

Making disciples that multiply

# PRAXEIS ANNUAL REPORT

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Those seeds that fell on good ground are the people who listen to the message and keep it in good and honest hearts. They last and produce a harvest.

Luke 8:15

2020/2021

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# MISSION AND VISION

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## **MISSION**

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To make disciples that multiply.

## **VISION**

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Praxeis is an ever-growing movement of passionate followers of Jesus, making disciples that multiply in all the world.

## Praxeis

# A MESSAGE FROM OUR NATIONAL DIRECTOR



Covid changed everything! It has been a very challenging year with heartfelt pain. It was also a very exciting year with real growth opportunities.

We faced deep pain with some leaders and their family members in India, Indonesia and Myanmar dying. This was a deep shock to many of us.

Another point of pain for us as a movement was an increase of persecution in India and the military coup in Myanmar. The COVID challenge also meant that we could no longer operate as normal. Meetings were disrupted.

And yet opportunities came with connection online - suddenly we were 'super-connected! Online meetings encompassed a wide range of people. Training on ZOOM increased and Discovery groups and church made sense in smaller family groupings. (Read **God's Call to Regional Victoria** p. 8) In the midst of challenges we grew. We value and measure prayer, and this also grew significantly.

On average, over 1000 non-Christians were engaged in discovering Jesus through the scriptures! (Read **From Theory to Practise** p.7)

By the end of the year, there were nearly 230 discovery groups and churches running!

To understand Praxeis, one needs not to think of an institution but a movement. It is a movement of ordinary people becoming disciples of Jesus. People who form groups in their relational worlds that become churches and multiply. It is growth in the ordinary that we celebrate.

Internationally we also grew, connecting with new leaders. Countries like Myanmar and others in South East Asia are celebrated. The work in Seattle went deeper as they connected over food with refugees. Space in this report limits us from hearing great stories from works in Singapore, Hong Kong, Laos and others.

As a Board, we thanked Toby Hall, with some sadness, as he finished his final term as Chairman. However, the board continues in highly capable hands as we welcome our new Chairwoman, Sue Ash.

Thank you for your partnership as we move forward to make disciples that multiply in all the world!

- Dave Lawton

# 2020/2021 HIGHLIGHTS

Our numbers may look a little different this year.

Due to the pandemic and travel restrictions, we have been unable to include information from Central India, one of our fastest growing regions.

870 hours  
corporate  
prayer per  
week

59  
teams

227  
groups

1100 people  
discovering  
God in DBS

330 'workers'  
Luke 10:2b

In 4 years, over  
900 groups,  
12,000 baptisms  
and 20,000  
disciples in  
Central India

# LOCATIONS



Praxeis works



Coached works



Projected works

Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”  
Matthew 9:37-38

# CARDINAL POINTS PRAYER

**'Let us go over to the other side of the lake.'**

With these words of Jesus ringing through the minds of the Praxeis team, we started to explore the possibilities of Prayerfest 21 - prayer at each of the cardinal points (North, South, East and West) of Australia on Resurrection Sunday, from sunrise to sunset.

The vision was big. It felt a little bit impossible. But we sensed God calling us to step on the land and pray for breakthrough for the nation.

The idea of surrounding the nation with prayer appealed to us. It is in prayer that God aligns our hearts with His. He whispers His vision and increases our heart for those that don't yet know Jesus. Australia needs breakthrough: people encountering Jesus and new places opening up to the gospel. By having people at the cardinal points we would embrace the land with the love of Jesus.

Our national team caught the vision: a family in North Queensland put their hand up to travel to Thursday Island (Northern point). People from Sydney and Melbourne decided Byron Bay (Eastern point) was the place to be.

Steep Point (Western point) was to be covered by our National leaders, three days drive up the coast from Perth.

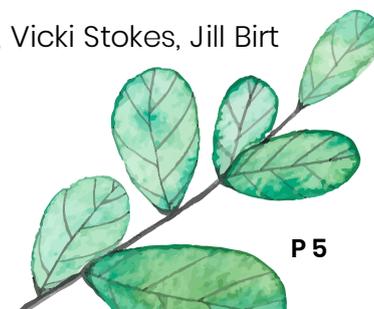
Two Melbourne leaders would hike through Wilson's Promontory to get to South Rocks (Southern point) and others started planning to cover significant locations across the nation - Canberra (ACT), Albany (WA), Alice Springs (NT), Ballarat (VIC) and Emerald (QLD) along with many more around the nation and world!

**By Resurrection Sunday we had more than 30 groups preparing to pray in every state and territory.**

As the sun rose on that day, it was precious to know that there were more than 200 people from different nationalities, backgrounds and churches - Indigenous, young, old, rich and poor - all united and praying for God's Kingdom to come.

What a day! Was it worth it? Would we do it again? You betcha!

- Andrew Pyman, Vicki Stokes, Jill Birt





## Australia

# FROM THEORY TO PRACTISE

After being overseas for 7 years, we returned to Melbourne in Jan 2019 with a call to reach out to Afghan people and other Muslim background migrants and refugees.

We had no connections to the community or other workers but somehow the Lord connected us with the Praxeis folks and we joined the South East Hub in Feb 2019.

During the first year, we learned a lot just by being part of a disciple-making community. We've read books, listened to podcasts, and received informal coaching. Yet our best teacher was learning from our own trial and error as we stepped out to try and apply DMM principles.

We're thankful for Praxeis - the people, and the team. Disciple-making isn't easy. Honestly, we're not sure if we would have gone this far if we had not been part of a Praxeis family.

The genuine friendship and love that our friends in this community have given to us are invaluable.

- Jason and Myra

## BIG LEARNS

### Take the time to build relationships

We dove headfirst into starting Discovery Bible Studies that soon fizzled out. We realise now, we need to take the time to build deeper relationships and empower people of peace.

### Pray, pray and pray some more

Never underestimate the power of prayer to find God's direction and the people he is preparing.

### Plant yourself in the community

We chose to live in the community we wanted to serve. This has led to deep connections between our family and our neighbours. Even our daughter is sharing her passion for Jesus with kids in the street.

### Be spiritually conspicuous

Every weekend, I (Myra) do my shopping at the Markets, a hub for a bustling international community including Afghans.

With God's help, I have a growing friendship with one of the cashiers and have had the opportunity to pray for her and see her marvel at answered prayer.

## Australia

# GOD'S CALL TO REGIONAL VICTORIA

### Prayer to teams.

It was June/July 2020 that we put the call out for people to join us to pray for Regional Victoria. God had placed the region in our hearts earlier in the year but COVID had shut down our opportunities to visit and build relationships – so we jumped online.

And yet, through the many long lockdowns in Melbourne, God reminded us it is not our job to do all the work but to empower others, build a team and focus on multiplication that will reach further than we ever could on our own.

A monthly prayer group began online and continued to grow. We are excited that now we have a group of committed pray-ers from 10 different regions around Victoria! Not only this, but these people are starting local prayer times with people from their own community.

**“It is interesting how people talk about disciple-making as if it is a method. But it isn’t a method, it is just how to follow Jesus in prayer, obeying the Word and sharing the Gospel”.**

**- Jerry**

There is a team now operating in Echuca Moama who are having spiritual conversations in the community and times of Bible discovery.

**‘The only way that I knew how to reach out before was, “Hey come to church.” But now I can make disciples with people in their lives.’ - Than**

As we look back over all that has happened in the past year, we see clearly God's unmistakable hand. God has made the connections with those who are hungry to pray and learn how to make disciples and provided ways to link us with those he is preparing.

We hope that we will soon be able to travel to the regions and gather together for the first time. We can't wait to be in the same room to praise God for all he has done and continue to ask him for more – more prayer, more team members and, most importantly, more disciples from the harvest.

- Vicki and Pete



**'The world has changed so much but we still want to make disciples.  
We still have a ticket to make disciples. It is very hard to  
stop 2 or 3 people meeting!'  
- Simone (Echuca)**



## Australia

# PERTH TIPPING POINT

### **A lot has changed in 12 months.**

In July of 2020, we had a team forming in the Hills district of Perth, a Bhutanese group just beginning to gel and the potential of an English-speaking Chinese group starting. As we were coming out of lockdown, we were delivering food parcels to Bhutanese students. While there were a number of workers in the Perth region, I still had my hands firmly on the reins: following God, mentoring people, praying, training and connecting with potential disciples and workers.

Fast forward a year and how things have grown. Stretching out from Perth, there are now two stable DMM teams, with another 3 forming. There are also a number of new contacts and regions that we are developing, with Discovery Bible Groups happening. It has truly been a year of growth.

**This year I reached a tipping point. I could no longer follow up every person, every time. God prompted me to let go of the reins and give people the freedom to do what they sensed God was calling them to.**

Now new workers are growing into coaching, mentoring and training roles and beginning to grasp a vision of DMM stretching out across the state of Western Australia.

**I also changed my focus; instead of going out to find people of peace, I asked God to bring them to me, with two groups connecting in this way.**

I've been trying to learn to give people a first step. I have asked them to start praying - personally, if that's what is needed - or to start a regular prayer gathering in their home. If they respond, I follow up and we move on together.

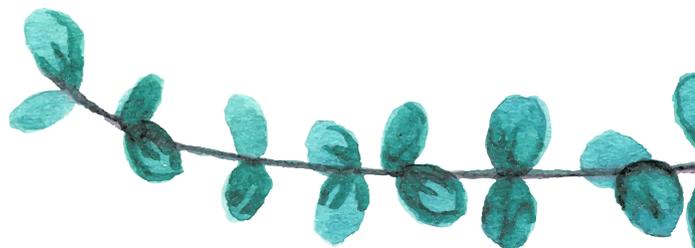
It has been exciting to see people take on greater responsibility, particularly in the refining of our DMM training materials, which a number of groups plan to use later in the year.

As I look to the rest of 2021 and into 2022, I can't wait for future training which will be run by our whole team of leaders. As well, as the continued development of prayer groups across the region. God is good!

- Jill Birt

## International

# SOUTH EAST ASIA



Across a country in South East Asia, God continues to bring the vision he gave us into reality.

The vision God has given us for our region is vast and yet, at times the work seems slow. God reminds us constantly to be patient and continue to hope that He will bring leaders and workers together. At this point in time, we have a team in one of our districts with Discovery Groups running to the third generation. In the other five districts, there are individuals and pairs who are praying hard and working to build teams.

In the midst of the pandemic, we have had to improvise and try new things to care for and support our communities. As we endeavour to meet specific needs, we also strive to empower people who are struggling financially with the opportunity to be part of our veggies and catfish farming program.

As we go out into the communities, we always ask our workers to focus on finding people of peace in new regions. It has been wonderful to hear story after story of how God is bringing these people of peace to our workers. Here is just one.

### PEOPLE OF PEACE

Daniel and John visited one of their relatives in a village about three hours away by motorbike.

When they arrived at the village, no one was home as the family was working away in the field. Daniel and John decided to wait for their family to return, resting in the community.

Before too long, a person from the village came to talk to them. Then a second person appeared, and a third.

This third person was an influential person in the village and started a spiritual conversation, not knowing Daniel and John were followers of Jesus. Daniel was able to engage respectfully with this person and they ended up chatting for almost 5 hours.

From this conversation, the three people realised that Daniel and John were followers of Jesus. There are now five Discovery Groups in this village with two potential leaders.



## International

# FOOD AND MINISTRY IN SEATTLE



Not unlike the rest of the world, our pandemic restrictions and reopenings in Seattle have stretched us. Our usual opportunities to connect with people in the harvest have been limited and so we knew we would have to do something different. With our travel, even in our own city, limited we began to focus more intently in our own neighbourhood.

Prayer was a foundational element with many prayer walks alone and together. We invited different neighbours to join us on walks so we could get to know them better and learn their stories. We also had increased opportunities and time with many in our local area: going to parks, hikes in the mountains, shared meals and marking milestones such as births and deaths. This has led to connection in the harvest on deeper levels.

Typically, during Ramadan, we organize focused prayer for Muslims. This year we went on weekly prayer walks near mosques, as well as a larger prayer walk in an area with several mosques and cultures represented. Given that large indoor gatherings were a challenge, we gifted some of our Muslim friends with food during Ramadan.

This led to lots of meals with the friends. It also led to spiritual conversations with the

mother and father of a large Somali family we have known for a few years.

During one of these meals, Lisa was invited to tutor some of the children. This has led to weekly times with the family and opportunities for deepening relationships and spiritual conversations.

**Over this year, we continued to realise that we don't often see answers to prayer quickly, but we do see answers.**

An example of long-coming answered prayer was meeting new neighbours who are also believers. Through this family and their connections, the annual neighborhood block party enjoyed its largest turnout. Each part of our development was represented with people from five nations outside of the U.S. all enjoying getting to know one another over a meal.

This year, food really was the fruit of our engagement. Especially this summer, the fruit of our connections was demonstrated through food like never before. We thank God for the way that he works through the simple things to spark and grow deeper relationships.

- Marc and Lisa

## International

# MYANMAR

Aung is a pastor in Myanmar, who from the time of his salvation during his teens, had a deep calling to plant churches among the Buddhist people of his nation. Aung is part of the Chin tribe, which is traditionally Christian.

For many years, Aung grappled with his large vision of planting hundreds of churches among the Buddhist nation but was unsure how to carry out God's plan. As a pastor, he had planted churches, but he also knew there was still more God wanted him to do.

In 2020, Aung travelled to Australia to take part in a discipleship course. It was during this course that he met Praxeis worker, Andrew Pyman,

**They began praying together and Andrew was able to share about DMM, exploring with Aung Discovery Bible Studies, multiplying prayer and prayer walking.**

Inspired by this meeting and his time with Andrew, Aung then travelled to Melbourne to meet with Dave Lawton in between lockdowns. It didn't take Dave long to realise Aung was a man who had a real vision for his nation. Taking part in the Praxeis Regional Leaders training, Aung

grasped the foundations of DMM which gave him the ability to see how it could take root throughout Myanmar.

Aung took this vision and transformed his church into multiple Discovery Bible Study groups. He also began to train a network of leaders across the country and into Myanmar, developing resources to assist.

In the midst of all this, there have been great obstacles. The first was COVID which swept through the nation, killing family members and leaders, The second was the Junta, causing instability across the nation as the military took power. In the chaos, Aung and his team held strong to their vision and continued to pray for God's word to ring out across the land.

**Today, there are 45 leaders and 20 Discovery Bible Study groups across Myanmar.**

Aung is part of the Praxeis team, with ongoing support from Praxeis in Australia and Singapore. We look forward with anticipation to what God will continue to do in Myanmar through Aung and his growing team.

# FINANCES



We again thank God for his provision in difficult circumstances.

Over the 2020/2021 financial year, we saw a 70% increase in donations (from 60K in FY20 to 102K in FY21), of which:

- one third (34% of donations in FY21) are regular committed donors
- one third (34% of donations in FY21) large donors of over \$5,000 which were matched by our generous grant partners
- one third (32% of donations in FY21) are one-off donations.

## Income



Gifts to supported workers \$1,084,503

Grants \$122,089

General donations \$102,547

Other \$244,211

Total \$1,553,351

### LOVE OFFERINGS

Over \$35,000 was given to work in Australia, India and South East Asia as part of COVID relief projects.

Payment to workers \$1,081,182

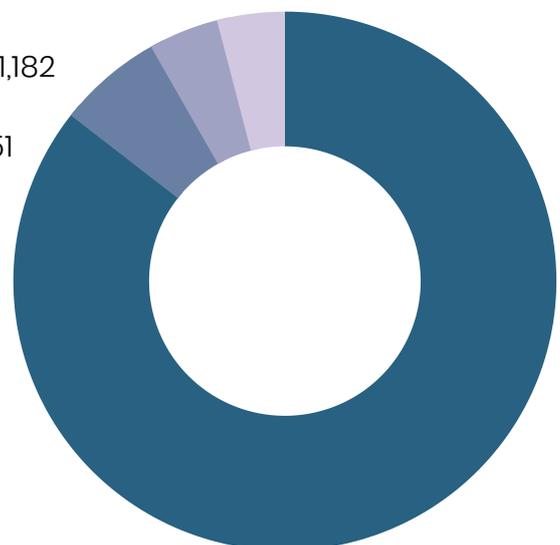
Support staff salary \$79,051

Jobkeeper wage topup \$52,817

Other \$50,885

Total \$1,263,935

## Expenses



# FROM THE OUTGOING BOARD CHAIR

When I first began as the first Board Chair of Praxeis 10 years ago, I was drawn to the opportunity to be a part of a group of people who were committed to exploring different ways to do church and expand God's kingdom.

In the beginning Praxeis was a rag-tag bunch of ordinary people seeking what God would have them do on the streets of Melbourne's west. Today, Praxies is still a movement of ordinary people sharing the message of Jesus, we are now just doing this in nations all over the world.

Our starting place as a group of people on mission has always been prayer. We have clearly seen that any outcome for the kingdom of God requires prayer. As we measured the amount of prayer across the organisation, we have seen that each deep movement of God was preceded by faithful prayer.

As I conclude in my role as Board Chair, I am excited to hand over this position to Sue Ash AO. Sue has been engaged with Praxeis for many years as a strong supporter and advocate for disciple-making movements, as well as a proud Western Australian. I know Praxeis will continue to flourish under Sue's leadership. Welcome Sue!

If I had been told at the start of my tenure that in 10 years Praxeis would be in countries all around the world, with thousands of people becoming disciples of Jesus, I admit, I would have been skeptical. But also deeply sure that God truly can do anything.

It has been a true privilege to serve as the Board Chair of Praxeis. I remain committed to the mission and vision of the organisation and truly believe that if people are willing to step out, pray and make disciples, there is no telling what God will do.

Praxeis continues to grow because ordinary people are obedient to God's call on their lives. While it is with sadness that I finish in my role as Chair, I look forward to seeing and cheering on the next chapter of Praxeis.

- Toby Hall





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