



ANGLICAN BOARD OF MISSION

Working for Love, Hope & Justice

Wednesday, February 14, 2018

Centenary of the ABM Good Friday Gift

This year marks the centenary since the Anglican Board of Mission – Australia first began collecting donations for the Good Friday Gift in support of people in the Holy Land.

The ABM Good Friday Gift is an annual appeal which traditionally focuses on fund-raising for ABM's partner, the Episcopal Church of Jerusalem and the Middle East.

Today the Church is made up of four dioceses, three of them multi-national. The Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem covers Palestine, Israel, Lebanon Syria and Jordan. The Episcopal Diocese of Egypt, North Africa and the Horn of Africa is made up by Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Djibouti and Somalia. The Anglican Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf comprises Cyprus, Iraq, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Oman and Yemen. The fourth Diocese is the Diocese of Iran.

The birth of the Good Friday Gift was set against the backdrop of World War 1, where key moments took place in the Middle East. The Sinai and Palestine Campaign saw fighting take place between the British Empire and the Ottoman Empire, assisted by the German Empire. The British imperial forces were boosted by Australian diggers. Many families here will have relatives in their family trees who fought in Palestine between 1915 and 1918.

As fighting raged, ABM received a *Cry from the Holy Land*, an appeal on behalf of the 'distressed and starving peoples of Palestine and Syria [...] sent to elicit the sympathy and to enlist the co-operation of the Christians in Australia'.

This cry for help was promoted to ABM's supporters in October 1917 and is the beginning of ABM's relationship with the Church in the Holy Land. Funds were distributed 'to the poor and destitute irrespective of race or creed. Train loads of food, clothing and medical stores were got through ...'

Thus it was that in 1918 the first monies sent by Australian Anglicans through ABM reached those in Palestine whose lives had been turned upside down by imperial conflict.

This tradition continues today through the generosity of many modern-day Australian Anglicans, enabling local church institutions, such as those run by EpiscoCare in Egypt, to serve those in need regardless of faith background.

ABM has supported the Al Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza for many years, including during times of emergency. The hospital's value to the local community is immeasurable, helping Arabs whether they are Christian or Muslim, and providing a tangible witness to the love of Christ in action.

The Episcopal Church of Jerusalem and the Middle East has seen many changes since those early days, with more of an indigenous church represented today. It is reassuring to know that Christians in the Middle East continue to serve God through faithful service, and that the ABM Good Friday Gift continues to fund their good deeds.

Find out more about the ABM Good Friday Gift Appeal at www.abmission.org/GoodFriday18

ENDS

Contact Vivienne For, ABM Communications Coordinator at communications@abm.asn.au for more information.

The Anglican Board of Mission (ABM) is the national mission agency of the Anglican Church of Australia. For over 160 years ABM has been assisting people all over the world to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ, provide health and education services, improve agricultural practices and strengthen the Church.