



AFRICA INLAND MISSION
INTERNATIONAL / ASIA-PACIFIC

AFRICA *news*

"Christ-centred churches among all African peoples"

www.aimint.org

FEB-MAY 2014



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Focus on Central Africa

Central Africa has many challenges. But God is touching lives — in places like Chad, Central Africa Republic, Rwanda,

Uganda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan. A new TIMO team is living among the Lopit people of South Sudan (pictured above). See the story on page 7. Join a team in

DRC (page 2), or go short-term and make a difference (page 6); or pray for the TIMO team in Chad (pages 4-5). God can use you in His work in Central Africa!

JUST BRIEFLY

AIM Australia's Annual Conference 2014 is on 29-31 August 2014 at Naamaroo Uniting Venues, Lane Cove. Connect with returned short and full-term workers. Meet new AIM International Director Luke Herrin. To register contact Robbyn at AIM on 02 4322 4777 or email admin@finance.aimint.net

Towards 2016 — AIM Australia will celebrate its centenary in August 2016 at a dinner in Sydney. This will follow the celebration in August 2015 of 120 years since the foundation of AIM International. Watch this space for updates on these events.

New AIM staff worker for New Zealand — Applications are being considered for a new position of Administration Officer in Auckland. This position will help represent AIM in New Zealand and will provide a range of administrative and recruiting functions to help achieve the goals of AIM. For more information contact Len on
E: director.nz@aimint.net or
T: 09 8899 406 (NZ).

AIM's new film: "The Distant Boat" was launched in November. This film is a story of young man touched by a kind favour by strangers. He is challenged that his new friends have not heard about Jesus. The film is designed to encourage the African church and others into mission. See the W: distantboat.com

OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE

Why Not Join a Team — Opportunities exist in several new AIM teams:

Democratic Republic of the Congo — Join a team from **July 2014 to March 2016**. This team will train members for ministry in the Banda area. As members learn language, they will minister alongside the CECA 20 church. Team leader Wendy Atkins is a long-term worker in the areas of ethno arts, leadership training, trauma healing and supporting national outreach to the Mbororo people.



Coastal Kenya — Professionals are needed for a team among the Digo people. **Starts early 2015 to late 2016**
Skills needed: Agricultural Specialist, Literacy Project Officer, High School Teacher, Sanitation and Hygiene
Namibia — The Tsumkwe TIMO team **starts in January 2015 to mid-2018**. Live among and reach the San people (also known as Bushman). Learn the Tsumkwe culture and the challenging San "click" language. Focus on youth

and basic medical care, teaching, mentoring and vocational training.
Skills needed: Teachers, Trades people, Vocational Educators, Doctors or Nurses



Madagascar — AIM is looking for men, women and families who love Jesus and love youth to reach out to young people! This unique team now **starts in January 2015 to December 2016**. There are opportunities for: swimming instructors, song writers, wood workers, bike riders, farming and development workers, sailors, surfers and qualified women for ministry to young girls and prostitutes.

Lesotho — TOUGH SINGLE MEN ONLY are needed for this X-treme TIMO team. Experience harsh mountain conditions to reach and disciple the shepherd boys. **Starts in September 2014**.

- Live simply
- Learn a new language
- Share the Good News of Jesus with the least reached
- Learn and minister as part of a team

For more information contact Len Lesleighter in Australia:
personnel.aus@aimint.net or in New Zealand on personnel.nz@aimint.net



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AIM'S INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP TRANSITIONS

Africa Inland Mission welcomed a new International Director on 1 January 2014. Retiring International Director, Lanny Arensen looks back at what God has done. New Director Dr Luke Herrin calls for a foundation of prayer for the future.

Change is Foundational to Success

by Lanny Arensen, retiring AIM International Director

As I step aside after 12 years as AIM's International Director, I have taken some time to look back and consider where we have come. In 2002 I challenged the leadership of AIM with these words:

“For AIM to remain the same, we must change.”

AIM'S FUTURE FOUNDED ON PRAYER

by Luke Herrin, New International Director (blog: herrin.aimsites.org)

The role of International Director of AIM is a huge responsibility for a field missionary like me! But I look forward to following Him along this part of the journey, and trust that He is with us, “even to the end of the age.”

The Lord called me and my wife Jenny into missions through our involvement in Interservice Christian Fellowship in our university years. I studied medicine, finishing my training in 1990. I love being a doctor, and using medicine to demonstrate the love and compassion of our Savior, especially in places where He is not known.

We joined AIM in 1990, with a desire to reach Muslims with the saving

I understood this to mean that if we, as AIM, intend to remain as effective for the Lord in the 21st century as we may have been in the past, we must be prepared to ask hard questions and seek new answers. I appreciate the way in which the leadership and members of AIM have asked the hard questions and made decisions which led to new ministries being started.

We have seen significant changes in AIM's organisational structure and the way in which leadership is encouraged. At the same time we have sought to keep the purpose and values for which AIM has been known from the beginning—namely obedience to Jesus' commission to “go and preach the gospel to all nations...” and the family nature of AIM. These changes have allowed AIM to move quickly into eight new countries and amongst 32 as yet unreached people groups.

We are in the early and often very difficult and dangerous stages of ministry as we seek to proclaim the gospel where it is not yet known. For



Carla and Lanny Arensen

this ministry to succeed we need staunch prayer warriors who will stand with us. We will also need workers who are committed to stay for extended periods of time in order to learn the language and cultures so as to clearly proclaim the truth.

In AIM International we have a great history. We follow in the path of giants in the faith. We have seen God do many miraculous things and have been blessed to play a small part in planting a huge growing and maturing church on the continent. But the way in which we have done things may not be the way we need to do things in the years ahead. So I repeat, “For AIM to remain the same, we must be prepared for change.”

love of Jesus. We have served in several locations in East Africa during the past 20 years, all of them creative-access nations, among Muslim people groups. These have been great years! Sometimes difficult and painful, sometime joyous and fruitful. The Lord has always led and been faithful to us.

Well enough. But where is He taking AIM? Where would I like AIM to move in the future? We have made significant strides in the recent past, with regionalisation, leadership development, and clarification of our goal: “Christ-Centered Churches among all African Peoples, with priority for the unreached.” I believe that we should continue to strive for this. In particular:

- more and more emphasis on the unreached. Engaging and reaching the

neglected and unevangelised peoples of Africa.

- increased efforts towards mobilising and equipping African churches, including our current partner churches, for reaching the unreached. We must partner more with African and Western mission boards.
- expansion of our work so that it becomes truly pan-African. Reaching the unreached among the Diaspora (emigrants to western countries) and in areas of Africa where we have never worked.
- all of it led, empowered, and supported by prayer. Unceasing and persistent prayer; group and individual prayer; focused and general prayer; and God-honoring and trusting prayer.

Will you join us?

PRAYER IS THE FOUNDATION OF MINISTRY IN CHAD

by **Kath in Chad**

Five times a day the call to prayer reverberates out from the mosques around my home in Chad.

Surprisingly, rather than being a distraction, it is a constant reminder to me of the power of prayer and that people who are truly surrendered to God have a life that is centred on prayer, time with God and time in His word.

Listening to the call everyday is slowly producing an inner change in me.

Five times a day I am reminded that I and my team must continually surrender to the true and living God and come before Him in prayer if we are to have any influence here as followers of Jesus.

I am on a TIMO (Training in Ministry Outreach) team living in D'town, central Chad, living amongst Chadian Arabs. As a team, we are striving to show God's love, truth and hope to the people of the town.

Our time in D'town has been full of language and culture learning, forming

relationships and sharing God's love and His word through our relationships with our new friends. It is exciting to see the boldness God has given my team as we have had many opportunities to share the truth from the word of God.

Memorizing scripture verses in Arabic requires hard work, especially when I barely understand the individual words in the verse! However, it is well worth the commitment when opportunities come up regularly to share these verses. What better way is there to share but with words God has given us in the Bible?

"Markaz al-Muna" (Centre of Hope) is a facility we have opened for teaching English, French, and computer skills to the people of D'town. Hope represents what many who will be coming to the centre have as they hope that learning English, French, or computer skills will give them a better future.

True, everlasting hope is also what we hope everyone will find as they come to the centre.

After many weeks of painting, varnishing, cleaning, scraping, and organizing we opened the centre at the end of August and to our delight about 150 people came. The local

authorities pledged their full support for us and asked that we bring even more people in the future to help the people of D'town. So I invite you to come and join us in the privilege of sharing truth to people who have no other way of hearing. The authorities were encouraging people to take advantage of the opportunity that God had brought to them. My team leader Justin used the parable of the Good Samaritan to share how Christ has called us to love all people — even those who are different from us.

It is exciting to see how God will change the lives of people in this town through the knowledge they gain as well as changing their hearts and opening their lives to true hope and ultimate truth. It will be amazing to see how God brings us into relationships with the different people who come to classes. It does remind

me though that all we do needs to be centred around prayer, as we surrender daily to God and immerse ourselves thoroughly in His word. I am being reminded of this journey into prayer and into God five times a day. What are you being reminded of throughout your day? What call are you hearing, and for what is God preparing you?





ARE YOU WILLING TO GET MESSY?

Short-Term Mission Redefined

by **Cassandra Luontela, AIM Short-term Coordinator, Uganda**

In the past 10 years there has been an explosion in missions – especially short-term missions. There has been a wave of individuals, churches, NGOs and others flooding areas of the world for a few weeks at a time, all in the name of Jesus.

I am astonished that many Christians believe “missions” equals weeks, rather than a way of life!

From where I sit I see that it is time — time to redefine “short-term missions.”

Yearly, thousands of people and, equally, thousands of dollars are used for flights, projects and events related to short-term missions.

More than 2.2 million Americans went on a “mission trip” in 2006.

One to two week trips have become the new definition of “missions.” I ask, “How effective can a 14-day trip be at making disciples?” I wonder who benefits from these short trips — the goer or the person they are hoping to help?

Jesus in, The Great Commission, stresses going and making disciples. After working on the beautiful, complex and hurting continent of Africa, it is clear there is a history of converts to the concept of Christianity. However, there is a vast void of “being a disciple” of Christ. Discipleship is life, and life is messy.

AIM’s Central Region has made discipleship the focus of its ministries. Every placement, whether long or short-term, centres on discipleship. We live life with each other. AIM’s view of “short-term” not only exposes people to the joys and pains of mission but stresses the importance of discipleship. It allows people to experience the power of truly living life with others for the sake of the Gospel. This takes time!

Short-term in AIM is three to 12 months, rather than 2 weeks. It is living life with each other. Living life with someone does not genuinely happen in a few short weeks. Rather, it comes from being in a place where you learn how to do everything. In a way, you become like a child again, an act that binds you to the people around you.

Short-term mission that really lives out Jesus’ words, needs a meaningful amount of time where one is living life with others in community. Time, to not only express the love of Jesus physically, but to share the Word with them, praying they will know Jesus as their personal saviour!

I am truly blessed to see many people coming out to Central Region through the short-term program who not only believe in short-term missions, but

who have come out for months at a time to allow God to use them in furthering His kingdom here in Africa. Each has their own joys and struggles, but each has lived life with others; they came to be with rather than do. Because of their sacrifice of time and willingness to be vulnerable, both they and their African community were changed.

Some short-term missionaries have lived life with others by cleaning urine off their therapy room floor for the hundredth time; still, they sit and play with the child who has cerebral palsy. Others have eaten field rat in the bush of South Sudan in order to spend more time with their students, talking about Jesus. All have been out of their comfort zone while learning how to be vulnerable and humble as they live in obedience to the Word by making disciples, no matter how messy life is.

So the question that is posed is this: Are you willing to get messy?



THE LOPIT **TIMO** TEAM IS A STORY OF GOD'S MERCY

by Kathy de Smidt, AIM Central Region Office

“God uses broken things. It takes broken soil to produce a crop, broken clouds to give rain, broken grain to give bread, broken bread to give strength. It is the broken alabaster box that gives forth the perfume... it is Peter, weeping, bitterly, who returns to greater power than ever.”

Vance Havner



Marlene van Tonder from New Zealand is on the Lopit TIMO team.

The story of the Lopit II TIMO team has been a lesson in humility and how little we can count on our own plans and strength. The team began in South Sudan in December 2013.

- The first team leader was not able to continue (for very good personal reasons), and we had to find alternate team leaders or face cancelling the team.
- Plans for personnel to build the houses had to be adjusted due to the changes in partner organizations.
- Logistics in such a setting are always challenging and have brought many stresses to people already over-stretched — unit leader, team leader, TIMO logistics (setting up a number of other teams this year) and our Central Region office.
- Numerous team members were accepted, and then pulled out for a number of reasons, leaving the team dynamics uncertain.

It has also been a story of God's mercy and goodness being shown through the limitations and cracks of our own lives. We rejoiced when Joshua and Justina Musuva agreed to be team leaders for this team. They were Kenyan team members on the first Lopit TIMO team, and have served among the Lopit people since then. We gave thanks to God for His provision through His people for the building of the houses and for another Kenyan builder who came to help with some of the main construction. And what a blessing to have a short term team and some other individuals come to help with some of the final building — laying cement floors, putting up gutters and rain-water

tanks, windows and filters.

We were thankful when Marlene van Tonder from New Zealand was accepted as the last member of the team... and was able to raise her support. The final roll-call for the team are Joshua and Justina and family from Kenya (team leaders); Ashley from the USA; Marlene from New Zealand; Guilherme and Marina from Brazil, Robert and Carol and family also from Kenya.

As the team settle into the village, begin making relationships and learning the Lopit language, they will no doubt have many opportunities to realize again that they are made of clay. God has determined the earth would be filled with people knowing His glory.

Strangely a pre-condition for showing the Lopit people that this all surpassing power is from God is the weakness of His people.





GOD AT WORK IN MADAGASCAR

by **Kirsten Wade, Australia**

I recently returned from my four-month short-term mission trip to Madagascar where God graciously allowed me to join in the wonderful work He is doing amongst this island nation. My assignment took me to the regional city of Antsirabe, less than 150km from the capital of Antananarivo, but a journey that could take anywhere between three hours and a whole day, given the state of the roads and — more significantly — the state of the run-down but always entertaining taxi-brousse (bush-taxi) used to get there.

Having arrived via France, I found my on-field orientation enormously helpful. It was great for me to be able to spend dedicated time reflecting on my expectations, personal goals and fears, as well as talking through various aspects with Sarah and Daniel before travelling to my place of ministry.

My role in Antsirabe was to support the English teaching of two language schools through teaching a number of classes, working with the teachers to improve their language skills as well as the curriculum, and encouraging the students in their faith through regular times of prayer and Bible reading. I also had the incredible opportunity to join in the music and youth ministries of a

new English-speaking church, planted and run by local Malagasy people. Their long-term vision is to reach out to English-speaking tourists and foreigners in the region. I was able to teach them some new songs which they incorporated into their worship and also explained the lyrics of many other songs to them. We started a youth Bible study after worship practice on Saturday mornings, which is continuing through the involvement of other church members. I was really encouraged to see more and more young people join this group and witness how God has given them such a desire to know Him more. Over four short months, God opened my eyes to a huge number of things.

I saw how He is using the wonderful capabilities He gives to all people, and how AIM's transformational development programs were working to bring about positive change. I saw the incredible faithfulness of local believers, willing to lay everything they had on the line to obediently serve their Lord. God used this to challenge me to take bigger steps of faith, even when I may have been unsure of the future, or how things would work out, I knew I just needed to trust and obey Him and things would work out.

On a personal level, I grew so much

closer to God through the necessity of relying on Him for everything — safety, wisdom, energy, comfort — in this new place. I was immeasurably encouraged by the Malagasy Christians who adopted me into their families and shared their lives and faith with me. As well as confirming the value of AIM's short-term mission program for both receiving community and missionary, God also opened my heart to the future possibility of doing missions long-term, something I would never have considered a year ago!

Madagascar is a country in great physical and spiritual need.

Please join me in praying that peace will remain after the final round of elections this past December. Pray for positive political, economic and social changes. You can also pray for both AIM missionaries and the Malagasy Church, that God would continue working through them to see His Kingdom come in Madagascar.



Would you like to explore some of the exciting Short-term opportunities that AIM has in Africa? Then contact Hilton on shortterm.ais@aimint.net or T: 02 4322 4777. In New Zealand, contact Len on director.nz@aimint.net or T: 09 8899 406. Our list of opportunities is also on our website: aimint.org/au/serve Or in New Zealand on aimint.org/nz/serve

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PROJECT

Advanced Training Fund

This is your opportunity to train African Church leaders from your own home! Your gift to the Advanced training Fund will *make a difference* for God's Kingdom in Africa.

AIM's Advanced Training Fund assists African church leaders to do post-graduate training. This helps them provide a strong evangelical foundation and inspired leadership for the African church.

In 2013, 95 students from South Sudan, Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Congo, Mozambique, Namibia and South Africa received partial scholarships. Here is what one student said:

"The most important courses for me this year were Africa Christian Theology, Hebrew Exegesis and, Working with Boards and Committees. I have learned about new and contemporary approaches used by African theologians to make the gospel more relevant to African people.

The course on Africa Christian Theology has totally changed and challenged my approaches to preaching to African people. Now I know how I can use the African context to reach out to African people without compromising the scripture. I now know 'how to wear their shoes' and show them the truth without compromising the Word of God."



Edwin Mihigo, Tanzania
Africa International University, Nairobi, Kenya — Master's in Theology

Other student testimonies can be found on our website: www.aimint.org/au/explore/stories.

Please donate to the ATF using the response slip overleaf or donate online at www.aimint.org/au/give. Quote "Advanced Training Fund" or ATF.

