Christmas is a significant season for many people.

For me personally, and for the wider Reach Beyond family, it is a time of joyful reflection as we look back over the last year and see the life-changing impact of the gospel and the opportunities we have had to share the love of Jesus to people in some of the most remote and spiritually dark places.

This response is from a listener in Andrah Pradesh, India—

“I have been listening to radio since 1984 to many stations. But I felt something different listening to your station, the songs that you play and the message that talks about Jesus loving you as you are, you are his child. You said ‘We can pray with you as you ask Jesus to be with you.’ This has changed my life. I read the Bible daily and pray. My family now listen to radio programs regularly.”

Just as we remember that “the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us” to save us from sin, we are passionate about bringing the same Good News to those who have never heard the gospel through our shortwave broadcasts and many practical initiatives around the world.

Over the last twelve months in particular, the Board and I have sensed the Lord calling us to strengthen our local presence in Kununurra. Why? For two big reasons:

1. Our facility in Kununurra is pivotal to delivering high-quality programs that broadcast the Good News on shortwave radio to the unreached; and

2. To be a ministry in Kununurra serving the needs of the local community where our shortwave facility is based.

While media will continue to be core to our ministry, we continue to prayerfully evaluate ways we can be better stewards of the resources we have. Examples of this include:

**Educational Partnership**

Who would have thought that our original transmitter building would be transformed into a state-of-the-art classroom catering for kids that were falling through the cracks of the mainstream system! It was exciting to partner with Alta-1 College to see the first intake of students begin at the school in August, with the goal of increasing the number of students and classrooms in 2019. There is great potential for our Kununurra property to be an outstanding venue for the future provision of vocational programs and cultural engagement field trips.

**Supported Accommodation**

We just completed a second season hosting short term seasonal workers from East Timor on behalf of a local farming family looking for a safe and secure environment for their workers. This initiative has helped us to build strong relationships in the local business community.

These opportunities are just two of many that are beginning to emerge—all of which strengthen our ministry presence in the local community, and financially contribute to the sustainability and vitality of Reach Beyond’s activities.

...continued on back page
BEING A DISCIPLE OF JESUS

By Ty Stakes

Sunshine glinted off the Sea of Galilee as waves lapped at the feet of Peter and Andrew, two hard-working, uneducated fishermen. To them, it was just another day, and they were hoping for nothing more than a decent catch. But they were about to get more than they had ever imagined! The disruption that would change everything forever was arriving on the scene: Jesus of Nazareth, the Holy Man everyone was talking about, was walking up the beach.

He approached these two unremarkable fellows and offered a simple invitation, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.” (Matt 4:19). From that moment, everything changed.

Two thousand years later, Jesus invited another unqualified nobody to be His follower—me. It was the start of my journey of becoming a disciple of Jesus. What does it mean to be a disciple? Jesus’ invitation to follow Him makes it clear that a disciple is a follower.

Coming into this new-found faith, I knew nothing and had a lot to learn. I went to a church where they took the Bible very seriously. I learned a lot about Jesus, the Bible, the Church, local ministry, missions, and so on. I applied a lot of what I learned too, and in those early days, my behaviour changed radically. Jesus gave me new priorities, new friends, a different lifestyle, upgraded moral standards—indeed, old things had passed away and everything was made new.

I often wondered about Jesus’ followers 2,000 years ago—how did they accumulate all the knowledge a disciple needs to know? They didn’t have books, couldn’t read them even if they had them. No technology either. The early church had only a few ‘great preachers’ and was mostly made up of regular folks meeting in houses. What did it look like for them to be disciples, to follow Jesus?

A while later I got involved in a project in a developing country where simple, uneducated, indigenous people were making a huge impact in their communities. They were disciples who made disciples, and those disciples then made more disciples, and so forth. Thousands of people were becoming disciples of Jesus, hundreds of churches were being started—it was out of control!

My indigenous friends and the early disciples knew that Jesus is the reason for everything. His invasion into my own life was what changed everything for me!

Our radio planting and shortwave broadcasts, our healthcare and project development teams are reaching far-flung places in the world—reaching the uneducated indigenous people that Jesus loves and is calling to be His disciples.

We are on this journey together to reach those who are yet to follow Jesus. I can’t wait to see where this journey leads!

(Ty worked in our Melbourne studios for several years before becoming director of the Asia Pacific office. Ty’s focus is now on the development of relationships with our indigenous partnerships around the globe, working with them to reach those ‘far-flung places’.)
Just like the Ord River flowing past the township of Kununurra, we have a constant flow of volunteers throughout the year that generously give of their time, skills and energy to support our ministry with the day-to-day operations, development and maintenance of our facility.

Volunteers are the backbone and lifeblood of Reach Beyond, without them, much of the work we do would not be possible.

Allow us to share the story of Hamish and Samantha McKerrow…

“We embarked on a working holiday around Australia in January 2018. We left our home in Geelong, Victoria, with our caravan in tow; looking for new adventures and experiences.

Over seven months we stopped along the Western Australian coast, Sam working as a midwife, and Hamish working as a carpenter or farmer. We met some incredible people during this time, especially a couple named Jenny and Andrew Johnson. They told us about the work done at Reach Beyond in Kununurra. They had volunteered picking bananas and gardening during their travels, and they shared how we could volunteer at Reach Beyond as well.

So with Sam getting a six-week nursing/midwifery contract at the local hospital, Hamish started farm and mechanical work at Reach Beyond. Our appreciation for Kununurra grew rapidly so Sam kept signing contracts at the hospital – from six weeks, to three months, to six months, and now a full year.

When God opened up all the doors so easily we were mad to ignore his calling for us to extend our time here at Reach Beyond. We were looking for adventures and new experiences – and we certainly found them here in Kununurra! Hamish is enjoying the mechanical work, farming and learning about bananas. Sam is learning more than she could have ever imagined doing remote midwifery and is loving it.

We have joined the local Anglican Church and have greatly appreciated the rich biblical teaching, worship and fellowship. God has provided us both with areas to serve in the church and local community. Oh, and the fishing is good!”

Just like Hamish and Samantha, you can make a significant difference and help transform lives through volunteering with Reach Beyond.

With your help, we are able to broadcast the gospel message daily in 30 languages to the Asia Pacific region. We would love for you to partner with us and keep the flow of the gospel reaching the unreached.

If volunteering is of interest to you, please call our office on 1300 653 853 to discuss opportunities to serve.
Continued from Page 1 ...

As we grow our local impact in Kununurra and maintain the quality and reach of our broadcasts into remote areas, there is the need to upgrade our facilities. This includes upgrading our septic system and completing the work on one of our houses that commenced 12 years ago!

There is no question that the Lord has provided us with an amazing shortwave facility that enables us to reach more people with the gospel (in thirty languages!) than we could ever have imagined. The countless stories we receive testify to this.

And now, a little closer to home—in Kununurra—we want to better serve the Kununurra community and those in the surrounding Kimberley region.

As we celebrate the birth of Jesus this Christmas and His presence among us, we have a good reason to look forward with great anticipation for the lives and communities that will be touched. Yes, it is exciting, but if I am honest, it can also be a little daunting!

Will you stand in the gap with us as we trust the Lord for $120,000 by December 31? We have some great resources and wonderful opportunities, and now we trust the Lord to provide for what is needed.

Thank you for standing with us over the years and encouraging us in our efforts to take the Good News into some of the most unreached places. It would be difficult for us to do this without your help.

N.B. I have only scratched the surface in explaining the vision for our Kununurra facility and would be happy to forward you more details. Feel free to call me or email me at dstagg@reachbeyond.org.au.

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BOARD SPOTLIGHT

Our most recent appointment to the Board of Reach Beyond is Ron Kooy.

Ron is an engineer who has spent his career in oil and gas and mining construction. He has the ability to direct multiple complex projects and is a gifted problem solver. He comes to Reach Beyond with a generous heart to serve.

Ron said, “I had been looking for ways to serve God in a more meaningful way in my life beyond my career in the business world. I spent some time praying and reading about different organisations and was especially drawn to Reach Beyond’s ‘Voice and Hands’ approach that combines sending the gospel message out with providing on the ground help to people in need. That Reach Beyond’s facilities are in Australia was also a draw card. I could get involved with the ‘real business’ of reaching and aiding others!”

As I learned more, I was also excited to see how Reach Beyond was partnering with other organisations like Alta-1 to fully utilise its property in Kununurra. The establishment of a school to provide indigenous young people with alternative education for those who struggle to engage with mainstream schooling has been a great outcome of this partnering.

I can’t wait to see what else God has in store for Reach Beyond in Australia and the world.”

We thank God for all our Board members who share the vision God has set for the ministry: to see Jesus known and loved among all people. Please pray for them as they seek God for wisdom, guidance and direction for the future.

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CLOSER TO HOME

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