

# Abundance

THE MAGAZINE OF ANGLICAN OVERSEAS AID | SUMMER 2022



**Confidence in changing times**

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# Confidence in changing times

**The Reverend Dr Bob Mitchell AM**  
CEO, Anglican Overseas Aid

**“So we can say with confidence,  
The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid.”**  
Hebrews 13:6, NRSV

The last two years have been filled with uncertainty as the world has responded to the COVID-19 pandemic. For many, our movements have been restricted, we have been separated from family and friends, and we have been hindered in our ability to plan.

Unfortunately, these challenges are often part of everyday life for many of the communities we partner with, and COVID-19 has only increased the struggles of daily life.

In this issue of *Abundance*, we look at some of the key issues confronting our partners and celebrate their ministry of love and service in changing times.

On page 4, we catch a glimpse into the life of Sister Daisy serving through the Anglican Church of Melanesia in its outreach to women who have experienced violence. Her strong faith and confidence in Christ are inspiring.

The issue of gender equality and violence against women continues to be a scourge on the ability of women across the world to live a life of abundance, and on page 8 we explore why AOA has a focus on this challenge.

Although many rich countries are emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic through access to vaccinations, this is sadly not the case for much of the world. On page 11 we briefly explore the issue of vaccine inequality and highlight the vaccination differences that exist between the countries we work in and Australia.

Climate change continues to be a significant challenge for the world, and we look at the work of the Anglican Communion in the leadup to the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) which occurred in November last year. With the Pacific region already experiencing significant impacts, we explore what climate stewardship and justice looks like.

The basis of who we are and what we do is the way of Christ. Our Bible study in this issue looks at Jesus as our light in changing times and can be found on page 14.

The Anglican Church is central to the work of AOA, so it's wonderful to share stories from our faithful supporters and church partners. In this edition, we speak to Ted and Brenda Mouritz, who have been supporting AOA for 30 years. Rev'd Chris Lancaster, of the Anglican Parish of Altona/Laverton, recently spoke to us about why they too, have supported AOA for over 30 years. We are humbled by their. These stories can be found on pages 16 and 17.

We also share brief updates on Mozambique and Ethiopia in this edition of *Abundance*.

Finally, as this is my final *Abundance* before I retire, I would like to record that it has been an extraordinary privilege to lead AOA for nearly 10 years. It is a wonderful organisation, with a remarkable team, that does amazing work. Its Christian heartbeat underpins it all. I pray that AOA will continue to be blessed as it has been a blessing to so many others.

*Thanks for a wonderful journey!*



All photos in this newsletter are supplied by AOA unless otherwise stated.  
Front cover image: A woman in Vanuatu participates in a community consultation for women and children's safety.

## Launch of the David Penman Fund

The David Penman Fund honours the visionary behind AOA, Archbishop David Penman, and will help AOA underwrite its important work into the future.

Archbishop Penman's vision was to leverage Anglican grassroots networks across the world to make a real difference to people impacted by disasters, emergencies, and extreme poverty. That vision remains as vital and relevant as ever.

Bequests enable supporters to leave a life-changing legacy that continues their commitment to a world where all people can live life to the fullest.

A Bequests brochure can be obtained by contacting the AOA office or downloaded from the AOA website.



## Annual Report 2021

In November, we published our Annual Report for the 2020/21 financial year. In addition to updates from AOA's President, Board Chair and CEO, the Annual Report contains updates on many of AOA's projects. The report also highlights the impact your support is having, together with the financial statements for the year. AOA is committed to transparency and we encourage all supporters to read the report, which can be found on the AOA website.

## Alison Preston

After 20 years with AOA, Alison Preston has left the organisation to spend more time with her family.

She came to AOA, then called Anglicord, after training as a journalist and working for several years in conflict-affected countries such as Sudan and Rwanda as well as in the Middle East.

Alison's formative years, growing up in a welcoming country church, gave her the ability to recognise the life-changing impact for good a small group of committed people can have in their own local community. She says this is the essence of what she sees AOA doing through a global network.

In her time with AOA, she has hosted a choir of young people from Rwanda



and been inspired by the response of Australians to the 2004 Asian tsunami. She has also seen firsthand the fruits of AOA's long-term partnerships, particularly in Gaza and Kenya.

We miss your passion and dedication Alison and wish you all the very best in the next chapter of your life.



# Christian Care Centre

**Sister Daisy serves through the Anglican Church of Melanesia, much of it working with women who have endured violence. She shared with us how the sisters shine light into the lives of women in the Solomon Islands.**

In the mornings and evenings, we pray with the women and girls. In the morning we come to talk with the women and welcome new mothers, new girls that have come. We tell them the rules of the place and how living is arranged.

Inside our daily routines, there's always a sister who looks after the gate because calls come in all the time. The sister greets them at the gate and leads them to the welcome station. She goes through things and shows them the places they need to know and then takes her to the house and room she'll be staying in, where she is given whatever needs to be provided for her. At night, we must stay alert for the gate. Some of the victims who have run away just walk in by themselves while others have transport from the police who bring them here.

***“Just like a doctor prescribing medicine, we sit and listen.”***

We have four groups: St. Michael, St. Mary, St. Clare and St. Joseph. Sisters live in each house to easily be with them when they have hard times and need someone to help them. Two sisters look after a group, and we take turns cooking. Clients will write their names on a board and see who is responsible for looking after them in a group.

When we stay with the women, we continue to talk with them. We have time to talk with one, then another one. We take turns talking to them. We don't just leave them alone altogether. Every day in their lives, we monitor them through our conversations with them. To help them, how they heal, how they understand their stay here.

Some mothers who have experienced issues in their homes come here and we try to maintain their lives. When they are unable to rest at night they come and wake us up. We wake to listen to their stories, why they cannot rest. We stay awake with them and listen to everything they have to say until they are satisfied with their sharing and can rest. Just like a doctor prescribing medicine, we sit and listen.

Sometimes this place will be filled with children that it looks like a family home. At times we have twenty children here and we look after them because their mothers are here.

The women can participate in Bible studies, sewing, arts and craft classes and learn about financial literacy. Some of the sisters introduced these things. They teach the clients and us too and sometimes officers in the church and volunteers come here to help with the programs too.

These trainings are to help them maintain themselves so that when they go home, they have skills and knowledge on things they did not know before, because in rural communities they only teach them to make gardens. When they come here, they have the time to do these things and dedicate themselves to learning. Some have said “When we come here our minds have been opened by the things we learn here, these are things we have not heard when we were at home.” Some have been victims all their lives, and their husbands have not allowed them a space to learn other things to dedicate themselves to or help themselves. It is only when they come here that they learn.

***“Some have been victims all their lives, and their husbands have not allowed them a space to learn”***

I have been here for a long time and in my experience, most of the women that keep coming, go back and live well with their families. Sometimes they see me and say, ‘Thank you sister, our family lives are good now’, some say ‘Sister, I left my husband, and I am so happy now. I don't live with him, I live on my own and provide for my children by myself, because when we lived with him, he was always violent.’

I have seen women leave here and live good lives, some now hold very important jobs in government ministries because these mothers are well-educated. It was from these things, this violence, that they were not able to reach their potential. When they come here, they leave and join some groups and tell them “We came out of CCC and it helped us, we have benefited from what

we learned and carry those lessons with us.”

When women leave the centre and return to their homes, we do follow ups on their progress. We call them to check how they are, if they are alright or not. Sometimes they just want to talk about their lives, and we listen. They ask us for advice, and we give it to them, because when we do, it gives them strength to continue with their lives. We do not completely disconnect from the women that come here. When they meet us in town, they tell us “Sister, I am well now,” I tell them “Thank God, He is the one who made us”

I would like to add, what I see in our work here, it is 24/7. Everyday cases come in and we follow up, what social welfare wants, what does Family Support Centre need, hospitals, and police – we sit with our clients at all these places every day. We enjoy this work; we stay positive with them and take them wherever they need to go.

I have been serving in the church over 26 years now, but I am happy. I see these women and I help. I enjoy working for the church like this. They come, we share with them, and we will all have joy.



Above: Sr Daisy stands ready at the gate to welcome a woman in need. Below: Prayer and Bible study are central to the life of Sr Daisy. Credit: Neil Nuia





# The Rev'd Dr Bob Mitchell AM retires

In February, our CEO, Revd. Dr Bob Mitchell, will be retiring from his role, leaving a remarkably strong legacy.

Bob began his professional life as a lawyer, being a partner at PwC for 14 years. He then moved to World Vision Australia before feeling a call to specific ministry around Scripture's themes of God's concern for the poor. This led to him becoming a deacon in the Uniting Church and then an Anglican minister.

His entry into international development began with a trip to Timor Leste in 2002. "This seared my conscience in terms of the injustice, oppression and poverty there," he said. "I was studying theology at the time and was beginning to ask questions about my future ministry involvement. Faith-based international development opened up as a path forward in the years that followed."

And so began Bob's journey to AOA. The organisation seemed to be an ideal context to bring personal theological convictions and a greater sense of ministry purpose together for him. The Board at that time wanted to strengthen connections between AOA and supporter churches. He exclaimed, "I jumped at the chance to affirm the role of AOA as a church-based ministry that gives practical expression to the Gospel!"

His greatest motivation in working with AOA is seeing our work as inspired by the idea of the coming kingdom of God. He points out that "what AOA tries to achieve is a greater sense of equity, opportunity, health, and dignity within communities"

Some of Bob's fondest memories at AOA include working with gifted and passionate colleagues, meeting partners and communities during field visits, and seeing firsthand the life-changing impact of the work we do.

Many significant changes have occurred at AOA during Bob's time. Building strong connections with supporter churches, and a deeper understanding about what faith-based organisations can contribute to the task of development are two of his achievements. He is also proud that we have maintained high-quality systems which have enabled AOA to maintain full accreditation with the Australian Government.

Good things often come to an end. Bob Mitchell's time as CEO of AOA has been very good indeed. All the very best Bob! Thank you for your service, your passion, your warmth and the legacy you will leave. You will be missed.



# Leadership and legacy

## AOA President

Anglican Overseas Aid is a great organisation, close to both the communities it works with and its supporter base.

Bob Mitchell has been a great leader of Anglican Overseas Aid, and his achievements deserve recognition as he concludes his role. Bob has been a purposeful leader of AOA; he has always taken questions and challenges back to the central purpose of AOA's work.

His doctoral research and 2017 book, 'Faith-based Development', gave intellectual rigour to those commitments of the heart that Bob so clearly displays for those who know and respect him.

In addition to the strength of the work of AOA and his contribution to the work of the wider community development sector, he has led the establishment of the David Penman Fund to both endow the future work of AOA and to draw that future closer to the founding vision of Archbishop David Penman.

Bob leaves a wonderful legacy, and we wish him God's richest blessings as he embarks on the next journey in his life.

Grace and peace,

## The Most Revd. Dr Philip Freier

*Archbishop of Melbourne and President of Anglican Overseas Aid*

## AOA Board Chair

Bob Mitchell has shown outstanding leadership of AOA for nearly 10 years. This has been shown in establishing and improving our systems, processes and policies, which have led to a high level of professionalism throughout the organisation and in our engagement with stakeholders. Bob has ensured excellence in organisational governance and ensured financial stability in the organisation.

A deep thinker on faith and development, Bob has represented AOA as a thought leader in this area, particularly in assisting Christian leaders to form a theological response to the issues of justice and poverty in our world.

It is not just his intellectual acuity that sets Bob apart. He demonstrates a deep empathy for marginalised people. I saw this up close on a trip to Kenya where we met women with HIV. Upon leaving the meeting, Bob looked at me with tears in his eyes and said, "Now we know why we do what we do." Throughout my travels with Bob, I constantly saw that heart.

There are so many areas in which Bob has shown impressive leadership of AOA. From key leadership roles, to recruiting and empowering an excellent team of professionals within AOA, to effectively maturing our ongoing professionalism and growth, Bob's legacy is profound. Recently he also successfully steered the organisation to full DFAT re-accreditation.

Bob will be sorely missed. We thank God for his legacy, for his faith and for all that he has brought to Anglican Overseas Aid.

## Mr Glenn Scott

*Board Chair of Anglican Overseas Aid*



# Abundant life for all?

**Why AOA has a program focus on gender equality and violence against women.**

Gender equality can be defined as “the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys” and a fundamental human right. In Genesis we read that both man and woman were made in the image of God and, throughout his life, Christ illustrates the importance of protecting and empowering women who had been marginalised or abused within the prevailing patriarchal culture.

Today, violence against women is one of the most common forms of human rights abuses across the world, with one in three women globally experiencing violence. Violence against women causes both significant short- and long-term physical, psychological and economic impact on women and girls. Its sinister and negative consequences touch families, communities and nations, impairing their ability to lead lives of abundance.

Achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls is Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) number 5. The Goal’s targets include the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls.

Gender equality as a key program focus was identified through a collaborative process with partners and stakeholders, aligning and complementing national and global development agendas including the strategic goals of the countries in which AOA works. Critically the Oceania region (excluding Australia and New Zealand)

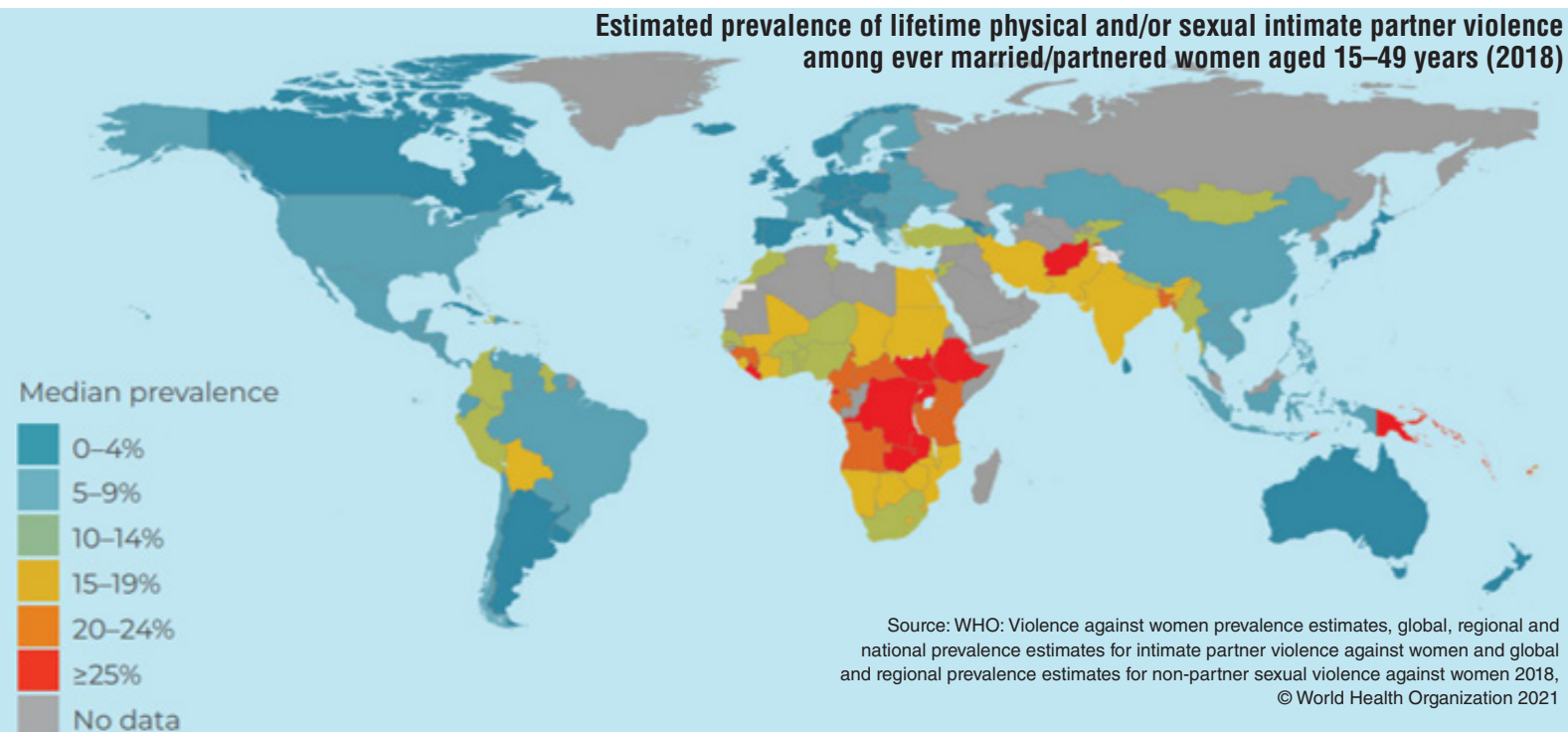
has the highest lifetime rate of women experiencing physical violence or sexual harm from a partner in the world. The Solomon Islands (5th) and Vanuatu (6th) both rank in the top 10 countries in the world for rates of violence against women with 50% and 47% respectively, of women estimated to have experienced violence. Australia has an estimated rate of violence of 23%.

AOA’s international programs pursue gender equality by working with partners to achieve fair and just outcomes for all people.

The elimination of all forms of family violence, including sexual and gender-based violence, requires transformational change of cultural and social norms that condone and support gender inequality and violence against women and children. Harmful narratives, including from religious institutions, influence societal norms and beliefs through to community and household level. This can translate into severe forms of family violence.

AOA’s transformative approach explores key strategic gender issues and challenges and works to identify opportunities that promote more equal gender roles and relations. The focus is on social relations and structural issues, such as social positions, laws and norms affecting gender equality, and power dynamics between groups.

**Estimated prevalence of lifetime physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence among ever married/partnered women aged 15–49 years (2018)**







Above: Gender Equality Theology Training, Anglican Church of Melanesia (ACOM), Solomon Islands. Credit: ACOM

AOA works with partners to implement projects that work at the institutional and community level, working with partners and their church leaders. Their aim is to transform harmful beliefs and practices and promote gender equality through a theological framework to create systemic change.

The communities in which we work all hold a strong faith identity. AOA's partners work to deliver gender education initiatives that are faith-sensitive and delivered through a faith lens, for transformational, lasting change.

Religious leaders themselves need to be sensitively supported in their exploration of the Scriptures, identifying problematic interpretations and teachings. Countering harmful beliefs with credible and positive biblical interpretations of Scripture reaffirms human equity for all. In deeply spiritual Christian-majority communities, this is a prerequisite to advancing gender equality.

By working with faith leaders and faith communities, we are collectively aiming to provide alternative narratives and perceptions of the roles and responsibilities of men and women, creating communities where all can flourish.

There have been great gains made towards gender equality over the past few decades, however the impact of the global pandemic, like all crises, is not gender neutral. Women and girls are impacted economically and socially

to a greater degree and women lost livelihoods at a faster rate than their male counterparts. The shift in focus and funding in response to the pandemic impacted access to women's healthcare, while gender-based violence reports increased globally due to confinement orders and social mobility restrictions. As such, many gains have been eroded, exacerbating existing inequalities such as discriminatory laws and harmful social norms. The work of gender equality and justice continues.

Although all AOA projects include a focus on gender equality, AOA currently has specific gender equality programs in:

- Kenya - Imarisha Maisha project focusing on gender-based violence and child protection.
- The Solomon Islands - Churches Promoting Safe Communities project focusing on Women-led responses to gender justice.
- The Solomon Islands - Anglican Sisters of the Melanesian Church, who run the Christian Care Centre women's refuge.

*The Imarisha Maisha project in Kenya and two gender equality initiatives in the Solomon Islands are supported by the Australian Government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP).*



**Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls**

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2. <https://www.who.int/news/item/09-03-2021-devastatingly-pervasive-1-in-3-women-globally-experience-violence>, accessed on 15 November, 2021.
3. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal5>, accessed on 15 November, 2021.
4. Violence against women prevalence estimates, 2018: global, regional and national prevalence estimates for intimate partner violence against women and global and regional prevalence estimates for non-partner sexual violence against women. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2021. accessed on 15 November, 2021.

# Mozambique

Sadly, the plight of the people of northern Mozambique, in the province of Cabo Delgado continues. Civil and military conflict which commenced in 2017, has continued throughout 2021, resulting in the devastating loss of over 3,000 lives, as well as mass displacement. It is estimated that almost 800,000 people have been displaced since 2017 due to the insecurity and violence representing almost half of the province's population.

Of the estimated 800,000 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), close to 50 percent are children and 30 percent women. In addition to COVID-19, the people have had to battle malaria, febrile syndrome, cholera and diarrhea in the second half of 2021.

"Repeated displacement and the consequent destruction of people's livelihoods are exhausting families' already scarce resources and causing food insecurity and malnutrition to rise."<sup>1</sup>

Many of those displaced have been left without any belongings and continue to require shelter and non-food items to survive. Security, protection and support services are still needed, and especially for survivors of gender-based violence, as well as unaccompanied and separated children and people with disabilities.

Anglican Overseas Aid's local partner, The Anglican Diocese of Nampula, has worked across 90 communities through the Towards Abundant Life project

and continues to respond as best it can in the crisis-affected communities.

To tackle both the physical and psychosocial needs, local emergency committees have been established in each of the 28 communities. The committees work to ensure IDPs are accepted into the community and provide access for each family's needs.

Local Adeptos (project staff) are providing hygiene training, including the correct treatment of drinking water to reduce water-borne diseases. The importance of using mosquito nets for children and pregnant women is also being communicated where families can access nets. Each month 14,400 households are visited and provided with information on preventing COVID-19 and other health updates. Additionally, vulnerable families are being supported to build tippy-taps in each of the 90 communities to assist with water and sanitation.

A focus has been on the 28 communities in Cabo Delgado hosting big numbers of IDPs. Training has been conducted on agriculture practices to 20 family members from each of the 28 communities. Horticultural seeds were then distributed to the families for planting. The establishment of agricultural skills training is designed to not only help local and internally displaced people in the short term but support, encourage and inspire lasting agricultural change that will assist with reliable access to food.

Luciano is the champion farmer in Chimoio community. He trains 19 other followers on conservation agriculture, using his own farm as a community demonstration farm. "I help people to learn more about conservation agriculture; I really feel bad when I see empty fields around the riverbanks, so it was really a blessing for the Church to come in our community of Chimoio and provide us with the training and assistance especially with the addition of IDPs in our community," he said.

*The Towards Abundant Life program in Mozambique is supported by the Australian Government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP).*



#### Sources:

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2. <https://reliefweb.int/report/mozambique/mozambique-humanitarian-crisis-grows-cabo-delgado-conflict-continues>, accessed on 15 November, 2021.
3. <https://reliefweb.int/report/mozambique/mozambique-cabo-delgado-nampula-niassa-humanitarian-snapshot-august-2021>, accessed on 15 November, 2021.
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5. *ibid*



# COVID-19 vaccine inequality

By the time you read this article, you may well be on holidays somewhere, or at home. Either way, you will most likely be experiencing more freedoms than you have for most of the last two years. This is largely due to the rapid development and uptake of COVID-19 vaccines in Australia.

Many poorer countries around the world though have not been so fortunate. In the second half of 2021, there were several reports about the extremely limited access to vaccines. While we in the rich world start to return to a semblance of normality, the poor world still languishes, the forgotten ones in what is an ongoing pandemic for them.

According to the World Health Organization, as of October 2021, 63 percent of people in high income countries had received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. At the same time, only 4.5 percent of people in low-income countries had received one dose. This is a major disparity and injustice.

Early in the pandemic, leaders from nations across the world formed the COVAX partnership to provide a mechanism for the equitable distribution of vaccines. In September, the COVAX alliance explained why this wasn't working: "In the critical months during which COVAX was created, signed on participants, pooled demand, and raised enough money to make advance purchases of vaccines, much of the early global supply had already been bought by wealthy nations."<sup>1</sup>

Wealthy nations, including Australia, have purchased more vaccine supply than they need. They have been

able to do this because they have made contracts with pharmaceutical companies to obtain fast access to vaccines. Australia, for example, has locked in supplies that could vaccinate our population more than three times over.

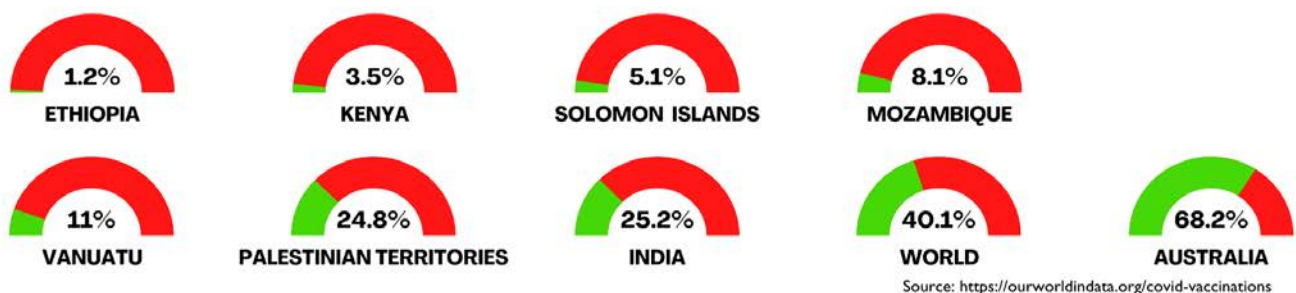
While this goes on, global poverty is increasing at alarming rates. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, more than 160 million people faced hunger in 2020 compared to the previous year.<sup>2</sup>

The explanations for this are varied. One reason is a rise in global food prices since the pandemic started. The rise in food prices has also triggered job losses, further affecting people's ability to buy nutritious food. This then increases malnutrition, again more prevalent in countries that can least afford access to nutrition services.

The most vulnerable people in any poverty situation are children. According to the Australian National University, pandemic-related school closures meant that 370 million children have missed out on in-school meals during the pandemic. For many children, a school meal was their most reliable source of nutritious food.<sup>3</sup>

Anglican Overseas Aid's partners around the world continue to respond to the global pandemic. We ask that you continue to be in prayer for our partners and the communities they work with across Africa, the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific.

## SHARE OF TOTAL POPULATION FULLY VACCINATED AGAINST COVID-19, NOV 12, 2021



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# Creation justice and stewardship

*"Climate Change is the greatest challenge that we and future generations face. When we look at Jesus, we see one who instinctively stood alongside the most vulnerable in society. It is absolutely clear that following Jesus must include standing alongside those that are on the frontline of this unfolding catastrophe".*

*The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby*

The 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference, also known as COP26, was held in Glasgow, Scotland, between 31 October and 12 November 2021.

A delegation from the Anglican Communion attended the conference and presented the Anglican Communion's COP26 Policy Brief to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, and the Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church, Bishop Mark Strange.

The policy brief is titled, Climate Resilience and Just Financing: Anglican Leadership for Climate Action and Climate Justice. As the impacts of climate change increase, it is often the world's poor and marginalised who will be the most impacted. The need to build climate resilience is fundamental to enabling communities most impacted to strengthen their capacity to adapt and mitigate climate-related disasters and long-term changes such as reduced water access and rising sea levels. AOA is currently working with partners in the Solomon Islands through the Disaster Ready program to build community resilience.

In our region, we can see that those likely to feel the greatest impact of climate change are Australian Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander communities, and the small island nations in the Pacific.<sup>1</sup>

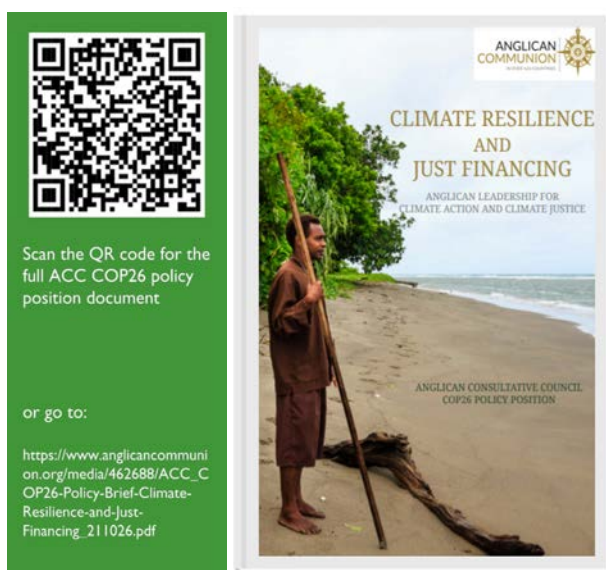
Low emitters, these communities face the injustice of bearing both the disproportionate impact and cost of climate change. For these reasons, just financing contains policies and initiatives that encourage and expect financial burden-sharing.

"High income countries, with fossil fuel driven economies and wealth derived from extractive industries, ensure that money is flowing (through climate funds or other means) to more vulnerable low-income countries."<sup>2</sup>

The Australian Government pledged an additional \$500 million in climate resilience projects at COP26, bringing the total commitment to the Pacific and Southeast Asia to \$2 billion over 5 years with the funds spent on infrastructure projects such as roads, schools and bridges.<sup>3</sup>

However Pacific leaders have continually urged the Australian Government to make sharper cuts to emissions by 2030. Speaking at a press conference at COP26, the Prime Minister confirmed the ongoing request for greater action. "Well, they always have. In every discussion I've ever had with Pacific Island leaders, that is something they've always encouraged us to do."<sup>4</sup>

As the Archbishop of Canterbury commented above, "it is absolutely clear that following Jesus must include standing alongside those that are on the frontline of this unfolding catastrophe." Let us pray for wisdom, discernment and courage for our leaders.



**Above: Anglican Communion COP26 delegation members, Dr Elizabeth Perry and Mr Nicholas Pande, present the policy document to Archbishop Justin Welby and Bishop Mark Strange. Credit: Anglican Communion.**

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1. <https://nepsclimate.com.au/understanding-indigenous-perspectives-of-climate-risk/> accessed 10 November, 2021.
2. ABC Australia News. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-11-02/scott-morrison-funding-pacific-climate-change-cop26/100587008> accessed 10 November, 2021.
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## An Urgent Call to Action

To respond to the climate crisis, we need a spiritual and cultural transformation. Hearts and minds must shift in order to change the way we see the world and how we relate to it.

"Many people, especially in industrialized countries, hold an extractive worldview which regards the earth as something to be exploited. It is particularly prevalent in societies whose wealth is derived from an economy based on extractive industries, such as gas, oil, and mining, and high levels of consumerism.

However, there are other worldviews, including within the Anglican Communion, that take a more holistic view of the natural world and how we relate to it. Indigenous people especially, including within Christian communities across the Communion, espouse a world view that is about relationship and connection. Indigenous Maori and Pacific peoples understand creation as inherently unified with a profound connection among all living things. This relational world view is shared by other Indigenous peoples in Africa, the Amazon and the Arctic."

Kinship and connection with the natural world, the need to respect boundaries and protection of the earth are deeply biblical ideas - as well as being supported by science. Both science and faith tell us that we-all living beings on Earth-are deeply interconnected. The COVID-19 pandemic reinforced this reality as it rapidly spread across the globe, leaving no corner of the world unaffected, demonstrating the importance of acknowledging our connectedness. Human beings can no longer view ourselves as separate from one another or from the natural world.

An extractive worldview, which regards the earth as a commodity that can be used and exploited without regard for the consequences, promotes unsustainable ways of living and is causing catastrophic harm and suffering. Those who hold such an extractive worldview need to turn away from it and instead embrace a mindset of relationship-for the sake of the earth, its creatures and our global family. Indigenous wisdom and a nature-centered worldview, which emphasise connection and interdependence, should shape our thinking moving forward-not only in our personal lives but also in our corporate decision-making, political thinking and economic philosophies.

Negotiations, such as those that will take place during COP26, are typically places of compromise and trading, where ambition is curbed in the face of political pragmatism and there is a disregard for morality as a determinant of action. Too often, national self-interest supersedes our collective wellbeing. However, the scale and urgency of the climate emergency is such that politics must give way to action based on science and rooted in a moral call to acknowledge our interdependence with each other and the natural world. Inadequate action and compromise can no longer be the status quo. The science shows that we must take bold, urgent action in the face of the climate emergency. Science also tells us it is still possible to avert widespread catastrophe.

**The question is: do we have the faith to act?"**

*The Urgent Call to Action (Anglican Communion) is taken from Climate Resilience and Just Financing Report 2021. Used with Permission. [https://www.anglicancommunion.org/media/462688/ACC\\_COP26-Policy-Brief-Climate-Resilience-and-Just-Financing\\_211026.pdf](https://www.anglicancommunion.org/media/462688/ACC_COP26-Policy-Brief-Climate-Resilience-and-Just-Financing_211026.pdf)*

"The Covid-19 pandemic has forced the world to look at how we have been living and operating, when so much of what was considered 'normal' was not possible.



We have been confronted by our behaviour: by our sin; our greed; our human fragility; our exploitation of the environment and encroachment on the natural world. For many this uncertainty is new. But many more around the world have been living with uncertainty for decades as the grim, real and present consequence of climate change. To think it is a problem of the future rather than a scourge of the present is the blind perspective of the privileged."

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby

"The impact of climate change will be experienced unequally throughout the world. Those who have advantage will often be in a situation where they,



at least for a time preserve that advantage. The most disadvantaged will however suffer greatly. Responding to climate change is therefore a justice issue as well as a sustainability and stewardship of creation issue. Let's hold our prayers for a sustainable society. That we might be good stewards of Gods creation. And for justice to be shared amongst all Gods people."

The Archbishop of Melbourne,  
The Most Revd Dr Philip Freier

The concept of kaitiakitanga positions human beings in creation – not as supreme masters over the earth community but as



interdependent members of the earth community. Perceiving ourselves as interdependent members of creation requires us to broaden our gaze beyond our anthropocentric concerns to include consideration of all living entities in everything we do."

Revd. Jacynthia Murphy, from the Diocese of Aotearoa New Zealand and Polynesia



# Bible Study: Light in changing times

## BIBLE READING

***The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. – John 1:5 (NRSV)***

It is often said that it is darkest just before the dawn. Times have been dark for the whole world over the past two years. COVID-19 has been no respecter of persons, borders or status, and it has upended the lives of millions of people.

During these difficult days, we can easily feel overwhelmed by life. We can feel anxious, unsure and insecure. These are all normal feelings. In the midst of this, light brings hope. Light is a sign pointing to something better and beyond. The great Christian hope is that God-in-Christ has come into the world, beginning a process of making all things new. This is what we celebrate at Christmas. Light has come into the world and the darkness has not overcome it.

Jesus referred to himself as the Light of the world. He added that whoever follows him will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.

While progress has been made, the treatment of women today is in many parts of the world very much like it was in Jesus' time. This includes in Gaza, where it is reported that many men whose wives have breast cancer leave them for another woman. Additionally, if you are a young woman whose mother or aunt has had breast cancer, you may be considered unmarriedable and be ostracised. The stigma of breast cancer for women looms large over Gazan society.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What are some metaphors for light that might be relevant?
- As well as bringing hope, what else can light bring in the context of the Christian message?
- Next time you turn a light on, notice how it immediately dispels any darkness.

## REFLECTION

The metaphor of light is a powerful and popular one throughout the Bible. In the creation story in Genesis, on the very first day, God created light, and it was good.

The opening of John's Gospel is a deliberate pointer back to Genesis. In the opening words, "In the

beginning," we hear echoes of the creation in Genesis, and we are told that in the Word was life and that life was the light of all people. Then comes the wonderful statement that this light has overcome the darkness in the world.

Light is a pointer, a sign, pointing to something greater and beyond. By referring to himself as the Light of the World, Jesus is emphatically declaring that he is the One through whom life is given to all people. He is that pointer. Through his life, death and resurrection, he shows us what life is about, and he shows us how to live this life.

It is through his life as described in the gospels that we see particularly how Jesus related with women. In the first century, women were considered to be second-class citizens. Your testimony was not valid in a court of law if you were a woman.

Jesus turned all that upside down. Women were among his closest followers; he honoured them when the rest of society shamed them. He lifted them up and gave them prominence when the rest of society considered them to be unreliable. And the Gospels contain example of extraordinary women showing extravagant love, and standing faithfully at the Cross.

As the Light of the world, Jesus points us in a direction of love of those who are considered outsiders. Let us follow him on the way as we too love the outsider in our lives.



Go online and find some images of lights. See how they remove darkness in different ways. What do they tell you about the power of light?



# Ethiopia: Continuing challenges

Ethiopia's year-long war between the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and government forces has killed thousands of people and forced more than 2 million from their homes.<sup>1</sup>

Having retaken the cities and towns in Tigray in June, the following month the TPLF pushed into the neighbouring Afar and Amhara regions, gaining control of a vital road to the port which the TPLF claimed was to break what it believed to be the humanitarian siege of Tigray. The United Nations now estimates that hundreds of thousands of people in Tigray face famine-like conditions.<sup>2</sup>

The TPLF and its allies are now reported to have joined forces and claimed the capture of the towns of Dessie, Kombolcha and Burka, all in the Amhara region, in early November.<sup>3</sup>

Ethiopia has declared a state of emergency, with the Prime Minister, Abiy Ahmed, calling on all citizens to take up arms and the Ethiopian army requesting former personnel to re-join the military.<sup>4</sup>

Valerie Browning from the Afar Pastoralist Development Association (APDA) continues to provide updates and shares her concerns of the unfolding crisis. "APDA saw a total of 40,968 displaced people in one rural site where minimal water, food and medical help is being supplied, with almost no shelter."

Meanwhile, APDA along with other NGOs are working to:

- Provide food to the most vulnerable.
- Support to health worker groups as they treat acute illness and survey for malnutrition.
- Supply water to the displacement camps.
- Provide hygiene and sanitation teaching along with soap and water purification.
- Provide supplementary food to pregnant and lactating mothers.

Already in drought and entering the dry season, La Niña conditions are forecast to see reduced below-average rainfall from March to May 2022.<sup>5</sup>

AOA is in conversation with Valerie about how we can best support the Afar Pastoralist Development Association as they serve the people in this deepening crisis.

Please continue to keep Valerie and her team in your prayers.

**Below: Makeshift shelters for internally displaced people in the Afar region. Credit: Afar Pastoralist Development Association (APDA)**



## Sources

1. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-11-06/ethiopia-anti-government-alliance-abiy-ahmed-tigray/100599950> accessed, 15 November, 2021.
2. <https://www.sbs.com.au/news/multiple-deaths-as-fighting-resumes-in-ethiopia-s-afar-region-sources-say/657c05c9-19d2-42fc-935b-98d077cbfd09> accessed, accessed 15 November, 2021.
3. *ibid*
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# Supporters: Changing the world

**AOA is a conduit between our dedicated supporters and our partners in ministry overseas. Ted and Brenda Mouritz have been supporting AOA for 30 years. It is an incredible commitment and they spoke to us about their motivations for supporting us.**

Brenda was born and raised in Melbourne. Now in her late 70s, she attends St John's Toorak with her husband, Ted. Brenda was a midwife until her retirement at the age of 60, and since then has actively participated in the pastoral care of the parish. She has been very involved in the parish and, in earlier years, in the wider Melbourne diocese as a synod member and the Southern Regional Council.

St John's is a special church for both Brenda and Ted. They met at St John's and were married there in 1992.

Ted's background followed a different trajectory. Growing up in rural Western Australia, he followed various careers in the overseas service, corporate and private consulting, and ending in large project development. He retired in 2010 at the age of 73. He came to Melbourne in 1973 and has been involved in the local State primary school, and St John's since about 1982. He has served there in the choir, on Vestry, as a Warden and in their Parish life.



Ted and Brenda's relationship with AOA almost goes back to our beginnings. In 1990, their vicar was the late Philip Newman, who was of course instrumental in setting up what was then The Archbishop's Relief and Development Fund. Beth Hookey as convenor set up an office in the parish Hall at St John's. Beth and Brenda became friends, which allowed Brenda to learn about the aims of the Fund, about it being a grassroots organisation giving to projects that local people required.

Beth's extensive travels allowed her to become well acquainted with needs in certain countries. As a parish, St John's was privileged to host several African clergy including Bishop Desmond Tutu and Bishop Sengulane from Mozambique. Both these men made a lasting impression on Brenda, so her support was cemented.

Ted's journey towards supporting AOA was, again, rather different to Brenda's. Ted has visited or worked in more than 20 countries across Asia, Europe, and North America since 1965 during multiple careers. He has seen the poverty and suffering that is the lot of millions across the world. A tour in Zambia extended this experience to Africa when the AIDS crisis was at its height.

"We had hoped that we could do some work in Mozambique, but that failed due to our extended working lives and Parish responsibilities. So, giving regularly to AOA and reading Abundance twice yearly keeps us abreast of the splendid work being achieved. We also enjoy the Lent and Advent reflection booklets. We applaud the programs, and the outcomes AOA achieves across the world in the name of Jesus Christ. And we applaud them for their amazing long-term commitment to bringing abundant life to communities across the world"

*AOA is blessed to have faithful supporters like Ted and Brenda Mouritz who in October reached the milestone of 30 years of support. We are grateful to our many faithful and passionate supporters who change the lives of thousands of people every year.*





# Gratitude for a sustained partnership

In this feature, we once again highlight a church that has been supporting us for many years. Revd. Chris Lancaster, of the Anglican Parish of Altona/Laverton, recently spoke to us about why they have supported AOA for so long.

Chris has been at the parish for nearly seven years. It's his first parish as vicar; previously he was assistant curate at Sorrento/Rye and then at Brighton.

The Altona/Laverton parish normally has approximately 100 people across four services on a Sunday. The age range is from pre-schoolers to people in their 90s, generally with rather more people who are older than younger.

The parish has been supporting AOA for 30 years (almost as long as AOA has existed!). Chris said that they have a strong history of supporting mission agencies both locally and overseas. He adds that, "we see it as one way to enact our gratitude to God and our common humanity with those whose needs are greater than ours. We are glad to support AOA in part because of the focus that AOA places on parish relationships, and on providing resources to help our people engage with the issues of global poverty."

Like a number of Anglican churches, the Altona/Laverton parish has an op shop, which is the main avenue through which the church raises money. The majority of the op shop's takings are given away each year to needs outside the parish. The parish is open with publicising in the op shop and on its website where money is donated so that customers and others can know that their purchases support worthwhile causes.

At AOA, we believe that what we do is an essential part of the Gospel. This is also how Chris encourages people in the parish to support our work. "I try to include global needs and issues in my sermons on a regular basis," he says, "and we sometimes have one-off retiring collections for particular needs"

One of the benefits of being an Anglican agency is that we develop personal relationships with parishes. This has certainly been the case with the Altona/Laverton parish. Part of this involves working with the parish in its efforts to contribute to the alleviation of global poverty through regular preaching visits. We have also provided the parish with our recently issued *Remembering the Poor* Bible study series. The parish also makes use of the AOA quarterly prayer points in its parish prayers.

AOA is extremely grateful for our relationship with the parish of Altona/Laverton. It is no exaggeration to say that, without their support and the support of other parishes throughout Australia, we would not be able to do what we do.



Above left: St. Eanswythe's Anglican Church Altona. Above right: Revd. Chris Lancaster



# Collaboration in times of emergency

Anglican Overseas Aid and 15 other Australian charities joined forces in August to launch the newly formed Emergency Action Alliance (EAA).

In an historic collaborative effort, the humanitarian agencies have united in their advertising efforts to improve how Australians can support and donate when large-scale overseas humanitarian disasters take place. When a major disaster occurs, some aid organisations use advertising on television and other media to raise awareness and encourage Australians to help. In the past, this has sometimes created confusion about which organisation to support for both individuals and media organisations who wish to provide donation contact details.

Speaking at the launch, Anglican Overseas Aid's CEO, the Revd. Dr. Bob Mitchell, said "The Emergency Action Alliance will be activated when the most serious natural disasters and humanitarian emergencies occur. I think the Australian community will appreciate agencies coming together in a spirit of co-operation in times like this, rather than inadvertently 'competing' with each other."

The other member organisations of the Emergency Action Alliance are Action Aid, ADRA, Act for Peace, Australian Lutheran World Service, Baptist World Aid, Caritas Australia, Care, CBM, ChildFund Australia, Oxfam, Plan International, Save the Children, Tearfund Australia, Australia for UNHCR and World Vision.

Each member organisation will continue to provide information and conduct an appeal with their supporters, however, any advertising to raise awareness will be focused through EAA. When a disaster occurs in a country where Anglican Overseas Aid's partners work, AOA will continue to keep our supporters updated and provide an opportunity for their response.

*\*Note: As a small boutique organisation that works with the Anglican Church, AOA's advertising is generally limited to a few specific Anglican publications.*



**EMERGENCY  
ACTION  
ALLIANCE**

# Resources

## REMEMBERING THE POOR - Bible Study

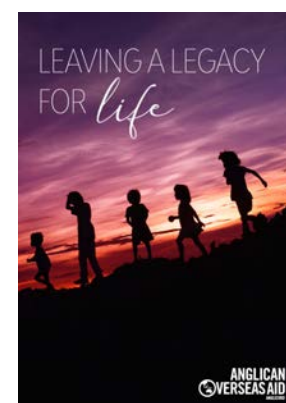
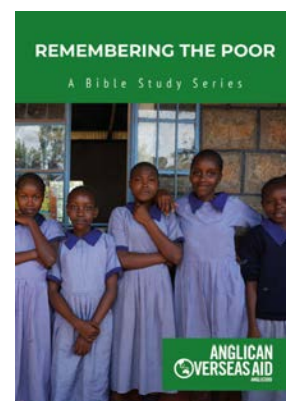
Caring for the poor is a central aspect of the Gospel. *REMEMBERING THE POOR* is designed to help individuals and groups explore this foundation. The series of four studies contain questions for either individuals or groups to consider, as well as ideas for practical application. At their core, they ask why Christians should care about global poverty, not simply as a humanitarian response, but as an outworking of our faith. We seek to alleviate poverty because we are Christian.

## LEAVING A LEGACY FOR LIFE - Bequests

This simple guide explores how each of us can leave a life-giving legacy. After providing for our loved ones, a bequest enables us to continue to support the work of those causes close to our heart.

With practical guidance, information about the new David Penman Fund, and testimonials from supporters, this resource can be useful in the creation of a will.

Both resources are available to download from the AOA website or by contacting AOA on 1800 249 880 or by email at [aoa@anglicanoverseasaid.org.au](mailto:aoa@anglicanoverseasaid.org.au)



## A Prayer

*Liberator Christ,  
you came into a holy place and read the sacred word  
about sight for the blind and freedom for prisoners.  
Come to this place now.*

*Read these words to us  
till our eyes are opened, our faith is unlocked,  
and we can see the world as it is, and as it could be;*

*till the yearnings of ordinary people are taken seriously,  
and the visions of young people are valued,  
and the potential of the old is released;  
till your kingdom is celebrated everywhere,  
and your church is good news to the poor. Amen.*



# Light their World

Christmas Appeal 2021

Vulnerable women and children in the Holy Land need your help.



1800 249 880

[www.anglicanoverseasaid.org.au](http://www.anglicanoverseasaid.org.au)

## Donation Details

☐ I'd like to donate \$ \_\_\_\_\_ as a one-off donation, or

☐ I'd like to give \$ \_\_\_\_\_ monthly by Credit Card

## Payment Details

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☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ Amex

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiry Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ CVV No: \_\_\_\_\_

Name on Card: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## Address Details

Title: Revd / Dr / Mr / Mrs / Ms / Miss / Other: \_\_\_\_\_

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Surname: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Suburb: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

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☐ I would like to know more about leaving a gift in my will to AOA.

Anglicord ABN 39 116 072 050. Donations of \$2 and over are tax-deductible. Your donation will be directed to our general fund that allows us to support our projects and emergency work around the world.

☐ Anglican Overseas Aid respects your privacy in accordance with the Australian Privacy Principles. Please tick this box if you do not want to receive further mailings from us.

21CA

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