



Finke River Mission  
Est 1877



# CHRIST IN THE CENTRE

WARNING: This publication may contain photographs of Indigenous people who are deceased.

NEWS FROM FINKE RIVER MISSION OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA

SUMMER 2015

## GO WEST, YOUNG MAN ORDINATION IN THE GIBSON DESERT

**On Sunday, 15 November, at Kiwirrkura, the most remote worshipping community of the Lutheran Church in Australia, 33-year-old John West was ordained by LCA Bishop John Henderson. He is the youngest Aboriginal man ever to be ordained as an LCA pastor.**

Kiwirrkura lies in Western Australia, 700km west of Alice Springs, it's closest major centre. In 1984, one of the last groups of Indigenous people came in from the desert when Kiwirrkura was only recently established as a community. All nine of them are Pastor John West's relatives; several attended his ordination service.

Under intense blue sky and surrounded by brilliant red sand dunes, over 200 people (the whole community plus a few 'locals' from Kintore and Alice Springs) gathered under gum trees and in 4WDs for the two-hour ordination service. We were fortunate that there was a 'cool change' that day, so the temperature barely nudged 40 degrees!

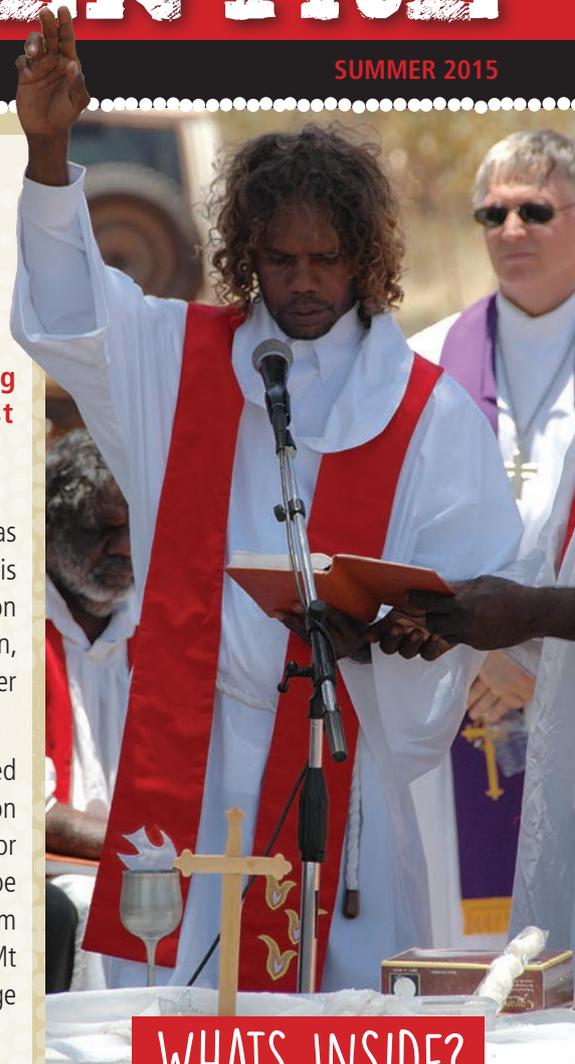
Finke River Mission support worker, Pastor Paul Traeger, travelled 400km west from Papunya to carefully translate each part of the bishop's sermon, based on Mark 13:1-8, into the local Pintupi-Luritja language. Classic hymns sung in this language, including *The Church's One Foundation* and *Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah*, plus the ordinand's selection *God is Always Near*, added to the spirit of the occasion.

Ingkaarta (pastor) John West, who was born at nearby Kintore, 180 km away, is married to Loretta and they have a son Titus. He is a capable footballer, musician, accomplished hunter and assistant teacher at the local school.

Other local ingkaartas who organised and supported the weekend celebration included local pastor and John's mentor Jimmy Brown, Lindsay Corby and Joe Young from Kintore, Graham Poulson from Papunya, Roderick Kantamara from Mt Liebig, and Simon Dixon from Yirara College who also led the Saturday night concert.

Bishop Henderson said, 'John West is a remarkable young man who will be a great blessing to his community. The weekend strengthened my appreciation of the value of our indigenous ministries. I pray that their deep experience of Christ, culture and resilience in the face of adversity serves to strengthen our faith across all of our church.'

Tim Stollznov and Paul Traeger.



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## NEW PASTORAL SUPPORT WORKER AT HERMANNSBURG

**On Sunday 15th November, Neville Doecke was installed as Pastoral Support Worker for the Western Arrarnta communities of Central Australia. Pastor Rob Borgas led the rite of commissioning at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Hermannsburg, assisted ably by local pastors Marcus Wheeler, Rodney Malbunka and Darryl Mattner.**

After 7 years as Yirara College chaplain, Neville joins a team of people who lead the ministry of word and sacrament among Arrarnta people. In his message, Pastor Borgas highlighted Neville's 'support' role for pastors and families, and just being an 'encourager' for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people at Hermannsburg and other areas. The Combined Central Australian Women's Choir enriched the service with harmonious singing of favourite hymns; a

legacy of the influence of German missionaries since 1877 when the mission was first established.

Since arriving at Hermannsburg on 10th November, 'Ingkaarta' Neville (as he was known at Yirara), and his wife Heather have been richly blessed by the sincere friendship of the local people:

"What a blessing after a hot, dusty and windy day to sit in the cool of the evening, surrounded by the twinkle of Christmas lights, reading and discussing the Scriptures with an Aboriginal pastor, while Heather talks and laughs with the women nearby, listening to their stories and attempting to learn some of the Arrarnta language."

God's Holy Spirit continues to work mightily in the hearts and lives of his people everywhere.





Image Above: Rodney Malbunka, Lorraine Donald and Darwin Lutheran Pastor Geoff Kuchel.

Top Right: Pastor Rodney Malbunka from Hermannsburg receiving his certificate from The Hon Peter Styles MLA, Minister for Business, Employment and Training.

## CHRISTIAN TRAINING FOR ABORIGINAL LUTHERANS

**Finke River Mission offers 3 'bush' courses per year supported by Australian Lutheran College to provide theological training for pastors and potential pastors. FRM also provides at least one 'bush' course per year for Indigenous women.**

No other church in Australia has provided regular courses in Indigenous language for their leaders over such a long period of time. Lutherans should be proud of our long history of bringing the Gospel to all in their own language.

In recent years FRM has also responded to the increased need to provide pathways for church leaders who desire accredited vocational skills in English. Since 2014 FRM has been sending men and women to Nungalinga, an Indigenous adult training college in Darwin for Anglican, Roman Catholic, Uniting and Lutheran students.

This year, 7 Lutherans from central Australia graduated with a Certificate 1 in Education and Skills Development. One of them was Pastor Rodney Malbunka from Hermannsburg, who appreciated gaining literacy and numeracy skills to help his work as a baker at the Hermannsburg Store. While most of Rodney's education expenses were provided by the government, FRM paid his store wages while he was studying in Darwin.

Rodney said: "I enjoyed going to Nungalinga because I have learnt many new things in English. But I was shocked to discover that many students up there don't know how to sing in their own language, only the Lutherans, and the lecturers were amazed that we could do it so well."



Lorraine Donald from Areyonga receiving her certificate.

# COMPLETING THE CIRCLE: BOOMERANG TOUR 2015



**It has taken approximately 120 years to complete the circle, but that is a small span within the history of the people of this continent.** The Central Australian Aboriginal Women's Choir returned in late June from its most ambitious and exciting venture yet. 33 singers (including 2 men) and a 13-member support crew left Melbourne on 26 May for their **Boomerang Tour** of Germany. Seven remote communities and three generations of singers were represented within the group.

Reversing the path taken by the first Lutheran missionaries to Central Australia, the choir staged 15 performances across 4 states of Germany in less than 4 weeks. They sung at

famous 19th century towns of Neuendettelsau and Hermannsburg, where the first missionaries were trained long ago. They appeared at major cities such as Wiesbaden and Stuttgart for the bi-annual Kirchentag Festival that drew an attendance of more than 120,000 people.

As a gesture of thankfulness and a tribute to the sacrifice and commitment made by the early missionaries, Areyonga parish worker, Daphne Puntjina presented a unique painting to the bishop of 20 million Protestants in Germany. Donated by local Lutheran artist and politician, Alison Anderson MLA, the stunning Aboriginal artwork depicts a local fire-dreaming story.





When he saw the painting, Bishop Bedford - Strohm exclaimed:

"I CANNOT BELIEVE THAT YOU ARE GIVING THIS (PAINTING) AS A GIFT TO US. IT TOUCHES ME VERY MUCH AND I THANK YOU FROM ALL MY HEART..."

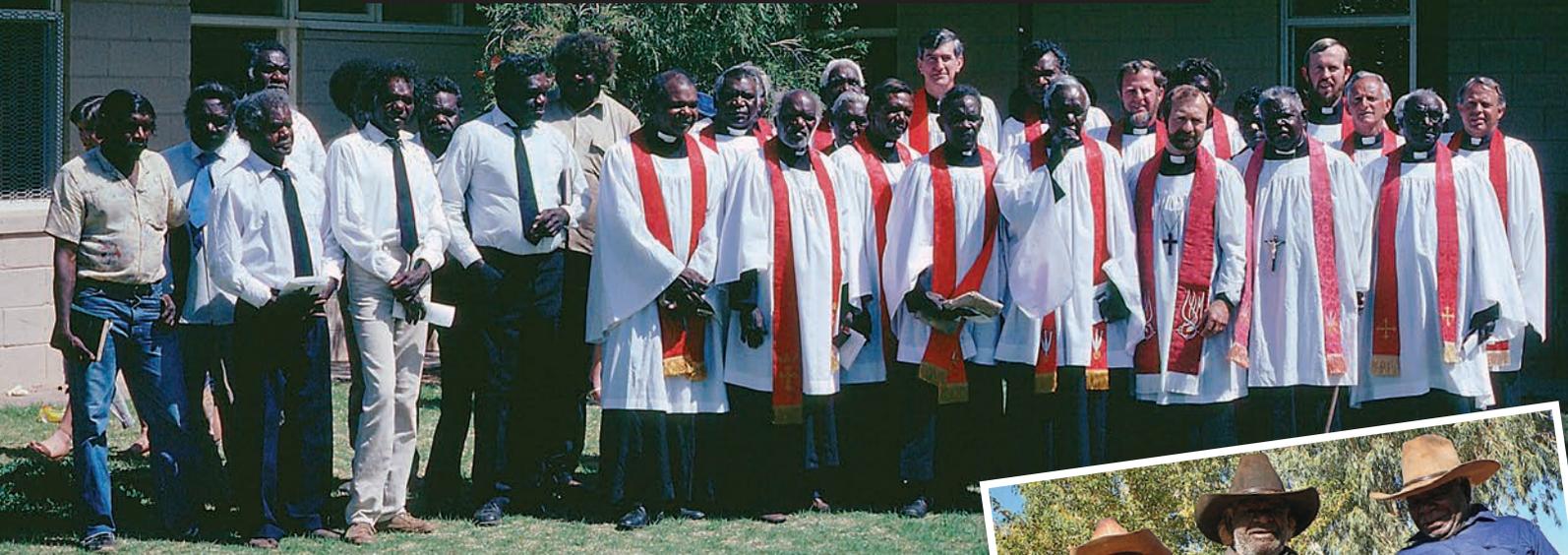
...A long time ago, missionaries from Germany came to your country and brought the gospel to you...,but today you are preaching the gospel to us through your songs."

The bishop's encounter with the choir left him deeply touched with a very personal experience of the global church of Jesus Christ, its beauty and power, and the hope that it brings.

Putting together such an ambitious tour has involved a significant amount of money and fundraising. Most of the group's needs within Germany were graciously met by our Lutheran partners at Neuendettelsau, Hermannsburg and Wiesbaden. Significant support was also received from the Centrecorp Foundation, Soweto Gospel Choir, and from individuals and congregations like you who have so generously supported the choir. Thank you!

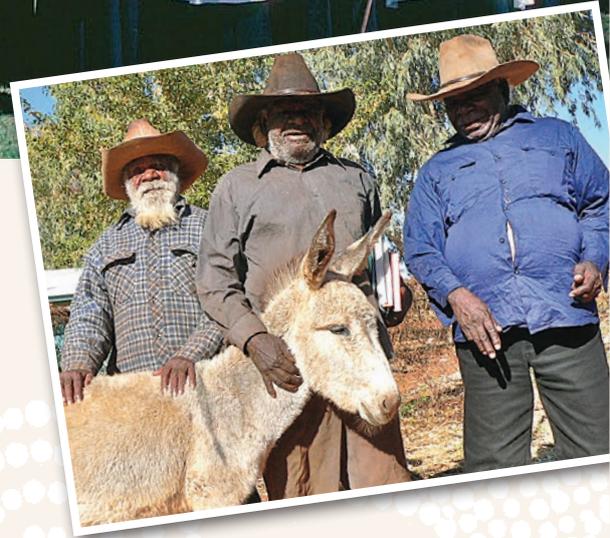


# IN MEMORY OF EVANGELIST TJUKI PUMPJACK (1924–2015)



## Lutheran evangelist for more than 40 years, Tjuki Pumpjack, died at Imanpa on the 7th of September, 2015

Born in 1924, Tjuki was a great leader and helper for his people. Unfortunately he was never ordained because he found it difficult to read and write in English or his own language (Pitjantjatjara). However, like the famous Arrarnta evangelist, Moses Tjalkaborta, Tjuki knew many bible stories, songs and prayers 'off by heart', enabling him to lead or assist other pastors with regular Sunday worship and devotions at Imanpa and Angas Downs for many years.



Evangelists Tjuki Pumpjack, Matthew Allan and Pastor Roy Yaltjanki from Docker River.

**Top Image:** Tjuki as an evangelist (front row, 2nd from left) at the ordination of Theo Windy and Eli Rubuntja in 1983.

**Image Below:** Tjuki with his wife Rosie at their house at Imanpa.



PLEASE PRAY FOR HIS WIFE ROSIE, AND THEIR FAMILY AS THEY MOURN HIS DEATH, AND THE PEOPLE OF IMANPA THAT GOD WILL RAISE UP ANOTHER PERSON TO LEAD THEIR WORSHIP.



## YIRARA CONFIRMATION 2015

The annual Yirara confirmation service is an important occasion in the worship life of the college. On Sunday 8th November, 10 young people publicly confessed their Christian faith and recalled the promises God first made to them at their baptism before receiving their first communion in the Yirara College Chapel.

So, it was most appropriate that just before the rite of confirmation one of the confirmees, Bethany Wayne, was baptised.

Prior to this special day, the students attended a series of lessons that were led by local Lutheran pastors (Rob Borgas, Darryl Mattner, Ken Schultz, Paul Traeger and Mark Thiel), supported by Yirara chaplain Pastor Simon Dixon and deputy principal, Elizabeth Kloeden.

The students confirmed were: Deanna Campbell, Tristan Lechleitner, Brittany Richards, Lofty Armstrong, Janet Ebatarinja, Aaron Palmer, Shannon Morton, Bethany Wayne, Tyron Sena and Lanita Tilmouth. Afterwards they were presented with a Bible and a

certificate that included the verse each student had chosen for their confirmation.

All who gathered for this important weekend enjoyed much fellowship, including an evening of gospel singing on Saturday night, and community lunch after the confirmation service.

Staff, students and visitors to Yirara were encouraged to set a good example for these young people, pray for them and encourage them to live as God's children. All praise and thanks to a loving God!

Elizabeth A. Kloeden  
Deputy Principal





## MEET MARTY AND BETTY!

Betty grew up on a farm at South Kilkerran on SA's Yorke Peninsula. As a child she mixed with Aboriginal shearers and their kids from Point Pearce Aboriginal Community. Betty has a deep love and respect for Aboriginal people.

Being lifelong church musicians, Marty and Betty fully appreciate the power of music and how hymnody is the theology of the church; for this reason alone they wanted to support the Boomerang Tour of Germany.

Marty and Betty are retired Mt Barker famers, able to support Finke River Mission in many ways including the Shed Men work trips to Hermannsburg. They both find financing the mission of the church as "adventurous". Marty says: "You never know where your money goes and who it helps, but we know that ultimately it is for the Lord's work".

Marty has total renal failure and is on dialysis 3 times a week. He is also blind. Despite these difficulties he remains positive and wishes to encourage all Aboriginal people suffering similar conditions in central Australia by saying, "Stay close to God and close to your family".

The staff and friends of Finke River Mission wish to thank Marty and Betty for their tremendous support. Without their support, and the support of many others, the FRM could not function.

I have known Marty and Betty for most of my life and they have been mentors all of that time. I appreciate their support and prayers. I now enjoy living next door to them again.

Pastor David Kuss, Mt Barker  
(ex FRM Arrarnta Support Worker)

We need  
your help

NEWS FROM **FINKE RIVER MISSION** OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA

SUMMER 2015

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: [www.lca.org.au/finke-river-mission](http://www.lca.org.au/finke-river-mission)

Mail Cheque    Credit Card details     Visa     Mastercard

Card Number \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ CCV \_\_\_\_

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

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

You really can make a difference

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 e-mail to [frmoffice@bigpond.com](mailto:frmoffice@bigpond.com)

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.



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