of other missionaries, even presenting youth Bible dramas in remote villages.

But in some contexts, ministry to and for children gets ignored or neglected. Such ministry can often be considered just plain hard work, with children seen as a distraction, difficult to work with, and not worth the time. This is not God’s perspective.

In New Testament times, when children were brought to Jesus, his disciples saw them as a hassle. Perhaps they were getting in the way of ‘real’ ministry? But Jesus rebuked his disciples:

*“Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.” And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them.*  
(Mark 10:14-16).



Image: Glen and his family with Bishop George.



## Looking to the future

In the context where I worked in Tanzania, sometimes children could be treated very poorly when it came to their discipline, their well-being, or the expectations placed upon them. But under the bishop of my diocese, Bishop George, I saw something different. I was so encouraged by the way he lived out and tried to draw attention to the importance of children, their unique needs, their vulnerability, their preciousness and their amazing potential.

Bishop George emphasised that the way we speak about children and the way we treat children shows what we believe about them—that they are made in God’s image and that God loves them. That’s why in the school where I taught, we wanted not only to educate children well, but to train them in the way of Scripture. We wanted to care for them and empower them in faith, so they might also trust in God. These young students of mine would be the future of the nation and the church.

“... ultimately, we don’t invest in the next generation for strategic reasons. We invest in children and youth because of God’s own heart.”

Indeed youth, almost by definition, represent the future all around the world. Investing in the next generation should be a normal thing for Christians—not just within our own families, but through the church and other specialised institutions too. I’m convinced that well-trained young people can change the face of the church and the wider society. Their creativity and enthusiasm can grow the Christian faith where it is small, and even reinvigorate the church where it may be dying, and bring new energy to the mission of Christ across the nations.



## God’s own heart

Working with children and youth is undoubtedly strategic. More than a quarter of the world’s population is under the age of 18<sup>1</sup>. The future health of Christianity is dependent on how we teach and train and disciple these young people.

But ultimately, we don’t invest in the next generation for strategic reasons. We invest in children and youth because of God’s own heart. He loves young people. He cares about the welfare of the orphan, the street children, those facing exploitation, the ones who are studying, and those whose parents send them off to Sunday School each week. He wants them to come to him. May we open our arms to them as part of our mission to see *a world that knows Jesus*.



## Care



How are you growing children’s hearts for mission? Go to [cms.org.au/kids](https://cms.org.au/kids) to check out activity sheets on all the countries and regions CMS is serving in.

## Read more online...



Read more about how Glen, together with his family served in Tanzania.

# A child singing of Christ



CMS missionary **Karen Webb**, together with **Chris** and their family, serves amongst Aboriginal people in Broome. Their Sunday School is a lively evening affair, where even children who don’t regularly attend can hear the gospel message.

“He died upon the cross, for me, for me, for you and me.”

I am waiting in Centrelink with my friend Mary,\* and the childish voice singing next to me fills my heart with joy! It’s little Dean,\* a quiet boy who occasionally comes along to church with his Nana Amy.\* He loves coming to Sunday School, and like most eight-year-olds, is full of bouncing energy. And he knows Jesus died for him!

Week by week, teaching Sunday School at Broome Peoples Church can feel like a struggle. Most of the kids come with their grandparents, so it’s never certain just who will be there in any given week. Some weeks, it’s a handful of preschoolers. Other times, the kids are all in upper primary. Sometimes, it’s 20 kids across the whole range of ages. Other weeks, it’s just my own children!

“We pray that the gospel seed planted now will bear fruit [in these kids] as they move into adulthood.”

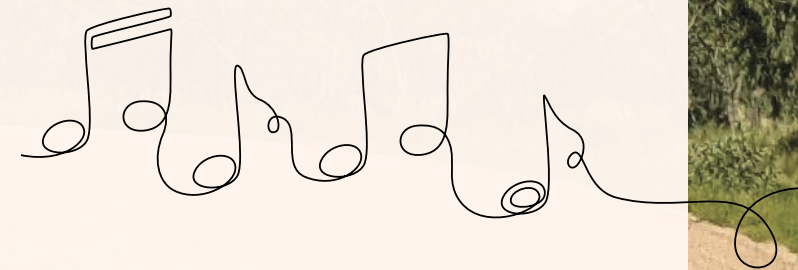
## Simple lessons with a simple goal

Over the years, I’ve found that it’s best to keep the lessons simple. Too much content can lead to chaos. Seeing as we never have the same group of kids from week to week, it is hard to build on previous lessons. But the kids love singing action songs (thanks Colin Buchanan). They enjoy watching the Bible stories on video (thanks ‘Saddleback Kids’),

with a brief chat about what happened in the story. They love playing games... which often walk that fine line between fun and frenzy!

Our goal in the evening Sunday School is also simple: we want the kids to have a positive experience of the gospel and church so that they will want to come back again. While many of their grandparents grew up in the ‘mission era’ steeped in Bible teaching, the younger generation have very few opportunities to hear the good news. Although our contact with some kids is pretty irregular, we’ve seen that building a positive relationship with them gives us ongoing opportunities to speak into their lives. We pray that the gospel seeds planted now will bear fruit as they move into adulthood.

So, when I hear little Dean singing the truth that Jesus died for him, I rejoice to know that perhaps, little bit by little bit, the good news of the gospel is settling in his heart.



## Give



Ministry amongst Indigenous peoples offers gospel hope to all. You can support a CMS missionary working in North Australia by going to this link: [cms.org.au/nthaustralliamissionaries](https://cms.org.au/nthaustralliamissionaries)



# Small conversations ON THE STAIRS



CMS missionaries **Josh and Susannah Apieczonek** serve in church and university ministry in Lyon, France. Here, Susannah shares how her friend Elisa\* is intentionally and actively reaching the next generation with the gospel:

## Meet Elisa

When I think about reaching the next generation, I immediately think of my friend Elisa. She is part of the group that is praying for and working towards a church plant in the west of Lyon.

She's a mother of two, busy at home and work, and an excellent friend. She trusts God and is thoughtful about how she uses her time to grow the kingdom.

Following a hunch and prayer for wisdom, Elisa started to connect with a small family living above her, who have three young children similar ages to her own. They could already hear each other's daily comings and goings—the flushing of toilets and so forth—so why not seek to share the more profound things of life?

“**The mother remembered Elisa speaking gently of her faith, and asked if she would explain the basics about God to her daughter.**”

## Small interactions leading to big opportunities

They began to share small conversations on the stairs, collect parcels for each other, and feed each other's cats. Slowly, this turned into cups of tea, noisy play dates and offers to babysit. They shared with Elisa their desire to move to Canada and learn English. So, Elisa asked me to run an after-school English club for their kids. This was a great way to serve and get to know them, and to widen their circle of believing friends.

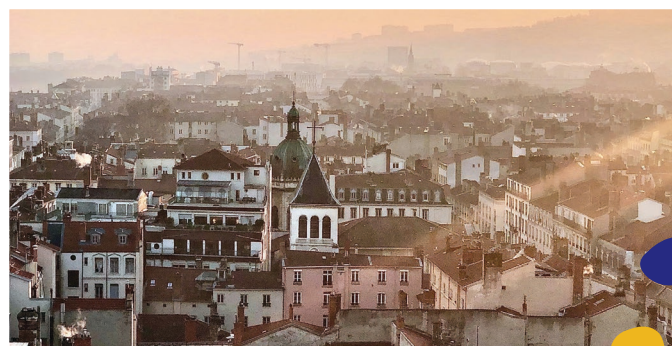
One sad day, the family's cat died. Their eldest daughter had many questions about death and what happens next—could she pray for her dead cat? The mother remembered

Elisa speaking gently of her faith, and asked if she would explain the basics about God to her daughter. What an unexpected opportunity!

These sessions have been beautiful times of discovery for this eight-year-old as she hears for the first time about the God who created and loves her. She is all in. The mum has also joined in to see what her daughter is learning, and wants to know more.

We have since shared multiple meals with their family and Elisa's—with chats going from completely superficial to suddenly deep. We invited this family to one of our church plant's meetings, where they have formed a bigger picture of who God is, and what his followers are like. We are putting them in touch with a believing friend in their new city in Canada, and plan to keep in touch and continue to pray for them.

I love that Elisa saw an opportunity to witness to these kids, and took it. All we need is to start with some intentionality and then watch what happens next! God is at work with and in us to reach the next generation. And Elisa wants to remind us of the great joy it is to share the good news with others!



Pray with Susannah and Josh that more believers in Lyon would actively seek opportunities to reach the next generation with the gospel.

# Letting the BIBLE TALK



CMS Co-Mission Partner **Jotham Booker** works with the *Christlige Gemeinde Karlsfeld* church in Munich. Among other ministries, Jotham leads a small youth group of Year 6 and 7 boys. Here, he explains why he made a deliberate decision to emphasise Bible reading over entertainment.

When I took on a role as a pastoral worker in a church of roughly 100 people, one of the first tasks I was given was to raise up a youth group and train youth leaders. I started with the question: ‘What kind of youth (and youth leaders) does God want to raise?’

The answer to that question is as obvious as it is profound: God wants committed followers of Christ. Jesus himself said: ‘Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.’ (Mark 8:34)

God wants disciples who ‘take up their cross and follow’. Youth leaders should seek to ‘lead’ youth towards that path, by word and by example.

“**Our goal, simply put, was to let the Bible talk to us about Jesus. Our reasoning was that ‘faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.’ (Romans 10:17)**”

## Entertainingly ordinary ministry

This conviction made me start a very ordinary youth ministry. We play games, we read the Bible, we pray, we have supper. That's pretty much it.

I was upfront with the youth that we were not going to try to offer them amazing entertainment on Friday nights. Yes, we were going to have plenty of fun, and we'd try to make our time as engaging as possible. But entertainment was not the main goal (after all, the ‘world’ is much better at entertainment, and would win such a competition).

Our goal, simply put, was to let the Bible talk to us about Jesus. Our reasoning was that ‘faith comes from hearing



the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.” (Romans 10:17).

## Small but committed

I wish I could tell you that all the youth who started coming to our little group of twelve (we only had those from years 6 and 7) were on board with our vision for the group. But that's not true. After three or four months, roughly half of them had left for various reasons—though I think some were definitely looking for more entertainment. Of course, I have questioned our approach because of that.

But while we've made mistakes, our basic approach wasn't one of them.

True, it did cause some of the youth to find Friday nights not exciting enough. But, by God's grace, it has also led others to grow in their faith considerably over the past 12 months. It has caused the group to be clear on the gospel and Jesus' call on our lives. Yes, my heart breaks when I think about the youth who have left. But at the same time, I rejoice in the prospect that—God willing—all who have stayed and those who are yet to (re-)join might grow to be joyful, uncompromising, committed followers and lovers of Jesus.

## What will happen next?

We are yet to see what fruits will eventually come from our approach of trying to attract youth with gospel clarity, rather than entertainment. It is one way we seek to live by faith in God's Word. Will you pray for us to keep thinking deeply about this issue, keep making hard decisions, and believe boldly that God will deliver on his promises?



Pray with Jotham and the youth that the church in Munich will see great fruit from their desire to learn from the Bible about how to be followers of Jesus.



# Mothers WHO DISCIPLE



CMS missionary M is serving in the Middle East. One of her joys is meeting with, supporting, and discipling local women in their homes. Here, she shares what it looks like for these women to model Christlikeness and disciple their children amid weariness, fear, and intense persecution.

## Celebrating Christ's birth with a party!

There was no mistaking what was in the box. As soon as the door cracked open, squeals erupted. The big reveal was certainly worth the anticipation, as a giant chocolate Nutella cake topped with Maltesers was lifted out of the box.

It was time to celebrate the birthday of Jesus, and that could not be done without a spectacular party cake.

Amid the natural chaos of eight excited children, my co-worker C took the two mothers aside into one room, whilst I took the children into another. We had to prepare for the party. The mothers were coached on how to share the Christmas story, and the children were taught the actions to accompany it.

**“We need to be patient, and keep encouraging women like these to teach their children what they have learnt and believe themselves.”**

With the lights dimmed, we gathered into a small room as these two women described the coming of the wise men, the fear of the shepherds, and the awe of a young mother holding her baby. As guests to this party, C and I became part of the audience, sitting between the children, and encouraging them to listen as their mothers took the lead sharing the story of Jesus' birth. The kids chimed in throughout the story, waiting for the cues to hold up their various props.

Soon, it was time to light the candles and sing Jesus his 'Happy Birthday' song. The cheers went up, the cake was cut, and the room soon fell silent as each child ploughed their way through a generous serving of chocolate cake.

## A game of Jenga

This is discipleship at its best.

These two mothers are sisters-in-law and raise their children in the same house. Their children often witness them being beaten, but they also know that their mothers secretly follow Jesus. Yet most of the time, these women are too weary to teach their children about Jesus.

We would love to see more parents witnessing to their children, but we know that the road of discipleship with Muslim background believers is long. We need to be patient, and keep encouraging women like these to teach their children what they have learnt and believe themselves.

In the Middle East, a mother's role is to pass on the foundations of faith to her children. However, when these women come to know Jesus, many won't pass their newfound faith onto their children. For some, fear not only stifles personal spiritual growth, but also prevents them from modelling Christ-honouring habits to their family.

Yet before we are quick to judge, we must remember that the full flow of culture, society and schooling is towards Islam. It is hard for these fragile followers to stand apart and hold their ground. For them, discipleship feels like an uphill battle. So from the outset, we seek to encourage new believers to share the gospel with their children amid the chaos and the clamour of a normal day.

These days, we take a bag of toys with us on all our visits. We begin our time by playing with the children, encouraging them to take turns, and modelling attentiveness, praise, and consistent boundaries.

Sometimes, discipleship just looks like a game of Jenga whilst sharing a Bible story.



Give thanks for M and C's opportunities to teach these women the gospel story, and pray that women who follow Jesus will capture the vision of discipling their own children.



We will tell the  
next generation the  
praiseworthy deeds  
of the Lord.

PSALM 78:4



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



Where will you serve?  
[cms.org.au/opportunities](https://cms.org.au/opportunities)





# Mission Minded: REACHING YOUNG PEOPLE AROUND AUSTRALIA

Each of the six CMS branches in Australia are deeply involved in helping youth realise the vision of *a world that knows Jesus*. Here is a picture of some of the camps, conferences, training and other youth-focused activities happening in CMS branches across the country.

## CMS NSW & ACT: 200 children at Milimani

Each year in the NSW April school holidays, roughly 200 children in Years 4-6 gather for Camp Milimani in the Blue Mountains. Milimani is a Swahili word meaning 'mountainous', which aptly describes both the local terrain and the size of the task involved in planning this time together!

A team of volunteers, CMS staff, house parents and missionaries join campers for four days of fellowship, fun and growing hearts for God's mission. The purpose is to 'turn up the temperature' of global mission for these children by spending time in the Bible, hearing from missionaries, praying together and working in discussion groups to consider God's plan of salvation.

This year, campers learned about "shining like stars" from Philippians, and loved dressing up with a space theme and enjoying some nighttime astronomy.

Pray for campers as they keep thinking about their role in God's mission.



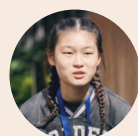
## CMS QNSW: the MELT camp

MELT, or **M**ission **E**xposure, **L**aughter, (**B**)ible **T**eaching is CMS QNSW's annual youth camp. Since it began in 2021, MELT has helped teens to grow their own heart and understanding for mission. They have also been encouraged by meeting other Christian teens from around Queensland and Northern NSW. We are so thankful for how God has grown MELT, and for the way he uses CMS missionaries to show what he is doing in the world. See a video recap of our most recent camp here – [cms.org.au/meltrecap](https://cms.org.au/meltrecap)



### Hayden (Grade 12):

"It is really great attending CMS youth camps, to talk with missionaries and meet many people my age. At MELT, I met other Christians in high school who live near me, but who I wouldn't see at church. CMS NSW & ACT's MMM camp was also special because I was able to hang out with hundreds of other guys in Grade 11 and 12. I appreciated digging deeply into Exodus during the Bible teaching time, and hearing from missionaries around the world. It was inspiring to hear how God is at work amid the challenges they face living cross-culturally."



### Anastasia (Grade 12):

"I've been going to MELT since Grade 9. I always like meeting new friends and catching up with old ones. I like seeing how they're going spiritually and encouraging one another. You've got the whole weekend... talking to people from different grades. I enjoy hearing from different missionaries each year. I get to be exposed to different parts of mission—being challenged about going to mission myself, and being prepared".

## CMS VIC: church visits

This year, CMS Victoria has begun 'Mission Focused Children's Church Visits'.

During these visits to CMS partner churches, our Children's and Families Coordinator Alyson Peatman is regularly invited to run a children's spot and program, generally aimed at preschool to Year 6. In doing this, we hope to encourage even the youngest members of the congregation to be actively involved with global mission. We build these programs around the partner church's link missionaries, and we talk to children about life on location and how these CMS missionaries share the gospel.

We want to inspire the next generation of CMS supporters by raising up young people who are prepared and equipped to *pray, care, give* and maybe one day *go* to the nations, so that we may see *a world that knows Jesus*.

### Axel (11 years old):

"CMS is great because it involves me in fun activities about mission, and inspires me to learn and spread God's word globally."



## CMS WA: a children's ministry convention

CMS WA works with other Christian organisations in Western Australia to present the annual Perth Children's Ministry Convention. This year we were delighted to invite CMS NSW & ACT's children's and youth worker, Bruce Linton, to speak. Bruce encouraged us to know God's character personally, and equipped us in practically teaching the character of God to children.

Bruce challenged us to plan, pray and program in a way that reflects and teaches who God is: holy, fair, loving, and truthful. He brought his wisdom to a practical session on running playgroups and holiday programs that reach children and families outside the church with the good news of Jesus.

Bruce spent the Friday evening prior helping a smaller group of children's ministry coordinators to think deeply about how to connect with their communities, and how to bring their whole church along with them. In CMS WA, we are praying for these inspiring insights to help spread the gospel to and through children and youth.

## CMS SANT: kids' Conference

At the beginning of each year, CMS SANT runs a kids' conference. The core group of kids who attend each year are from families that already partner with CMS. This makes for an extraordinary time, where we get to build on the foundation already laid at church and home to really dig into God's Word and world.

Kids start to see that how God works in their life is not so different to how he is working across the world, even if it looks, sounds, tastes, smells and feels different. As they listen to missionaries, their worldview expands and so too does their understanding of who God is. We see kids drawing closer to God, caring beyond themselves, and praying for the gospel to be known, and local ministry to be grown around the world.

### Jacob (leader):

"It's a great start to the year to lift our eyes to our big, diverse world and learn how to trust and pray to God about his kingdom purposes."

### James (9 years old):

"I love meeting kids who have been on mission with their parents. They help me see that lots of people love Jesus, and I can be part of Jesus' love for the world by praying and caring."

## CMS TAS: youth at Summer Conference

At our CMS TAS Summer Conference, we keep the youth in for the main mission presentations (given by CMS missionaries), rather than running a separate youth program.

During the main Bible talks, the youth go out with their mentors, to open God's Word and reflect on what they are learning about God's mission. These discussions encourage our teenagers to think about how they might get involved in global mission now through prayer, care and giving, and perhaps even serving cross-culturally one day.

One teenager, Ana-Laura, reflects: "I like staying in for the mission presentations because I enjoy hearing stories about their lives as missionaries. It helps me to see possibilities for myself in different countries around the world."



Taking children and youth to CMS activities, introducing them to missionaries, and even helping lead and organise is a practical way of encouraging mission concern. Contact your CMS branch for how you can be involved.



# Encountering Christ

## ON THE SOCCER FIELD



**CMS missionary Rachel Hughes, together with husband Dene, have been serving in Japan where Dene works with KGK university students and graduates. But where does football fit into family life? Read on.**

We were in the middle of a half-day workshop on *‘What is the Bible?’* with an extremely unexpected group of around 70 people: stylish mums, stinky kids in soccer uniforms, older and younger brothers and sisters, bikie dads and nerdy dads, the trendy uni-student assistant coach, and us, the foreigners—all brought together by ‘Seahorse Soccer’, the football team with Christian roots that serves a purpose beyond just kicking a ball. A friendly but suspicious soccer dad was—to our surprise and joy—asking about whether the Japanese translation of the Bible was reliable. Before saying more, here is some background to this scene.

### Meet Masa and Chie Yokota, and Seahorse Soccer

Football coach Masa Yokota and his wife Chie have been running the gospel-minded ‘Seahorse Soccer’ club since September 2010. Dene and I, alongside our other commitments, have been taking our boys along to their club since our second week in Japan, back in February 2012.

Coach Masa shares ‘Bible time’ with the kids during soccer classes. Through this, and through his attitude and actions and the values of the club, he demonstrates the love of God to every student and to their family members. Over the years Masa and Chie have built up a culture of acceptance and trust within the club. Kids know that Masa is interested in them personally. Parents know Masa and Chie are people of integrity, who can be trusted to build up their kids in ways that impact them far beyond their soccer skills.

### Sport days, bad days, and Bible days

Sport brings out the best and worst in people. If a soccer student is having a bad day—struggling with anger,

disappointment, jealousy, insecurity—coach Masa will notice and spend time chatting with that child on the sidelines.

In stark contrast to the teams on other fields Masa encourages kids to speak words of appreciation and encouragement to each other. Never harsh words. Past students drop in randomly to join practice, assured of a warm welcome. It’s clear that this culture reflects the love of Masa and Chie’s God. Long before these kids understand the details of the gospel, they see in Masa and Chie God’s character of acceptance and loving discipline.

So when Masa and Chie invite all of us—parents, kids, friends—to hear a longer Bible message at the end of year, at Christmas, or on a summer soccer camp, everyone is willing to listen. Even the most anti-religious parents are open to hear what it is that makes Masa and Chie care so much for their kids.

### A Bible day with a Bible game challenge

So it was at our Bible workshop on a summer soccer camp that one dad (the one mentioned earlier) started to realise that the Bible is actually a collection of historical documents—not just made-up stories written by brainwashed disciples. It happened through a camp game.

Throughout the camp hall, groups had to ‘re-create’ a page of a Bible story. Each group’s Bible story page had been torn into many pieces that were hidden in various ways. One group’s pieces had been carefully buried in a corner of the park outside and had to be dug up. Another group found their pieces all together, but perished and cracking with ‘age’. A third group’s pieces had been ‘lost’ around the building and had to be found. One group received bags of rubbish to sort through for their pieces of text!

Each group had to find their pieces, reassemble the page, and carefully write out their own copy of the original text, as best they could.

After collaborating with just one other team, most groups had an almost 100% match with the original text. We pointed out that since there were multiple copies here in the room, even without the original, someone would notice if anyone had made a mistake or tried to change the text somehow.

“**Even the most anti-religious parents are open to hear what it is that makes Masa and Chie care so much for their kids.**”

The obvious lesson from our game was that the Bible has been put together in a trustworthy way, and we can know this by cross-checking all the copies against each other.

“So how many copies of the Bible texts exist?” our friend the soccer dad asked. “And is the Japanese translation of the Bible a reliable copy?”

He was visibly shocked by our answers, which I think you can guess for yourself: “Thousands of copies of the Bible exist.” And “yes, the Japanese translation of the Bible is

reliable and was created by teams of language experts”. This man’s son still comes to soccer and our prayer is that he will read the Bible for himself, along with his family.

Through this soccer club for kids, whole families who would never otherwise encounter the love of Christ or hear the gospel message are experiencing and being taught about Jesus and his Word. Praise God! And join us in praying for Masa and Chie to continue growing as servants of Christ at the Seahorse Soccer club and elsewhere.



Thank God for the gospel ministry that Seahorse Soccer has made possible, and ask for growing opportunities to reach both children and parents in Japan.





# EQUIPPING CHILDREN FOR THE HARVEST IN *Japan*



CMS missionaries **Adam and Helene Ramsay** partner with a local church in Japan to grow disciples of Jesus, and develop children's ministry resources. Here, Helene shares her desire to see the children and youth of Japan become the next generation of gospel workers.

## Japan's pastor drought

Churches in Japan have a big problem. There aren't enough pastors.

Many are old and want to retire. They can't, because there are none to take their place. Many churches want to hire a pastor, but there is no one to apply for the position. Many pastors are overworked, doing fill-in preaching spots for other churches, and working part-time jobs to make ends meet.

Imagine the pastor creation process as a stream, with different people working in different positions along the way. At the top of the stream, churches are working hard to provide young people with opportunities to serve and grow in their knowledge of Jesus. Further downstream, ministries such as Samurai Projects<sup>1</sup> and KGK are training young people, and helping them to see if they have passion and aptitude for ministry. Finally, near the river mouth of the stream, locals and missionaries at Bible colleges are preparing students for a life of ministry.

What we are trying to do is right at the very start of the stream. We are developing gospel-centred resources and training for children's ministry, so that kids can learn to live for Jesus now. Our prayer is that in twenty years, there

will be more young people contemplating a life of ministry because they have been disciples from an early age.

## Gospel and resource poor

In a gospel-poor context like Japan, finding sound biblical resources is a big issue. Recently, my team and I wrote a kids' ministry lesson about Jesus entering Jerusalem on a donkey. I wanted to teach about Jesus the King, how he was received by the people, and how quickly he was crucified after his triumphal entry. But we kept getting hung up on the donkey, and struggled to keep Jesus at the centre of his own story!

“Imagine the pastor creation process as a stream.”

As my colleagues searched online for more resources and commentary, everything they found was, once again, focused on the donkey. I found a commentary in my pastor's office, hopeful that maybe this was what we needed. My pastor said, “It's comprehensive, but a lot of it is legalistic”. Next I went to look for kids' songs that fitted our teaching theme. There were none. If I were to search for 'Bible crafts' online in English, I would get millions of results. If I search for crafts based on the story in *Japanese*, there is less than a page.

The blessing of developing resources in a gospel-poor context is that there is a world of possibilities for creativity. We are blessed to work with dramatic, musical, faithful people who love to come up with new songs, talks, pictures, maps, games, crafts, and more. We would love to see these resources shared through a network of gospel-centred and kids ministry-minded people. While creating new resources in Japanese is the goal, we are also currently translating existing English resources. *Kidswise* from Australia are excellent in reaching kids with gospel truth using all the different ways kids learn.

Last year, we translated lessons from Jonah for a Japanese summer camp. The leaders were very impressed by the quality of these lessons. Non-believers were able to pray using tools we provided, and Christian kids were able to reflect honestly on the state of their faith. Praise God for gospel resources!

## Training gospel workers

All the resources in the world won't help grow the church without workers for the harvest. We are training leaders at church to run and oversee children's ministry, and to train other leaders. We are also mentoring leaders in other churches. One of them said recently, “I pass on all the things you teach me to the others I work with.” Praise God for multiplying ministry!

## Praying for the end of the drought

As much as we see this ministry bearing fruit, we often can feel like our work can feel like a vapour or a morning mist. But we trust that God is at work. Can you imagine that in 20 years, no-one is talking about a pastor drought in Japan anymore? That Bible colleges and pulpits are full, and experienced pastors are turning towards church planting because their hands are freed up by the wealth of young pastors coming through?

Our desire is for children to be raised up and equipped as workers of the harvest, so that we may see a *Japan that knows Jesus*. Will you join in praying for this?



Helene and her team want to see more gospel workers in Japan. Could you go to serve with them? Contact your CMS branch to learn more.



# GIVING *thanks* TO GOD

## DOROTHY MCGORLICK

We thank God for the life and witness of his servant, **Dorothy McGorlick** (nee Mace), who went to be with Christ on 5 June 2024, aged 94. Dorothy came to trust the Lord Jesus in her youth, through the ministry of her parents. Dorothy trained as a schoolteacher and offered to use those skills as a CMS missionary. She undertook missionary training at St Hilda's College, then was accepted by CMS in 1958 and sailed for Tanganyika. She is still remembered with affection by her former school students.

In 1961, Dorothy met CMS missionary Frank McGorlick, who was the first principal of a Bible School in Katoke. They married in June 1963. They served with CMS together until their retirement in 1974. Dorothy became an active member of the Women's Missionary Council in Victoria, (now the Missionary Care Fellowship). She remained an active member for 50 years. Let us thank God for Dorothy's life, and pray for her sons Richard and Andrew and all who loved her.

## VALERIE FIZZELL

We give thanks for the life of **Valerie Fizzell**, who went to be with the Lord on 6 June 2024. Together with her husband John, they served with CMS at Roper River Station in the Northern Territory from 1958 to 1969. John maintained machinery, while Valerie involved herself effectively in the work of the station. Although a trained nurse, she proved herself to have remarkable teaching gifts, and for a time supplemented the teaching staff. Before their departure, she was sister-in-charge of the Roper River Hospital, where she showed a deep love and concern for those she ministered to.

John and Valerie's home was always open to visitors, and they were greatly used by God to build up a sense of unity and purpose amongst those around them. May God give grace and peace to family and friends.

*I am the resurrection and the life.  
The one who believes in me will live, even though they die.*

*John 11:25*

## PRAYER DIARY UPDATES



**DAY 1**  
**CRAIG & SAM MCCORKINDALE** from CMS NSW & ACT finished their service with CMS on 30 June 2024.



**DAY 15**  
**K (& A)** from CMS TAS welcomed their daughter, L, who was born on 29 April 2024.



**DAY 21**  
**MAGGIE CREWES** from CMS SANT will begin Home Assignment in August before she begins ministry in North Australia in November.



**DAY 29**  
CoMPs **THULISILE** (& THATO) **MABE** have welcomed their twin daughters, Maru and Nala.

# CMS MISSION *podcasts*

Explore missionary stories in their own voice with the **Heart of Mission podcast** or dive into focused discussions on mission topics and ideas with **Mission Up Close**.



Listen now on your favourite podcast platform and be inspired!



Heart of Mission Podcast



Mission Up Close Podcast

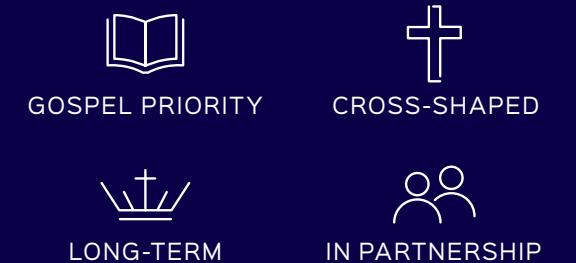


Our vision is for *a world that knows Jesus*.  
We work with churches to set apart godly people as long-term cross-cultural gospel workers.

## OUR MISSION



## OUR VALUES



Read the full CMS vision: [cms.org.au/vision](https://cms.org.au/vision)

## GET INVOLVED





# Summer Conferences 2025

CMS Summer conferences are part of our vision for *a world that knows Jesus*. A chance to hear from God's word, meet missionaries, spend time with brothers and sisters in Christ, and shape your mission plans for the year.



**CMS QNSW**  
SUMMER SCHOOL  
3-8 JANUARY 2025



**CMS VIC**  
SUTS  
16-18 JANUARY 2025



**CMS NSW & ACT**  
SUMMER SCHOOL  
4-10 JANUARY 2025



**CMS SANT**  
SUMMER  
CONFERENCE  
18 JANUARY 2025



**CMS TAS**  
SPUR  
16-18 JANUARY 2025



Save the date in  
your calendar now!

[cms.org.au/summer-conferences](https://cms.org.au/summer-conferences)



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*.

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