

SPRING 2010

SOUTHERN CROSS MINISTRIES

Spring Has Arrived

September 1 marked the official start of Spring in Australia. Though these are usually low rainfall months in our area, we had our wettest August in history, September was well above average, and October has started with a lot of heavy rain. A year ago our city reservoirs stood at 9% capacity and now we have reached 31%.

Kerry and Mona Allen

Kerry and Mona Allen made their fifth trip to Australia in August. Kerry is a gifted communicator and strengthened and encouraged the church. Mona assisted Jim and Becky in many ways as well as encouraging the ladies of the church. We followed a slightly different schedule than usual by spreading the teaching over three weeks in our area and compacting the teaching in New South Wales to one weekend.

Kerry was involved in teaching a Southern Cross Bible Institute class on the book of James, preaching, and leading in a devotion at a men's breakfast. We also visited a number of folk; especially those in our congregation who are battling cancer. The trip was timely and helpful to the church.

Building Progress

The extremely wet weather has put all building projects far behind schedule. If we get some dry days the concrete slab should be poured in October and the metal building erected a short time afterwards. We have made the final payment on the building materials and they are being held in a warehouse in Toowoomba. We hope to have some photos to include in our next newsletter. The building will prove to be a tremendous asset to this work and we are very excited about it.

Mike Cassara

Mike Cassara, Minister with the Nesconset, NY Christian Church is scheduled to arrive on October 19. Mike has been a close friend of Jim since their first year at Kentucky Christian College in 1979. The Nesconset Church is a faithful supporter of this work and we are thankful they are sharing Mike with us. Mike will teach a Southern Cross Bible Institute class on Evangelism.



KERRY AND MONA ALLEN



MEN'S BREAKFAST MEETING



JIM AND BECKY

Eastern Downs Church of Christ

We continue to face illness in our congregation. Renee has finished her third of four chemotherapy treatments. She became quite ill after the first, but she tolerated the second and third much better. Richard finished six weeks of radiation treatments for a melanoma which has spread to a lymph node. The radiation burned him so badly that he will not have another PET scan until late October. At that time he will be assessed to determine what future treatments are appropriate.

Besides illnesses the church is going well. The Westbrook group is now involved in a study of 1 Peter, the Hodgson Vale group is studying Discipleship 101, and the Pittsworth group is working its way through Genesis. We completed a Friday night study on Philippians with some of the men. This class had an emphasis on how to design sermons and/or lessons from what we have studied. The ladies shared in a devotional each Friday night. Friday afternoon the ladies get together for a craft time and Becky and Samantha are involved in this time of fellowship. This is a good way for them to share with people inside and outside our congregation.

Australian Christian Convention

Jim, Becky, Daniel, and Samantha traveled to the Australian Christian Convention. This year it was held in Sydney from October 8-10. The convention is an annual gathering of people from Restoration Movement Churches and provides fellowship and encouragement through preaching and workshops. Perhaps the best part of the convention is the opportunity to meet new brothers and sisters and to renew old friendships.

Approximately 150 people from New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria, Western Australia, Tasmania, and the Australian Capital Territory attended the convention. Overseas attendees included people from New Zealand, the USA, India, and Papua New Guinea. Jim lead a session on House Church Networks and also shared the plans and work of the Southern Cross Bible Institute. Becky shared on house churches in a session for the ladies. Jim serves on the steering committee for the convention and tentative plans are for the Eastern Downs Church to host the convention in 2012. The 2011 convention will be held in Newcastle.

Prior to the convention (Oct. 7 -8), a Church Planters workshop was held with teams from Auckland, Christchurch, and Dunedin in New Zealand and Wollongong, Newcastle, and Ipswich in Australia (in addition to our Eastern Downs church plant). About half the teams were from a cappella Churches of Christ and the remainder from independent Churches of Christ/Christian Churches.

This is the first time that we had met most of these teams and it was encouraging to see what is happening in several parts of two nations where 95% of the population is not involved in any church of any kind. There are some impressive young families who are beginning new works around the South Pacific and we thank God for these new laborers.



JIM SHARING AT THE CONVENTION



CHURCH PLANTERS WORKSHOP



AUSTRALIAN CHRISTIAN CONVENTION

The South Pacific as a Mission Field

In visiting with the missionaries from across Australia and New Zealand we were again reminded of the needs and challenges in this part of the world. These two nations have a declining number of people who want to be identified as Christians and existing churches are losing people and influence. Many churches have become so theologically liberal and biblically illiterate that they are unable to make any positive impact for Christ.

These fields are becoming more secular and more resistant and have the serious problems one might expect in such a society. Australia faces high drug use, alcoholism, a troubling suicide rate, and an endemic problem with gambling. Families are becoming less stable, abuse is prevalent, depression is rampant, and prostitution is legal and growing. In the midst of this chaos and despair it is our desire to hold out the hope that is in Christ. Though the field is resistive, Christians in Australia have a strong faith and want to share it with others.

People don't often look at Australia and New Zealand as mission fields because they are prosperous English speaking nations. Australia has low unemployment, high wages, and abundant resources. Yet spiritually this nation is impoverished and in decline. If a mission field is where one finds lost people then Australia is a needy mission field. The work is difficult, but necessary and rewarding. Please pray for us and the other workers laboring in this part of the world and pray that the Lord of the harvest will raise up more workers for the harvest.



The Australian Dollar

The Australian dollar climbed to its highest level in history when it hit parity with the U.S. dollar on October 15. The current projections are for the Australian dollar to climb to \$1.05 (or more) in coming months. The long term average is .75 per U.S. dollar and our budget would be in good shape at that exchange rate. This is extremely troublesome for us and other missionaries in Australia. The financial difficulty is three-fold: 1) mission income has been reduced because of the distressing financial conditions in the USA; 2) the cost of living in Australia is already about 40% higher than in the USA and climbing; 3) the U.S. dollar has lost nearly 20% of the buying power it had just three months ago. When these are combined they can form into a crippling scenario where some veteran missionaries are forced from the field and new recruits are unable to get to the field.

The Lord has always provided for our needs through his people since we first started raising funds to go to the mission field some 25 years ago. We are confident he will continue to provide. We know that many in our supporting churches are suffering and we are praying for you and for America. Some of the other missionary families in Australia are already in greater stress than us, so we ask that you pray for them as well.

Becky's Teaching Position

Becky continues to enjoy teaching at the small Christian school where she has been throughout this school year. Her fellow teachers and principal are good co-workers who are personable and supportive and the kids in her second and third grade class of fourteen have been great. Through this job, she has received her full Queensland Teacher Registration and made valuable contacts with other teachers, parents, and students. The school wants to retain her as a teacher for the next school year which begins in late January, but unless enrolment increases this may not be possible. Thus far 50 children are registered for the new school year and 60 are needed. Please pray that the school will enroll the necessary students for her job to continue.

Southern Cross Bible Institute

This year was our first full year of classes for SCBI and the attendance exceeded our expectations. Approximately 115 different people attended at least some of the classes and nearly 50 attended most or all. We thank Ken Henderson, Dr. Rick Cherok, and Kerry Allen for sharing with us and we look forward to Mike Cassara's class on evangelism the final two weeks of October. We have videoed all of the classes and have sent out scores of copies across Australia so that even those who were unable to attend are benefitting from the studies.

In 2011, SCBI plans to offer four more classes. Jim expects to teach two of them with overseas or Australian men teaching the others. Besides the SCBI classes, we ran a leadership retreat which was well received. We are planning another leadership retreat for 2012. We are planning to sponsor a preaching summit, a couples retreat, and programs for young men in the future.

Furlough 2010

Jim will be heading to the USA on November 10 in time for the National Missionary Convention in Lexington, KY. Jim along with fellow Australian missionary, Tim Yates, will present the workshop: *Church Planting in Australia: What's Happening Down Under?* on Friday Nov. 19 at 10:45 am. The display will be located at booth H111 under the name Mission Australia.

Becky and Andrew are scheduled to arrive in the USA on December 6 after finishing their school year. From December 30 - January 10, they will be off to Grenada for the 25th anniversary celebration of the planting of the church there. It will be great to encourage the church and relive memories from the beginning of the church in Grenada. On January 13, they are scheduled to return to Australia. Please pray for Daniel and Samantha who will not be able to make the trip and will be alone for six weeks. This will be their first Christmas away from all family.

Daniel and Samantha

In September, Daniel and Samantha marked one year in Australia. It has been an eventful year as many things have happened: Samantha received her spousal visa, Daniel and Samantha moved into their own apartment and the Pittsworth house church began meeting on a weekly basis in their apartment with Daniel teaching on a regular basis, Daniel and Samantha both started jobs, and Daniel received his FBI background check and can now apply to Queensland College of Teachers to become a registered teacher in Queensland.

In the coming year please pray that they can make more contacts in the community and that Daniel can begin teaching. Please pray for Samantha's connections with young people in the community. She is already having opportunity to meet with a few young women. They both hope to have more opportunities with youth and young adults in 2011.

Yours in Christ,

Jim, Becky, Daniel, Samantha, and Andrew

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