

## YIRARA COLLEGE *Baptism and Communion Day*

by Basil Schild

**Yirara College Baptism and Communion Day 2002 was celebrated on Sunday 6 November. Sixteen students were baptised in the Yirara College chapel, and 28 celebrated their first communion.**

The students come from across the Northern Territory: from the desert, from the Barkly Tableland, from the Gulf of Carpentaria, from Gurindji country on the edge of the Kimberley near the border with Western Australia, and even from the northern Arnhem Land coast! Families of the students travelled a long way to be there, some from over a thousand kilometres away. Communities included Imanpa, Papunya, Titjikala, Yuelamau, Ntaria, Alice Springs, Ti Tree, Tennant Creek, Borroloola, Robinson River, Doomadgee, Kalkaringi and Galiwinku on Elcho Island.

Ingkarta Simon Dixon from Ikintji, together with Karina Penhall and Ingkarta Basil Schild,

assisted with the celebration of baptism and communion. Karina presented the college with a banner celebrating the sacraments, completed while she was studying at Nungalinga College in Darwin.

The Yirara staff band played beautifully, with many students joining the band on percussion.

Some of the songs were sung in Luritja and Pitjantjatjara, with help from the Mission Block choir. Ali Hayes from Titjikala read the lessons for the day. Nunga Williams from the Ntaria community presented baptism candles, and Chris Altus (Christian Studies teacher at Yirara) helped with communion.

After the celebrations in the chapel, the families of students joined together for dinner on the lawns and enjoyed a gospel concert from Ingkarta Simon Dixon and his band, with Yirara Deputy Principal Greg Miller joining in on bass.

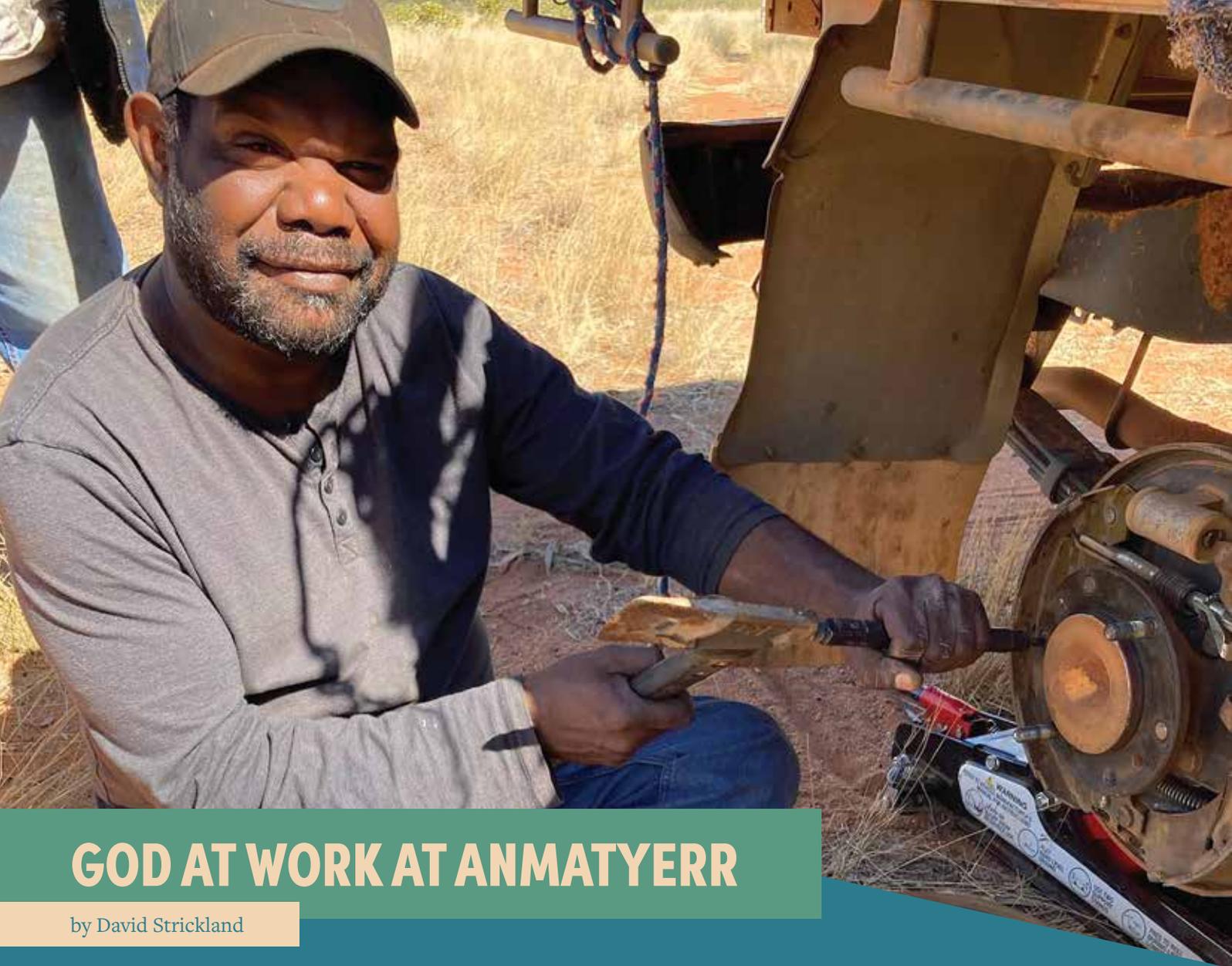
Many thanks to everyone who worked hard to make this day happen.

*Pastor Basil Schild is the chaplain at Yirara College.*

*Photo: A joyful day at Yirara: 16 students were baptised, and 28 celebrated their first communion (with Ingkarta Simon Dixon, far right)*

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## GOD AT WORK AT ANMATYERR

by David Strickland

Since starting work part-time with Finke River Mission last November, it has been challenging to establish any kind of routine. COVID restrictions and family commitments have created interruptions to my ministry in the Anmatyerr area, where there are about a thousand speakers of the language.

Despite this, night-time singalongs have been regularly happening at Ti Tree Six Mile. There has been a lot of activity at Laramba, too. We are thankful for these signs of the Holy Spirit working with the Anmatyerr-speaking people.

Ryan Nelson, a key organiser of the singalongs, is keen to become a pastor. He is learning to read Anmatyerr and is studying the catechism. This year he attended an introductory Bible course at Nungalinga College in Darwin.

He also attended the recent bush course at Harts Range (story on page 4). Two men from Laramba may be interested in doing this training, too. Please pray that they will continue in their enthusiasm to study God's word and to go on in their training to become pastors.

My wife Ming Fang has been organising painting workshops for women to express their faith and use their art to teach the younger generation. We have held workshops at the Bible Place in Alice Springs and also in Ti Tree. Seraphina Presley, who is still living in town, has been involved, too, after recuperating from a kidney transplant. Seraphina is my key translation helper. The topic for the recent workshop was Pentecost, and Ming Fang is planning to produce another booklet featuring the art.

I have been participating in a translation consultant check for Alyawarr Revelation, chapters 15 to 22. In my training to become a consultant, I was an understudy to an international consultant. We worked together at the AuSIL office in Alice Springs, together with three language helpers and a translation advisor.

We pray that our best efforts will result in glory to God among the Alyawarr people, to the northeast of Alice Springs, which is partly a Lutheran area.

*David Strickland is a part-time pastoral support worker.*

*Photo: Bush mechanic Ryan Nelson is keen to become a pastor. He is learning to read Anmatyerr and is studying the catechism.*



## After 12 years of outstanding service, Tim Stollznow steps down as FRM Board chair. **FAREWELL (AND THANK YOU), TIM!**

by Chris Guntner

**About 12 years ago the Finke River Mission Board was experiencing a great deal of change and at the same time was needing to fill the chairperson's role.**

We prayed for a person to lead us through challenging times and to embed renewed stability. The Lord provided us with exactly the person we were looking for: Tim Stollznow.

Tim grew up in Papunya, about 250 kilometres northwest of Alice Springs. The son of FRM missionary Max and nurse Rosemary Stollznow, he spent his childhood playing and learning with Indigenous children from the community.

He has an Honours Degree in Engineering (Adelaide University), a Graduate Diploma in Management (Deakin University), and is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Twelve years ago, Tim had recently returned from the USA, after finalising the sale of a successful IT business he had built up in Adelaide. It was then that God called him to the FRM leadership role, which he embraced with enthusiasm and vigour.

Tim saw the role of FRM chairperson as a wonderful opportunity to combine his deep love of the Indigenous Lutheran communities of Central Australia with the skills he had developed in the intervening years. His commercial background, political connections and 'can do' entrepreneurial spirit have all come in very handy in his confident steering of our complex and multi-faceted operations.

Tim says that his best experiences as FRM chairperson were visiting the 'amazing' Lutheran communities and outback areas. 'The people, their faith, the country – all are quite incredible', he says.

Some of his most special memories are the ordination of Inkarta John West at Kiwirrkurra, an eight-hour drive west of Alice Springs; the ordination of Pastor Paul Traeger at Papunya 'with my dad'; and attending *The Songkeepers* premiere in Melbourne with the Central Australian Aboriginal Women's Choir.

'Working with diligent and talented FRM board members to navigate the challenges and opportunities created a unique camaraderie,

which I enjoyed', he says. FRM is 'all about people and Christian service'.

'Ultimately it is about walking alongside and supporting our Lutheran brothers and sisters in Central Australia. That's why we are here, that's why we've been here for 140 years, and that's why Finke River Mission will be here in the years to come.'

The FRM and Yirara board members, management and staff, the Indigenous Lutheran communities in Central Australia, and the leadership of the LCA NZ have all benefitted greatly from Tim's guidance. He leaves us some very big boots to fill, but we wish him well in his new corporate venture as the managing director of MyVenue.

Thank you, Tim. We pray for your success and are sure your involvement with FRM will continue in some way in the future.

*Chris Guntner is the acting chairperson of the Finke River Mission Board.*

*Photo: Tim Stollznow with Warren Williams, retracing their fathers' footsteps, at Ellery Creek. After heavy rainfall 50 years ago, Pastor Max Stollznow and Gus Williams were stranded together at Ellery Creek for three days.*



# BUSH COURSES

## Atitjere

by Michael Jacobsen

The last of the three pastors bush courses this year was held at the end of September at Harts Range, about 215 kilometres northeast of Alice Springs. It is a spectacular outcrop of quartz- and mineral-rich mountains, well known by fossickers and also for its picnic race carnival held every August.

In the past there has been a lot of mining in this dramatic and beautiful country. As the area has higher rainfall than Alice Springs, it has been well-loved and occupied by Eastern Arrernte people. They call this area 'Rainmaker Country', after the big dreaming story that travels through this range region. The Arrernte name for the Harts Range Community itself is Atitjere (pronounced a-DITCH-air-uh).

The FRM archives indicate that a pastors bush course had already taken place 14 years ago – in April 2008, at Atitjere, at the same location.

For this year's course, Dr Stephen Pietsch from Australian Lutheran College travelled with pastor candidate Jacob Fabich to the Red Centre. Since there have been many funerals in bush communities recently, and the course group made a request at previous courses, our lecturer focused the biblical studies on the subject of grief. We explored texts from Lamentations, Psalm 23, the story of Lazarus (John 11) and the Easter story of the Emmaus brothers (Luke 24). Lively group conversation often ensued, in which

participants contributed their own experiences of lamentation, mourning and consolation.

The training course ended with a communion service in the Catholic church at Atitjere. The people in Harts Range are predominantly Catholic Christians, who have a good understanding with their Lutheran sisters and brothers and let them use their church when needed.

*Michael Jacobsen is FRM Support Worker for the Alyawarr language area.*





# Mt Allan

by Paul Traeger

In July FRM held a bush teaching course at the community of Yuelamu/Mt Allan. It was held under the shade of some trees in a dry creek bed, close to the community. It had been 17 years since we last held a course in this place, so for the local people it was a significant event.

Mt Allan is right on the edge of FRM's area of operations. Most people speak Anmatyerr, but a significant number speak Warlpiri. It has a sizeable non-Lutheran population, mostly non-Trinitarian Pentecostals.

The course teaching was based on the book of Ezekiel. We pretty much covered the entire book! We

had never tackled Ezekiel before, as only bits and pieces of Ezekiel are available in any Central Australian language – but translating on the go from English seemed to work okay. Understanding the background to Ezekiel is indispensable to understanding the book. The main theme that came through in the teaching is that God is watching. He is watching over; he is watching out. He is not distant. And God's people, too, are called to be watchful.

I presented the training materials, since no lecturer from Australian Lutheran College or elsewhere was available. David Strickland did most of the interpreting. The participants seemed to

appreciate the course – including the FRM support workers, none of whom had ever studied Ezekiel in detail before.

The weather was cold, possibly the coldest we have ever had for a course, but a few flies still made an appearance! The cookies did an excellent job, not least in getting up early each morning to get the fire started.

Afterwards, we had a communion service in the community. At this service there were ten baptisms – from infants to people in their eighties.

*Paul Traeger is FRM Support Worker for the Pintupi-Luritja language area.*





# CHRIST IN THE 'TOP END'

by Ben van Gelderen

**Nungalinga College, situated in Darwin, is the premier ecumenical Bible and community development training facility for Indigenous students in Australia.**

A range of courses is offered, including Foundation Studies (English literacy and numeracy courses taught through the major narratives and characters of the Scriptures), Art & Faith, Ministry & Theology, Media and Music, and Bible Translation.

Nungalinga is formally supported by the Anglican, Uniting and Catholic churches of the Northern Territory, but over the past five years there has been significant growth in students attending from Lutheran communities.

In 2022, 15 Lutheran students graduated from various courses. All expressed a desire to continue to grow in their faith and ministry by enrolling in a new course, as it is more than just the classroom learning that is precious. Students highlight the fellowship with brothers and sisters from different languages and communities as a real inspiration, as well as the time of reflection and peace,

away from some of the pressures of community life.

From the college's perspective, it has been a real blessing to expand our appreciation of the rich history of the Finke River Mission and to include more prayers, songs and Bible readings in the First Languages of Pitjantjatjara, Pintupi-Luritja and Western Arrernte. Pastor Rodney Malbunka and translator Carolyn Windy have also been involved in our recent Languages workshops, making recordings for future generations of mini-sermons in Language on the Gospel of Mark, Genesis 1-15 and Acts 1-10.

Karina Napangardi Penhall has been coming to Nungalinga since 2016 and completed her Certificate IV in Christian

Ministry & Theology in 2021. This year she graduated from the Art and Faith course. This is what she had to say about her experiences at Nungalinga:

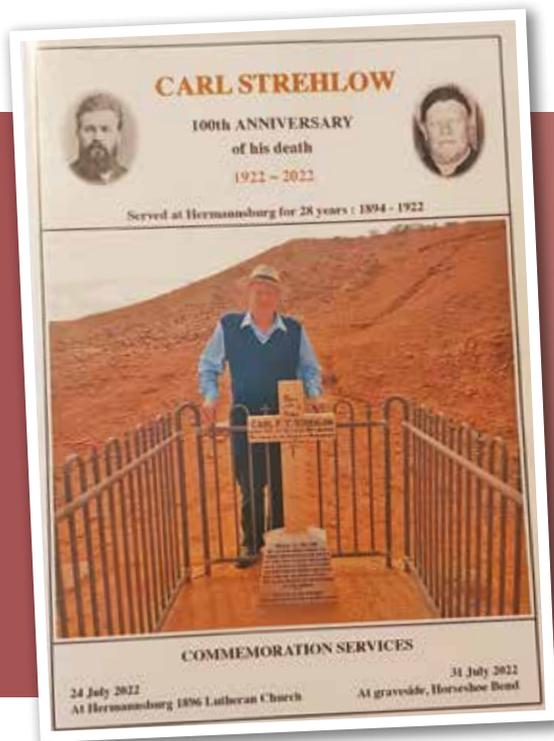
'God telling me to keep coming back ... I did Certificate I, Certificate III, Certificate IV and now Art! Nungalinga made my faith go stronger ... learning a lot of things at Nungalinga, making friends with people. I always trust God to bring me here.'

It has been hard for me, far away from home, but the Lord is with me. Nungalinga is a special place, different community, different languages, to make friends with – and it's really good.

We are one big, happy family in the college – like the song in chapel, gathering together. I really love this, God bringing me here, learning new things, reading in chapel, that makes me real strong.'

*Ben van Gelderen is Principal of Nungalinga College.*

*Above: Karina Penhall with her graduation certificate from her most recent course at Nungalinga College in Darwin. 'I always trust God to bring me here', she says.*



## CARL STREHLOW: 100<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF HIS DEATH 1922-2022

Double DVD set or MP4 file (on 64GB USB) of the two commemorative worship services: *Hermannsburg 24 July, and Horseshoe Bend 31 July*

### TO ORDER, CONTACT:

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0428 363 373 | brian.mibus@bigpond.com

**Pastor Neville Doecke (Alice Springs NT)**

0498 583 808 | doecke.nh@gmail.com



# ‘GOD HAS ALWAYS LOOKED AFTER US’

by Marcus Wheeler

**I was born out in the bush on 16 October 1947, so now I am 75 years old. When I was young I never thought I would become a pastor. I was a stockman, riding horses, doing cattle work.**

I learnt to be a builder, too. I helped build houses at Ntaria and churches in some other communities.

I helped blast the sandstone rocks from the hillside quarry across the Finke; there’s a picture of me when I was 19. They used the rocks to build this new church here.

I also drove the mission truck to take stores from Alice Springs to Areyonga and Ntaria along rough, two-furrowed tracks. I would often drink too much. Then I

married Betty [Albert Namatjira’s granddaughter]. We were married in the old church by Pastor Doug Radke. Betty says she always prayed for me to stay away from drink, to keep safe and follow God’s ways.

I went to lots of bush courses to learn about the Bible and God. I was 60 years old already and they said I should be a pastor. So I did. On 25 November 2007 President Mike Semmler ordained me.

My happiest times as a pastor are when I teach and read the Bible. The best time was when my grandson Jeffery was ordained as a pastor at Mt Liebig by Bishop John Henderson. I was very proud.

The saddest times are when we have had to bury younger family members. That’s hard.

Betty always comes with me wherever I go to support me. And God has always looked after us both, keeping us safe, healthy and together as partners.

***Marcus Wheeler is a pastor at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Ntaria (Hermannsburg) NT.***

*In a worship service at Ntaria (Hermannsburg) on 27 November 2022, the 15-year service of Pastor Marcus was acknowledged. A certificate was presented to him, and his favourite hymn, ‘God be with you till we meet again’, was sung.*



## Reformation Day CELEBRATIONS AT NTARIA

*At Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Ntaria (Hermannsburg), Pastor Rodney Malbunka preaches at the confirmation service for 13 young men on Reformation Day, 30 October 2022. To make the very special day, they all promised to wear white shirts, black trousers – and even black ties!*

# FOR YOUR PRAYERS

## Pray for:

- talented young Indigenous adults in the Alyawarr area to be encouraged to persist with the training they have begun to become pastors or evangelists
- long-serving Areyonga church worker and Servant of Christ Award recipient Daphne Puntjina, as she ages and becomes frailer
- pastoral candidate Abraham Poulson as he prepares to be considered for ordination in 2023
- Michael, the husband of Titjikala church worker Janie Campbell. Michael needs a liver transplant soon
- Aboriginal General Synod delegates – particularly those who will experience an in-person convention of synod for the first time in February 2023
- the Lord of the harvest to send labourers into his vineyard so that the work can continue, despite more FRM positions becoming vacant in 2023
- people with the appropriate gifts to be willing to serve as a town camps worker, a women's ministry worker and a hospital chaplain
- workers to come to Central Australia to be trained to continue FRM's service with Aboriginal Lutheran leaders and congregations
- wives of pastoral support workers, who are often home alone awaiting the safe return of their husbands from remote bush communities
- parents living in Alice Springs, as they endeavour to educate, supervise and model positive behaviour to their children.

## TWO CHURCHES OPENED IN ONE DAY

by Michael Jacobsen

**The small outstation Irrultja is on Utopia freehold country. Its sister community Atnwengerrp, just a few kilometres northwest, is part of the former stock route on Sandover River.**

Irrultja and Atnwengerrp are predominantly Lutheran homelands. Pastor Frank Turner lives with his family at the main community of Ampilatwatja, 354 kilometres northeast of Alice Springs. From there he ministers to his people.

New church buildings for both communities were dedicated on 22 October 2022. They were built with funds from the district government. Previously the family groups held their services and singalongs in bush churches constructed with shrub and tree branches.

The people are happy that they can hold funerals and baptisms at the new churches.

*Michael Jacobsen is FRM Support Worker for the Alyawarr language area.*

*Photo: The new Lutheran church building at Irrultja*

## WE NEED YOUR HELP

NEWS FROM FINKE RIVER MISSION OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA SUMMER 2022-23

### Our Indigenous leaders in Central Australia desire the skills, resources, support and opportunities to serve their growing congregations.

They are asking for more Christian teaching and training, resources in their own language, equipment to run singalongs, and personal support than we have the capacity to give. We need your help!

#### Tax-deductible donations of \$2 or above can be made as follows:

Online: [finkerivermission.lca.org.au](http://finkerivermission.lca.org.au)

Mail Cheque    Credit Card details:  Visa     Mastercard

Card number \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ CCV \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Name on card \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Send your donations to: FRM, PO Box 2129 Alice Springs NT 0871. For regular donations please phone FRM on 08 8952 4666 (Alice Springs) or send an email to [admin@finkerivermission.org.au](mailto:admin@finkerivermission.org.au)

All information is kept strictly confidential in accordance with the LCA Privacy Policy and is used only to inform you of the work of Finke River Mission.

**PLEASE NOTE:**  
Your donation cannot be processed without these numbers



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