



MANNA matters

Newsletter of MANNA GUM.

Welcome to the first edition of Manna Matters, the quarterly newsletter of Manna Gum.

The purpose of Manna Matters is to provide regular reflections in Manna Gum's core areas of concern – faith & economy and aid & development – as well as to provide an update about our work. It is hoped that these will be stimulating, informative, challenging and hopeful. This first edition is entirely an in-house composition, however in coming editions we will be seeking to tap the wealth of a range of contributors, maybe even you.

We anticipate that Manna Matters will follow a regular structure with ongoing articles in four areas: (i) Bible and Economy; (ii) Aid & Development; (iii) Understanding the Times (comment on current issues); and (iv) Home Economics.

This edition is a bit of a bumper! This is partly because it is a first edition, but mostly because there is so much going on – climate change, the economic crisis, and the launch of the Save the Mekong campaign. Normally we expect Manna Matters to be about 4-6 pages long.

If you haven't already, please let us know if you would prefer to receive Manna Matters electronically or in hard copy, or not at all!



News from Manna Gum

- 2009 is our first year in full swing, with Jonathan leaving his work at Oxfam just before Christmas. The Footscray Church of Christ has very generously given us use of a freshly painted office, along with use of their internet and phone connections. We are very grateful for this.
- January to March has really been a starting up phase for us, trying to set up a whole bunch of things, from office equipment and finances to the newsletter & website, so it doesn't yet feel like we have had much time to do the actual work we want to do!
- Although it is still early days, the initial response of **financial support** for Manna Gum has been very encouraging. We are now half way to our goal of raising \$1250 per month from individual supporters and donations. If you would like to become a supporter or make a contribution, see the response form on the last page.
- In February we talked to a couple of groups about the **Household Covenant**, an initiative in responsible living started by Bartimaeus Cooperative Ministries in the US. The development of the Household Covenant in Australia, and a Household Covenant network, is a work in progress and something we hope to develop this year.
- Manna Gum has joined a range of organisations, academics and people's groups in launching the **Save the Mekong Campaign**, beginning over March and April. See the article on page 6 for more information on this important initiative. (continued back page)

Matter Matters

The spiritual side of economics

As the first in what will be an ongoing series of reflections on economics in the Bible, it is appropriate that we start with the first concepts – the ideas that underpin everything else. And for a Christian reading of the Bible, that means starting with one small but cosmic verse: ‘The Word became flesh ...’ (John 1:14).

The first thing that we need to say about these startling four words in John’s Gospel, is that matter matters. This seems a small thing to say, however the idea that God is only interested in ‘the soul’, and not the body, has been one of the most damaging distortions of the Christian gospel throughout the history of the Church. It was because of this misunderstanding that devout evangelical mill owners could force seven year-old orphans to work fifteen hour days in nineteenth century England, happy in the knowledge that a little religious instruction could assure them a better life in heaven.

But John’s Gospel tells us that the most important event in human history was God taking on human flesh. The ‘Word’ that God had to say to us had to be ‘spoken’ in the form of a whole human life (including death), because it fundamentally concerned how we live.

Therefore, whatever we do in this world and in our bodies, matters in some way to God. In fact, the whole current of the Bible tells us that there is no such thing as a ‘spiritual life’, or ‘spirituality’, that is disconnected from our bodily and material life.

Thus the prophets continually have to remind the people of Israel that all their prayers, fasting and worship are futile if they continue to practise economic injustice (see especially Isaiah 58 and Amos 5). The Apostle Paul informed the Christians in Rome that what they did in their bodies, in their day to day lives, was actually what constituted their ‘spiritual worship’ (Romans 12:1).

This means that everything we do with money has a ‘spiritual’ side to it. Most people can relate to the idea that our attitude to money and possessions has spiritual implications – an all consuming desire for these things will obviously compete with our openness to a higher reality. However the Bible goes further than this – it claims that it is not just our attitude to money and possessions that is important, it is also the actual impact of our dealings upon other people (see, for example Isaiah 1:12-17 or Ezekiel 34).

It follows that if we are the beneficiaries of an economic system that systematically harms other people: (i) we are morally culpable; and (ii) that has a direct bearing on how God relates to us, and (even if we aren’t aware of it) how we relate to God.

Why is this so? Because, as we find out a couple of chapters later in John’s Gospel, the whole reason that God’s Word became flesh was because ‘God so loved the world’ (John 3:16). What God really cares about is our relationships, and, our relationships to each other (including financial and economic relationships) cannot be separated from our relationship to God. Jesus made this abundantly clear when he summed up the whole Bible in two commandments:

‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second *is like it*: ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. (Matthew 22:37-40)

... it is not just our attitude to money and possessions that is important, it is also the actual impact of our dealings upon other people.



No Time to Lose

Waking up to climate change

by Kim Cornford

Over the last 9 months I have been significantly prompted by God to see the issue of climate change with new eyes. With my 'new eyes' I find myself and our household responding and making decisions with an imperative that for me can only be understood as a response to a revelation from God.

For me, this revelation started when I learnt about the impact of climate change upon the poorer nations of the world. In July 2008 I attended the TEAR National Conference and heard one of the TEAR workers talking about a recent trip to Bangladesh. He spent some time with a family living on the coast in Bangladesh who have been forced to move 5 times in the last 7 years because of rising sea levels, and increasing salt in the soil. I later heard another disturbing story from the Cartaret Islands, which are part of Papua New Guinea. Here high tides have been washing away homes, destroying vegetable gardens and contaminating fresh water supplies. In 2007 the PNG Government began the evacuation of the islands. It is estimated that by 2015, the Carteret Islands could be largely submerged and entirely uninhabitable.

My revelation has become a great responsibility, and I realise that climate change is not just about the future, but it is here and now. For millions of people with whom we share God's earth, our climate is changing now.

How can we hear Christ's command to love our neighbour and ignore this?

In Genesis 2:15 we read that God took Adam and put him in the Garden of Eden to work (abad) it and to keep (shamar) it. The verb, shamar, is also found in the familiar Aaronic Blessing; "May the Lord bless you and keep you...". Shamar invokes an active caring, sustaining and life-fulfilling way of 'keeping' the earth, modeled by God and expected of us.

Yet the science is now showing more and more clearly just how far we have turned from 'keeping' the earth. Debate over climate change took a radical turn in September 2007 when research revealed that the floating sea-ice in the Arctic was disintegrating roughly one hundred years ahead of schedule. Since this event scientists are confirming that previously ignored 'feedback effects' indicate the speed of climate change to be considerably worse than anyone had thought. A sea level rise of one metre would affect 200 million people living on coastal floodplains around the world, but some scientists now predict a five metre rise by the end of the century.

There is no science that is going to offer 100% absolute certainty of what is happening. But we need to see this in perspective. If we make changes in our lives, and the science is wrong, *it is still good for us*. If the science is right, and we do nothing, or not enough, then we face terrible

suffering worldwide. The demand of love is too great for us to ignore.

So what must we do here in Australia? Understanding where the greenhouse gases are coming from helps us to see clearly where we need to change. In 2006, electricity use accounted for 35% of our national greenhouse gas emissions, agriculture accounted for a further 16% and transport for 14%.

The challenge is immediately personal. Have you switched to 100% Greenpower? Have you checked drafts around your doors and windows to reduce your use of heating? Have you reduced your use of a car? Can you eat less red meat?

The challenge is also political. The Government's proposed Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme aims to have reduced our nation's emissions in 2020 by only 5% from the levels that they were in 2000. The 2007 International Panel on Climate Change report recommended emissions reductions of 25%-40% from 1990 levels to try to contain global warming to a rise of 2.0-2.4 degrees. Even with a 2 degree rise, species loss is estimated at 15%-40%, and freshwater loss at 20-30% in vulnerable regions. Australia's target of 5% reduction is worse than irresponsible.

To make matters worse, the current design of the proposed scheme effectively works to nullify any voluntary actions that you or I might take to reduce our emissions. Under the current design, if you pollute less you are simply giving someone else permission to pollute more.

The challenge is urgent and we are currently failing. So which day this week will you visit your Federal MP?



Talitha Ray, Amy & Mhairi Cornford and friends have sand-bagged the office of Nicola Roxon, Federal Member for Gellibrand and Minister for Health, to hold back rising sea levels.

Opening the Can of Worms

Hard questions about aid

by Jonathan Cornford

In March last year I sat on an island in the Mekong River in Cambodia's Sambor district, talking to some of the fisherfolk and farmers who live there - people whose lives work to a rhythm of farming rice in the wet season, vegetables in the dry season and fishing all year round, as well as raising some livestock (chickens, buffalos, cows and some pigs).

To Australian eyes, these were poor people - they know nothing of the consumer conveniences and luxuries which we take for granted. Indeed, some of them do live in real hardship - especially the elderly who have no family support, and the households of single mothers. But most live with dignity and some satisfaction with their lifestyle of fishing and farming (they also have their complaints), and would not necessarily think of themselves as 'poor'.

There were a number of villages on this island who had received assistance through a project from an international non-government aid organisation (NGO). The project used what is called an 'integrated community development' approach, providing assistance with things as diverse as building schools, vaccinating livestock, setting up community self-help groups such as rice banks and women's savings groups, and assisting the community to prepare for natural disasters (especially floods). A central principle of this approach is that villagers themselves play a key role in managing and implementing the project.

The villagers I talked to considered that they had experienced some modest but real improvements in their standard of living thanks to the assistance they had received, especially the poorer households who benefited from an extra 'safety net' buffer from projects such as rice banks (which store some of the community's surplus rice from good years, which can be loaned at no interest in time of need) designed to give them a fall-back in the lean months. In short, they had benefited from international aid, some of it given directly by people like yourselves through non-government aid organisations, and some of it funded by your tax dollars through the Australian Government's aid program.

However the villagers I talked to that day were worried that their lives would soon be turned upside down. The Cambodian Government has given rights to a Chinese company to develop a massive hydropower dam just downstream from their village. The power would be sold to the energy-hungry economies of Thailand or Vietnam.

One woman, Mrs Som, tells me she does not know much about dams, "but if it is built, everything will be lost." Certainly the local impacts of the dam would be significant. It would force the resettlement of thousands of people from the area, in a context where there is already escalating conflicts over land. Where would they go? However the impacts of the dam would extend far further: situated on the Mekong river between Cambodia's Great Lake (the Tonle Sap) and its largest tributary system, it will block the migration of fish in what is the second most productive inland fishery in the world - people here depend on fish. This would affect millions in Cambodia and probably Laos as well.

'... if it is built, everything will be lost.'
- Mrs Som Djeng



Photo: Jonathan Cornford



The irony is that this project, although privately financed, is in many ways also the product of international aid money. For a couple of decades now, hundreds of millions of aid dollars have been spent in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam, promoting hydropower projects just like this. Likewise the land conflicts mentioned above are a result of the rapid rise of commercial agribusiness in Cambodia – things like rubber and coconut plantations. This too is something that has long been encouraged and facilitated through aid money.

This sort of aid comes largely through the big international aid organisations like the World Bank and Asian Development Bank, but also through country-to-country aid such as the Australian Government's aid program. Just like the rice banks and women's self-help groups in Sambor, building massive hydropower dams and encouraging agribusiness are considered to be part of 'development', and therefore something to be supported by aid (the technical term for aid is 'official development assistance' or ODA).

This illustrates some of the deep complexities and contradictions in the world of aid and development. The unfortunate reality is that, although given with humanitarian intentions, aid projects can harm people as well as help them.

Facing up to this reality puts us in a difficult position. If you are like me, you probably consider that our Government (and probably each of us individually as well) has a moral responsibility to provide assistance to poorer countries. We want to support overseas aid in principle, but how do we make sure that it isn't sometimes part of the problem?

Ultimately, like in so many other things, we have to come to terms with the fact that money does not solve things. Obviously, used well it can have enormous benefits, however this is dependent on it being accompanied by careful, compassionate, insightful and humble human action. It is the human element that makes all the difference. The presence of large sums of money without this element can be enormously destructive.

Over the course of this column we will explore questions of what makes good and bad aid, and we will be asking how the Australian Government's aid program stacks up. This will require us to look for the causes of poverty, and to ask what sort of things need to be done to address these. Much of the discussion will lead us to think about the meaning of that catch-all word 'development' that we are meant to support. This in turn will inevitably lead us to thinking about our own lives and the ways in which they relate to these complex issues overseas.

There are few easy answers and we will not attempt to supply any here. However there is much we can learn, and much we need to begin to understand.

Ultimately, we have to come to terms with the fact that money does not solve things.



Photo: Simon Bush



Save the Mekong Campaign

The Mekong River is under threat. The governments of Cambodia, Laos and Thailand are planning eleven big hydropower dams on the Mekong River's mainstream. If built, the dams would block major fish migrations and disrupt this vitally important river, placing at risk millions of people who depend upon the Mekong for their food security and income.

The Mekong River supports one of the world's most productive inland fisheries, which feeds over sixty million people. Official estimates put its value at more than US\$3 billion annually. Yet, even this staggering figure understates the true value, as fisheries are also central to peoples' nutrition and food security. Experience around the world points to the fact there is no way of mitigating such large dams' impacts on fisheries.

The bulk of electricity generated by the Mekong mainstream dams is destined for distant energy-hungry cities in Thailand and Vietnam. Yet the region's urban electricity needs could be better met by improving energy efficiency and deploying recent innovations in decentralized energy technologies.

The prospect of damming the Mekong has evoked widespread concern amongst potentially affected riverside communities, civil society groups, academics, journalists, businesses, and the general public within the Mekong region and internationally.

Manna Gum is a partner in the Save the Mekong Coalition, which brings together non-government organizations, local people, academics, journalists, artists and ordinary people from within the Mekong countries and internationally. For more information, go to www.savethemekong.org



Photo courtesy of Jerry Galea/OxfamAUS

If built, the dams would block major fish migrations and disrupt this vitally important river, placing at risk millions of people who depend upon the Mekong for their food security and income.



Photo courtesy of Jerry Galea/OxfamAUS



The Theun-Hinboun Dam in Laos funded by the Asian Development Bank. Photo courtesy of International Rivers.



Damming the Mainstream of the Mekong



TAKE ACTION NOW TO SAVE THE MEKONG:

Write to the Prime Ministers of Thailand, Laos, Cambodia & Vietnam asking them to keep the Mekong flowing freely.

1. If you have a hard copy of Manna Matters, you can fill out the enclosed post card, and send it back to Manna Gum at 14 Essex Street, Footscray, VIC 3011.
2. If you have an electronic copy, you can sign up to the petition – visit www.savethemekong.org





It probably hasn't escaped your notice that we are in the midst of a global economic meltdown. At least this is what we are continually being told anyway. However the experiences of this will be quite different amongst Manna Matters readers – while the lives of some may already have been turned upside down, others will hardly have noticed its effects at all, except perhaps for a \$900 cheque in the mail any time now. This can make it all seem a bit surreal; nevertheless it is real, and by the end of the year most of us will have felt its impact in some way.

Preparing for the impact

It is a sobering thought, but if the current economic forecasts are in the right ballpark, then some reading this newsletter may lose their jobs in the next twelve months. It is clear that all sorts of different sectors of the economy are already feeling the strain of economic contraction, including odd little independent Christian ministries that harp on about economics.

What role does our faith play in how we prepare for and respond to this?

The first thing we must face up to is that 'having faith' does not in any way make us immune from suffering the effects of this economic crisis. The core promise of Jesus (expressed in the name 'Immanuel') is that God is with us in the good times and bad, and not that God removes us from the bad times. We are bound together with the broader community of humanity and we share a common fate - this is as it should be. The questions of faith have to do with how we respond to suffering and not how we evade it.

We need to look for and positively accept some of the lessons that the economic crisis will offer us



So like many others, some good and faithful Christian folk will lose their jobs (and probably already have) through no fault of their own. Others will be forced to live on lower incomes. This is a devastating blow for anyone, and although our circumstances are nothing like those in the 1930s Great Depression, there will be real hardship. How will we face it and how will we support each other?

1. In all things it is important to keep perspective – one important resource for coping with a significant change in income and living standard is learning to see how wealthy we (in Australia) actually are. Indeed this is perhaps the first necessary step in any economic reorientation. Maintaining a sense of clarity and thankfulness about the things we do have is a source of enormous spiritual resilience.
2. We need to look for and positively accept some of the lessons that the economic crisis will offer us:
 - a. There will be new opportunities to explore different forms of job sharing. One of these – and it is already starting to happen – is accepting fewer hours of work (and therefore lower incomes) so that jobs can be saved. This has been needed for a long time, but now will become more possible.
 - b. There will be a need for new initiatives in community cooperation to support those who have lost employment. These will necessarily involve material and emotional support but could also begin to help redefine a more positive and less individualistic approach to work: what work does the community need and how will the community resource it?



- c. There will be opportunities to learn a greater generosity of spirit that includes our material goods.
 - d. We will need to learn new economic habits – we will have to down-scale our consumption, learn greater maintenance and care for what we do have and learn to live within our means rather than on credit.
3. In all of this, it will be important to be building a sense of why this is happening. Having some understanding of the impersonal political and economic forces behind this upheaval will not lessen the hardship for anyone who has lost their job, but if we learn from it, it can instil a sense of purpose and resolve about what sort of economic and political system we strive for as individuals and as citizens. This is another powerful source of spiritual and psychological resilience in the face of hardship.

All of these things are things we need to learn irrespective of the present economic crisis. Can we take up the challenge willingly? Given that we are currently in the season of Lent, it would not be inappropriate to even look on these lessons as an opportunity for economic repentance. The Greek word for repentance [metanoia] means to renew your mind; this cannot be forced on anyone – it has to be chosen.

Can we afford to move away from a consumer economy?

Let's be honest – the economic crisis throws up as many big questions and challenges for those of us interested in an alternative economics as it does for the evangelists of unrestrained capitalism.

For while times of crisis present times of opportunity, we are also presented with the very real human cost of such an event. So many jobs here and abroad have grown up around decades of rampant consumerism, can we now responsibly reduce our consumption? What about the impact on jobs, both here and abroad?

So keeping these questions in mind, let's put it into perspective:

1. While the financial meltdown (which has now turned into an economic meltdown) has completely dominated our attention, developing countries have been suffering an even more serious economic crisis for a longer period of time. Between mid 2007 and mid 2008 the prices of food staples such as wheat, rice and corn shot up, in some cases more than doubling. While we experienced this as an annoying increase in our grocery bill, in the developing world an additional 75 million people went hungry resulting in food riots across three continents. The causes of this food crisis are multiple and complex, but it is very much a product of the present system.
2. To argue for the status quo out of concern for people's welfare ignores the very fact that the current shock and trauma is a product of the present economic system and its own inherent contradictions, and not the product of any steady shift away from irresponsible and unsustainable economic behaviour.
3. A more responsible economy is going to require massive job creation. Most importantly, a shift to more responsible agriculture (less dependence on petroleum inputs, better stewardship of soils, water and habitat, lower greenhouse gas emissions) will be highly labour intensive, in Australia as well as in developing countries. Likewise, there is whole raft of 'green jobs' which do not yet exist but will become essential to our ongoing economy.
4. Our current world economy is so ecologically unsustainable that continuing on with the status quo is the surest way to ensure mass suffering on a scale we cannot conceive. The potential economic impact of climate change and resource depletion in the coming century makes the current crisis look like a Sunday School role play. Simply put, we do not have an option.

The Greek word for repentance [metanoia] means to renew your mind; this cannot be forced on anyone – it has to be chosen.

Lets be honest – the economic crisis throws up as many big questions and challenges for those of us interested in an alternative economics as it does for the evangelists of unrestrained capitalism.



Manna from Kevin

This all brings us to a more direct and immediate question. Sometime in April many of us will once again be showered in unlooked-for manna from Kevin - \$900 if you are lucky enough to be on an income below \$80,000. What then should we do with it?

The message from the Government is that we should use this money to consume our way out of recession. The cash hand-out is part of a much larger overall economic stimulus package which has the ultimate aim of keeping money circulating through the economy. This is undoubtedly necessary – while the amount that should be spent (and debt that is incurred) is debatable, it would be irresponsible to just let things collapse.

The more important question is how the money is spent. In one sense this is a golden opportunity – the much bigger issues of climate change, resource depletion and waste all require a massive effort of spending and human energy to begin to shift our economy onto a less self-destructive footing. Some of this is being done under the current package – things such as insulation rebates and water efficiency measures – although in a less than visionary manner.

However the purpose of the \$900 cash hand out is simply this: shop ‘til you drop. It is yet another development of the disturbing idea that a citizen’s duty is to consume. It says that even though the current crisis is a manifestation of our collective greed, and even though this greed is killing the planet and creating poverty, we are determined to do more of the same.

It is in just such a context that Jesus calls us to do something different.: ‘Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the road is easy that leads to destruction, and there are many who take it’ (Matthew 7:13).

The only responsible thing to do with such a massive splurge of public money is to put it towards healing. There are many different ways in which this could be done (see the box for some suggestions) and it is appropriate that we take time to actually think and talk about it. Whether you use the money materially or symbolically is probably not important – what is important is that it makes a statement: we need to change.



It is in just such a context that Jesus calls us to do something different

Five things you could do with your \$900 from Kevin

1. Give it all to an overseas development project in a country hit hard by the food crisis – see www.letsgiveitaway.org
2. Buy a 2000 litre rainwater tank (around \$600) – if you own your own home, plumb it into your toilet and/or washing machine (you can get a \$500 rebate in Victoria); if you rent, buy a pump and make it your sole source of water for the garden (\$150 rebate, Victoria).
3. Hold on to it for a year (see no.5 below); when the Government’s new Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme starts next year, buy \$900 worth of carbon credits (around 36 tonnes of carbon dioxide) and then rip them up so no-one else can use them. This is manifestly stupid, but so is the current design of the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (see article on p.3)
4. Send it to your state Premier and ask them to put it towards a decent public transport system.
5. Withdraw it in cash from the bank and stick it under your mattress (don’t do this if you have a water bed). This will achieve precisely nothing, but it would be an interesting spiritual test of our attitude to money - you could also read the Parable of the Pounds (Luke 19:11-27) and ask yourself who is really the hero in this story.

Visit mannafromkevin.wordpress.com and share your ideas.

Responsibility Starts at Home

In September last year we harvested our first major crop of garlic. Our aim is to try to be self-sufficient in garlic after realising that this (for us) cooking essential has one of the highest application of chemicals for a vegetable (before and after harvest) and has usually travelled a few thousand kilometres to get to our door – neither good for us or the planet.

Because of our passion for garlic, the harvest of sixty good-sized bulbs from our garden was an exciting moment! We dried them for a couple of weeks, and then, using instructions off the internet, plaited and hung them. Our next challenge is to see if they last all year. We'll see ...

It is now clear that the way we live is not sustainable, for the planet or ourselves. Climate change is by far the most serious issue endangering the future of our children, but it is certainly not the only one. The declining ecological productivity of our soils, rivers, forests and oceans is global and long established. Nearly all of these issues of unsustainable exploitation – which by the way are a major and direct cause of poverty in the developing world – relate in some way to what happens in our homes.

While it is clear that we need rapid and decisive action from governments on issues like climate change, it is also clear that that is not enough. We live in what amounts to a consumer democracy; our governments will not act until they feel they have the bulk of public opinion behind them, and the bulk of the public is still holding stubbornly to the idea that 'more' is better and 'more' is my right.

What we need is a visible community of people whose everyday economic life of work, production, consumption and finances demonstrates that: (i) another more just, more compassionate and more sustainable way of living is practically possible; and (ii) it is actually a better way of living. Funnily enough, this was precisely God's intention for the nation of Israel and the Christian Church. And did you know that the word 'economics' comes from the Greek word *oikonomia* which simply means 'the affairs of the house'? So it all comes back to what happens in our homes – home economics.

Home Economics. Who would have thought that that boring and dubious compulsory Year 8 subject, could provide the basis for God's plan to transform human history? I wish I had paid more attention ...

Over the course of this column in *Manna Matters* we will discuss practices of everyday economics that are ethical, sustainable and responsible. However this will also be as much about a way of living that is good for our families, faith and communities, which is fun and even healing. These things go together. Some of the issues that will be touched on are:

- o food and food production
- o consumer responsibility
- o energy and water use
- o work and work habits
- o debt, savings and investments
- o housing and housing markets
- o kids
- o recreation
- o and more!

This month is tomato harvest and bottling time – our other major crop. We're hoping to have enough to replace supermarket tinned tomatoes for the year, but the heat and dry have taken their toll, and we probably chose the wrong variety of tomato and planted too late. So much to learn ...

Home Economics. Who would have thought that that boring and dubious compulsory Year 8 subject, could provide the basis for God's plan to transform human history?



- Manna Gum & the Seeds Network have launched a small **Manna from Kevin Campaign** to encourage people to do something different with their \$900 from the government. See page 8 for more information.
- On March 14 we had a **commissioning service** for the ministry of Manna Gum. This involved a 'sending out' by representatives of the three ministries/communities that have nurtured the birth of this ministry – Urban Seed, Common Life and the Footscray Church of Christ – and also involved our treasured Management Committee (Greg & Elvira Hewson), our wise and respected Advisory Council (Peter Chapman, Deb Storie and Al Macrae) and many old and new friends.
- The **Manna Gum website** will hopefully be up and running by the end of March. If we have your email address, you will receive notice. We are very thankful to Shelley and Timshel Knoll-Miller for the skilful design and technical assistance that they have provided for Manna Matters and the website.



Kim and Jonathan Cornford



MANNA GUM

— Enough for all —

MANNA GUM seeks to live within the economy of God – frugally, ethically and through the generous sharing of abundance within the community of faith. If our work resonates with you, please consider becoming a financial supporter.

- I would like to make a donation to MANNA GUM.
 I would like to become a regular financial supporter of MANNA GUM

Name: _____

Address: _____

State: _____ Postcode: _____

Email: _____

CONTRIBUTIONS per month once off donation

Amount: \$20 \$30 \$50 \$100 Other \$ _____

Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT)* **Cheque/Money Order**
BSB: 633 000 A/c No. 134 179 514 (payable to Manna Gum Initiatives Inc.)
A/c Name: Manna Gum Initiatives Inc.

* We can send you information on how to set up an EFT.

Support the work of MANNA GUM



About Manna Gum

Manna Gum is an independent non-profit organisation which seeks to:

1. provide resources for Christian groups to understand and practise the social, economic and political implications of the Gospel of Christ; and

2. to stimulate critical thinking on issues of aid and development, poverty and wealth, and to undertake research and advocacy on matters concerning Australian aid and development involvement overseas.

Please contact us if you would like more information about our work or to find how we could support you and your group/organisation to explore some of these issues.

Post to **MANNA GUM, 14 Essex Street, Footscray VIC 3011**,
call (03) 9689 0202 or email us at manna-gum@optusnet.com.au