



Visit to BiranyBirany Homeland

By Vanessa Lamboa (MAF staff member from PNG in Arnhem Land)

"Nhämirri nhe, Vanessa?" asked Pamela Yunupingu, a young mother from BiranyBirany who was very eager to see me in the Yirkala community store. "I want to come and see you and ask if you can come and fellowship with my family at BiranyBirany this Christmas." she said.

I have received several invitations from the Yolŋu but I could really feel that the request from this young lady was truly coming from her heart as she was organising a Christmas program (church) for her homeland.



Marrkapmirr God Wanjarr (Praise creator God) for providing and making the outreach to BiranyBirany on the Friday 27th December 2013 possible. *(To the MAF Ministry team, the time and effort put into this outreach are acknowledged and appreciated. It is truly not a simple task but with the knowledge and wisdom and understanding of the Holy Spirit working, the **MANYMAK DHÄWU** (True message) spreads like bush fire in these timely outreach programs)*

This particular outreach consisted of a team of six children and six adults, and to move this amount of people two flights were required. Upon arrival there was a family of four, two young men and a very old man waiting anxiously for us at BiranyBirany to have the Christmas fellowship.



We were welcomed by a young couple Damien and Pamela, who had given the invitation to visit, and Djarrpirr (Julie) who was an elder of the community. The team was offered tasty and juicy BiranyBirany mangoes which became our dinner and breakfast for the next day. As nightfall came, we prepared the fellowship area and the fireplaces were lit up. One of the Yolŋu men played the bilma (clapsticks) to the Yolŋu Christmas songs we were singing. The fellowship continued with testimonies, sharing the Christmas message, kids items and prayer.



Prior to the outreach the MAF kids had looked forward to teaching the homeland kids of BiranyBirany a skit and some creative dance but found out that there were only two small boys present on the day. However, that did not let the kids down and they went ahead and taught the boys and the Yolŋu men some dance moves. The small BiranyBirany group much enjoyed our visit and this was clearly seen in how excited and enthusiastic they were in the dances.

One of the most positive signs that I experienced during this outreach was this: Even though the community was empty with most of the families returning to Yirrkala to spend Christmas, I was inspired by the attitude of Damien and Pamela. They both felt responsible for their invitation, and wanted to really obey God's call for them to have Christmas fellowship at BiranyBirany.

In reflection the community was really encouraged and asked especially for prayers for Damien and Pamela who are future leaders of the community.

I, Vanessa Lamboa, feel strongly that if our MAF children, especially primary and high school aged groups, are able to be involved in these outreach programs, it gives stability to the family. It helps provide answers to some of the childrens questions on why the family needs to be away from their home country serving with MAF. The children are able to see that they also are called by God to be part of the family's call to missions!



(The team gives special thanks to MAF pilot Keith Maag for the very comfortable trips, smooth landings and takeoffs and Hannah Maag for being part of the outreach.)





The Christmas message by David Lamboa

My Christmas message to the children of Biranybirany was the same message that I have been challenging Yolŋu children at Yirrkala through out this festive season. The message was about the best gift that can ever be given!

I asked the children questions to see if they knew what this gift was:

What is the best gift you can ever give to someone this season? And who would be that special person you would give your gift to? If money was not a problem what would that be your choice of gift? Would it be a magnificent car, golden watch or a huge lavish mansion?

I told the children that if we study about the gift that God gave, we would find that it was a very different type of gift. God unselfishly gave us his Son and he did not make this sacrifice for only one group of people. This gift was given for all of humanity.

Therefore in response to this gift from God, I challenged them to give their own life back to him for this will bring pleasure to him. When we give our lives back to God the way we live our lives will show this. Our attitudes and love towards our families and friends will change. When we accept this gift from God we acknowledge that we must humble ourselves, respect one another, obey our leaders, live in unity with one another and avoid evil. Being nice and showing love to another is greater than a materialistic gift! We don't have to wait until Christmas to give this.

My last challenge to them was that our life should be like a living letter, that whatever we do everyday people would read our testimony! Please pray with me for the children who have heard this message that they will think seriously about it and act up on it.



David Lamboa (*MAF Aircraft Engineer and resident of the Yirrkala Aboriginal community*)