

# The Gaius Trust Newsletter April 2021



Dear Gaius supporters,

The trustees of The Gaius Trust continue to be very grateful to you for all your continued support for the work of the gospel among the indigenous peoples of Australia which the Trust seeks to help and encourage. There is more detailed news in the letter from our brother Stephen that follows, but I wanted to let you know how the trustees (Stephen Bignall, Christopher Davies, Martin Leech and I) currently see the work of the Trust developing.

When we first established the Trust, its main aim was to support Stephen and Fiona in the gospel work to which they were going among indigenous peoples in New South Wales, as they returned to Australia from the UK. We supported the Bignalls for some years and then also began to support Henry Louie, an aboriginal preacher and pastor whom Stephen and Fiona had got to know well. Stephen and Henry visited the UK on deputation a couple of years ago and some of you will have met Henry then.

As Stephen says in his letter, Henry is now approaching retirement age. While Stephen and Fiona will keep in close touch with Henry and his family, Henry will be financially provided for by the state pension arrangements once he reaches the appropriate age. The Trust will continue to contribute to Henry's support until that time.

In the meantime, the Trust has been developing a relationship with David and Rose Cox in Dubbo. David pastors a church in that town attended by many indigenous folk. As you will recall, the Trust has supported David through the refresher studies at Seminary in Sydney which he completed recently.

In God's providence, opportunities are opening up in David's ministry, primarily in the Dubbo church, to mentor and train aboriginal young men for gospel ministry. This is an exciting development and the trustees believe it is right to pursue this and seek to give it what support we can. We intend then, the Lord willing, to direct financial support increasingly in that direction. We invite you to join us in praying for the Lord's blessing on this developing work, that it would see very much fruit in years to come in the advancement of the kingdom of Christ among indigenous peoples of New South Wales.

Again we are thankful to you for your fellowship in the work of the Trust,

Robert Strivens  
On behalf of the Gaius trustees

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Warm greetings from a water-logged NSW, where flooding has put a big dint in the rural mouse plague out our way (by drowning them in the fields)! We live in a land of surprising natural extremities, and yet we are kept graciously and borne along by the mercies of our sovereign Lord. We have heard that the vaccination rollout is going well in the UK and over half the populace have now been inoculated, and we pray for fruit from this massive public health undertaking, not least a high-level immunity and consequent social freedom. Our extremities whether climatic or pandemic, will normalise in the course of time, Lord willing, but the greatest problem remains, i.e. the lost impenitence of the majority of residents in our local communities whether in the isolated Aussie bush or populous counties of the UK – the Gospel alone is God's cure.

### Dubbo

The Trust has sought to continue providing support for Gospel ministry among communities in outback NSW this year, and a new gospel traineeship that is emerging through Dubbo Christian Family Church and pastor David Cox is an answer to prayer and reason to continue praying for the future.

Brendan Garlett, an aboriginal brother in his late-30's, converted in the late 1990's, who has worked in both pastoral and mental healthcare vocations, has now agreed to undertake a three-year mentoring and training course, involving both theological study and co-pastoring. He will attend the reformed Christ College in Sydney and serve as part of the pastoral team under the tutelage of David Cox in Dubbo, moving there with his family. We hope to commit to regular monthly support for Brendan and family, (as we did throughout 2020 for David and Rose Cox).

### Gilgandra to Pilliga

Our friends the Louie's are now limited by health problems and reduced opportunity; the Gilgandra Church have replaced Henry as their pastor. The Louie's continue to visit Pilliga and plan also to hold Bible clubs for kids in Baradine and Coonabarabran, villages within range of their home. Henry has struggled with depression and chronic illness; he is now 64 (quite aged for an indigenous man, the average lifespan being 58 for men). He plans to go on to the aged pension at 65 and is on partial disability support presently. The Trust plans to continue with him at our present level of monthly support for the 12 months until retirement and a full pension. He is a dear brother and any who have met him on deputation will know that he is a humble and encouraging ambassador for Christ and his aboriginal people.

Please continue to prayerfully uphold he and Maria. They have conveyed their love and thankfulness for your prayerful and practical care.

### Wee Waa to Gulargambone

This is a weekly circuit for the Bignall's. As well as preaching and pastoring, Stephen now teaches primary aged RE in 3 schools this year - Gulargambone, Pilliga and Burren Junction (all within a 190km radius - 2 have an 80% aboriginal attendance).

Fiona keeps in good touch with Maria Louie, and also attends and takes her turn to lead a Ladies Bible study in Wee Waa each week; as a couple they spend time with the Cox's at Dubbo and visit their church when possible. Stephen has had the privilege of discussing David's ministry training plan and scoping it out together. He also visits or talks with Henry regularly.

Stephen and Fiona became "empty nesters" at the end of 2020. Michael has just moved to Gunnedah with wife of 9 months Naomi, and Jess to Gilgandra working in a care home and planning to marry Brady mid-year. Joanna and family are nestled in Herts. UK, and the whole family is thankful for real time video calls.

All the Aussie servants for whom you pray, greet you in the Lord and in his love.

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Please continue in prayer for these men and their wives, families and possibilities. The Gaius Trust continues to support Henry and David financially on a monthly basis and to make grants towards the high fuel costs which aboriginal pastors incur due to the long distances that they need to travel. If you would like to contribute to any of these needs, you can do so through **give.net** via our website ([gaiustrust.org](http://gaiustrust.org)), or by **cheque** to Gaius Trust, sent to 15 St Margaret's Street, Bradford on Avon, BA15 1DA.