



fresh hope

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Andrew's Message

Dear Readers,

As we come towards the end of another year, I believe that the message of God's kingdom is as important and pertinent now, as in any other time in our history. Globally, there continues to be incredible uncertainty in so many places and spaces. The year in review has been difficult for so many across our nation. It appears that many of the values so inherent in our culture and ethos (for example marriage) are under threat as this nation continues to slide into political correctness and secularisation. I am reminded of the words of Jesus, our Messiah and King, when commenting on the last days, he stated: "Staying with it- that's what God requires. Stay with it to the end. You won't be sorry, and you'll be saved. All during this time, the good news – the Message of the Kingdom – will be preached all over the world, a witness staked out in every country. And then the end will come". (Matthew 24:13-14 in the Message).

To remain steadfast in the midst of uncertainty and turmoil is an important spiritual discipline. Steadfastness is not a popular pursuit. When have you recently heard of a 'steadfastness coach' or a course in spiritual steadfastness? Yet Jesus reminds us to stay with it – to remain secure and strong in our values and position. Beethoven once said: "This is the mark of a really admirable man: steadfastness in the face of trouble." This Christmas may you be reminded of the need to practice steadfastness. The arrival of the baby Jesus, was an incredible declaration from our Heavenly Father, that He remains steadfast in His redemptive activity to restore all peoples back to Him. Christmas is a time where as God's people we can steadfastly proclaim the good news of the Kingdom of God. I am so grateful that our Lord and Saviour was born – a new hope for a world in turmoil and pain."

Kind regards

Andrew Ball

Executive Ministry Director

Churches of Christ in NSW.



Rhythms Christmas Party 2011

Last Saturday evening (26 November) Castle Hill Community Church hosted a big "Thank-You" Christmas party for the volunteers of our Rhythms Op-Shop and Enterprise. It was a great night and an important one as it's often hard to find ways of showing our appreciation enough to the wonderful people who are the backbone of our operation.

Rhythms is a big community more like a family than an organization. All sorts of people are involved and it's often genuinely touching to see how much they love the place and what it's about and how hard they work to make sure it works.

This is really interesting since most of our volunteers are not yet Christians. We are here to serve and reach our community but our volunteers are our greatest mission field because of the proximity we work in so often. Relationships are formed, conversations are had and now our Faith Collective is filling up with volunteers. It's truly awesome to see it unfold and to be a part of something that is genuinely making a difference in the lives of those who do not know Jesus.

I'm grateful for the vision of those who started Rhythms and who had the foresight to see that something so simple could have such an impact.

Adrian Jackson





Careworks NSW

Careworks NSW is the welfare and community ministry division of Churches of Christ in NSW and has been operating across NSW since 1970. It is a body established by the Conference of Churches of Christ in NSW for the direct relief of poverty, suffering, distress, misfortune, disability or helplessness in the community. Its mission is "lives being transformed through vibrant communities of fresh hope".

Careworks NSW forms partnerships with local churches that want to undertake relevant and sustainable community based projects. Careworks NSW forms the auspicing body for these projects to seek and receive government funding (where appropriate) and provide a legal framework for them to operate within.

Careworks NSW oversees a large range of community based projects including a crisis centre for women and children, homeless street feeds, drop in centres, counselling centres, foodbanks, opportunity shops and chaplaincy services for prison, aged care and schools.

A Prayer Letter is released twice each year with a primary focus on sharing information regarding the projects currently being undertaken by as many local churches as we can find room on the four pages we have to work with. The December 2011 Prayer letter has just been issued. If your church has not got a copy for you to read then look on the website for more information at www.careworks.org.au or contact Taksan Scott at the Careworks office on 87192630 and she will ensure you can find out more about the Careworks ministry.

All donations made to Careworks are tax deductible and can be directed to the specific projects or used to support the ministry of Careworks generally. The Christmas Appeal 2011 has just been launched with donation forms being distributed to all churches. Should you require more forms or wish to learn more about how you can donate to Careworks then contact Taksan Scott on 87192630 or email Taksan@careworks.org.au.

Wayne Morris – ministry facilitator





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In 2011 ACOM saw 63 students graduate with qualifications and training that see's them ready and equipped to serve our Churches around Australia. What is even more exciting about these numbers is the fact that the majority of these students are part of our Church of Christ movement and already serving and ministering in our churches.

This in fact continues a trend of increased numbers of people enrolling for ministry training, suggesting that our churches are raising up good young leaders and those leaders are looking to develop and refine their skills as ministers of the Gospel and leaders of people. For the ACOM team it is indeed exciting to be on the edge of ministry training and a privilege to serve and partner future leaders and pastors.

One especially exciting new frontier that has opened up in recent weeks has been an opportunity to develop and train men and women for ministry in Vanuatu. Churches of Christ has a long history of work in Vanuatu. There was at one stage a great bible college operating out of the Island Santos, however amidst all the challenges that come with sustaining a viable training facility the college fell into decline. Global Mission Partners and Judith Vusi, a key Vanuatuan leader along with her husband Samuel Vusi were extremely keen to see ministry training take root once more in the Islands. The flexibility of ACOM's unique agile learning processes really offered an opportunity for us to partner with GMP and Vanuatu Churches of Christ. We are delighted to announce the recommencement of ministry training up to Bachelor of Theology level in Vanuatu once again. This strategic partnership will see Kingdom foundations laid for the development of Vanuatuan leaders from all of that country and we anticipate it will have a lasting effect on many communities across Vanuatu.

The team at ACOM has 2012 firmly in it's sights. Work is well underway for our online learning platform to go to the next level. ACOM will launch 2012 using "Moodle" as it's new elearning platform, a strategic move to deliver a better virtual community, a more versatile and user friendly platform and a more comprehensive platform for offering our students the best resources around in theological and leadership training. This along with increased capacity in terms of staffing and redesigned systems across our administration division will see ACOM ready to better serve the needs of over 1200 students studying with ACOM around Australia.

We are revisiting our Curriculum offerings and adding more bible subjects, more research opportunities and more pastoral and ministry focused subjects. We see our churches taking the challenge of Kingdom living out to the community and we are determined to support and undergird those endeavours.

We are also delighted to announce new study options with regards to our offered Qualifications. This year we have been approved to offer two new qualifications: Bachelor of Theology Honours degree and the Master of Theology Degree. This is a



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significant academic pathway that ensures that for those people in Churches of Christ who want to become leaders in biblical and theological disciplines, ACOM is a champion of these thought leaders.

We are also delighted with talks and ongoing discussions being had with Stirling College in Melbourne and look forward to working collaboratively and strategically with them in adding value to our churches across Australia

It would be an understatement to say that 2011 has been a busy year. However, for all the challenges 2011 has thrown at the ACOM team, we have definitely seen God help us develop an even more compelling College for Churches of Christ Australia. We look forward to serving you in the New Year and wish you a very Merry Christmas in your churches and with your families. Season Greeting!

The ACOM Team

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Each year our Fresh hope network provides opportunities for churches to apply for **Synergy Grants**. This is a part of our heart to serve the local church on the frontier of mission.

Partnership Grants: The deadline is 31 December 2011

For more information please go to www.synergyproject.org.au

Global Mission Partners

COCOA Christmas Appeal

Thandolwenkosi is the child pictured on the front of this year's COCOA (Churches of Christ Overseas Aid) Offering Envelope. She is one very happy pre-schooler at Khayelihle Children's Village (KCV) in Zimbabwe. Her life has been transformed by the nurture she receives at KCV. This includes food, the love of adults and an education. Such a transformation is largely due to the compassionate support of the people of Churches of Christ in Australia. Giving to the COCOA Christmas Appeal makes it possible for:



- Children at Khayelihle Children's Village, Zimbabwe, to have access to medicine, education, good food and the loving care and support of housemothers. In South Sudan young child victims of war are fed and educated.
- People in Zimbabwe and Vietnam to have access to a fresh, clean and consistent water supply. Health and diet improves because the water is safe. Food can be grown and dignity is enhanced.
- Education projects in Vanuatu strengthen the capacity of schools. Children have equipped teachers and resources for education and learning.
- In Vietnam new employment opportunities are being created, micro enterprise is made possible, houses are constructed and fresh water tanks are built near homes.
- Health projects made possible in India include community education and support for people living with HIV/AIDS and diabetes. In South Sudan Traditional Birth Attendants receive training and birthing kits that directly reduce the infant mortality rate.



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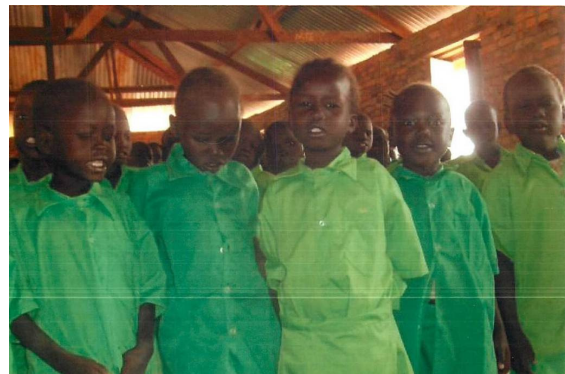
- In Thailand young men, who otherwise would roam without purpose or hope, begin to gain dignity and purpose through a soccer program in which they take part as players, coaches and assistant coaches.
- COCOA continues to respond to the unfolding disaster in the Horn of Africa.

Two editable newsletter adverts for the COCOA Christmas Appeal can be downloaded from the GMP website (www.inpartnership.org.au). An audio visual is available after December 1st which can be downloaded from the website or sent without cost on request from our office (info@inpartnership.org.au or 08 8212 4446).

We appreciate the consistent support of so many local churches as you include in your Christmas Services an offering for people who face great need and who have far fewer resources than we take for granted. Thank you for sharing the blessings and joy of Christmas in practical ways across nations.

Standing Tall in New School Uniforms

There was great excitement as the students at the Emmanuel Children's Centre, South Sudan, received their school uniforms. The school in Marialbai is very new and only commenced in March this year. When the school registered with the Ministry of Education one requirement of registration was providing the students with uniforms.



Paulino Malou, the Program Coordinator, had hoped for navy blue shorts and skirts with white shirts. Somehow the uniforms ended up being lime green! Never-the-less the students are very proud to have uniforms like the children from other schools. These uniforms are a sign of dignity, hope and belonging for these students as they look to a brighter future. As the people of Marialbai see the children in bright green walking to and from the school, they have the satisfaction of knowing that the children of those who lost their lives in the long battle for freedom are being cared for and educated.

Along with the school uniforms the nutrition and education programs of the Emmanuel Children's Centre is made possible through the sponsorship of these children. So far 106 of the 240 child victims of war are sponsored.

Ros Stafford Green comments, "Seeing some of the 240 orphan children, part of the GMP Child Support Program, in their classes under the trees, enjoying playing together, having a meal and with many enthusiastically involved in a church service (held in their school building) gives real hope to the future of this community.

You can read more of this story including the delivery of the letters from sponsors on the blogsite <http://fairdinkamate.blogspot.com/>.



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Bible Training even in Prison

As director of the Bible Training Institute (BTI) in Fiji, offering correspondence courses to any who are interested, Bhimrao Thavare encounters a range of remarkable students and situations. Bhimrao regularly visits a nearby correction centre to conduct Bible studies with a group of inmates. The size of this group varies from three to seven. Recently one of the students expressed interest in following Christ. Bhimrao's prayer is that he will continue to grow in his understanding and consider the next step of baptism in the near future.



Sharing with the inmates in this way is a great source of joy and encouragement to Bhimrao. He is grateful for the good reception and cooperation of the prison authorities that makes this opportunity possible.

One of the prisoners involved with the BTI course requested that Bhimrao visit his family. Bhimrao reports, "It was our great joy to visit the family of one of our students in the correction centre. Kanta came with me along with two of our Christian friends. The family of five members welcomed us and were delighted to see someone visiting them after a long time. We spent time singing gospel songs, sharing God's Word, offering prayers and practical help for the family. We have begun to keep contact with the family in response to their expressed needs. We hope to continue the same with others and so share the love of Christ.

"On this journey, it is a joyful moment in the life of students when they commit their lives to Christ. Some even choose to go on to formal Christian ministry. We praise God for what He does in the life of these students from all walks of life."



Diary Dates for 2011 & 2012

Make sure you enter these dates in your 2012 Diary now and plan to be involved:

28 November 2011	Applications for NAVIGATE 2012 close
2 December 2011	Applications for IMPART 2012 close
16 – 18 March 2012	The Transformational Church Cohort
6-9 April 2012	Collide @ The Tops
4 – 5 May 2012	Annual Conference @ Northside Community Church
22 July 2012	Global Mission Partners Day of Prayer.
23 July 2012	Deep Day
23 – 27 July 2012	Contemplative Retreat
3 – 5 August 2012	Southpoint Spiritual Retreat
7 – 9 August 2012	Ministry Endorsement Pilgrimage
22 – 26 September 2012	Born to Win Camp 1
27 September – 1 October 2012	Born to Win Camp 2
2 – 5 October 2012	Drastic
7 – 10 October 2012	Ministers Awakening
27 Oct 2012	Global Mission Partners Celebration of Global Mission
25 Dec 2012	COCOA Christmas Offering