

Prayer Points

- We are still struggling to find appropriate people to help craft and then test the Bible 'stories' that Phil has been allocated to form as part of the February workshop he attended. Please pray that the appropriate people will pop up.
- For continued financial discipline so we can move into our house next year.
- For the witness we are to a completely different group of people at the train station including the train staff.
- For wisdom with us both preparing our Bible studies for the Amoonguna families. And that they will turn up each week and that they interact with the study.
- For wisdom in the direction of the ministry here and in the implementing of the changes.
- That the sale of the bus will reveal a hunger for God that will motivate people to come to church on their own.
- That the Holy Spirit will work in the hearts of the Aboriginal people that come to church here.
- For perseverance in the work here.
- That we will be fully dependent on the Sovereignty of God in our lives and here in the work. (The work here is mostly very discouraging).
- That I (Phil) will put more effort into my communication skills with the people I work with (who are oral learners, speak little English, have a different culture and different world view). *I have been a bit slack with my communication skills - reading too many books, spending too much time with white fellas having been dismayed with the work and the people we work with.*
- That we will make time to do the repairs on the caravan so we can sell it, so we can move into our house next year. *(We can't move until it is sold.*
- For our own spiritual growth.

Praise Points

- For the help that Naomi continues to be.
- That Naomi's family came to visit and take her on a family holiday with them.
- For the church taking up the challenge of collecting cans & bottles for cash. *(even though 99% of the cans they bring in are their empty beer cans - oh well! One family brings in 100-200 cans each Sunday from their drinking that week!)*
- For the successful garage sale.
- That God is Sovereign and has put us here for a reason. And that we are confident that we are supposed to be here even when we are having bad days.
- For friends & family who have been able to visit & encourage us.
- For the encouraging prayer and the financial support we receive.
- At Bible study (12th July) someone prayed and in language! That's 2 people in 2 years.
- For the successful meetings we had with the AIM Directors and that we were all on the same page as to the changes that need to take place here for the ministry to move ahead



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Stepping Out With the Stuarts July 2011



G'day from the Alice.

We know when our newsletter is more than a little late as we start getting a lot more mail asking how things are going. We were waiting until we had our meetings with the AIM directors so we could announce some major changes about to take place here at AIM Alice Springs. But you have to read on to find out what they are!

Our last newsletter went out in early April as Naomi and I (Cathy) were celebrating our birthdays a few days apart. Naomi was blessed with a visit from her mum and a suitcase full of presents. Naomi and Joshua baked and decorated the lounge to give me a big surprise when I came home from work at the train station. It was very special.

In April we were blessed with a visit from an AIM Mission Awareness Tour (MAT). We have had a few over the years where we get a few hours to share about the ministry in a verbal way. However we had this group for about 70 hours, so we did the verbal thing on the Saturday night & Sunday, but on the Monday we put them to work. We had them sewing skirts & bags for the hospital, gardening, and cleaning the church bus. They were such an encouragement and saved us weeks of work (that realistically may have only ever been dreamed about).

Easter was a quieter event for church this year. I think the colder weather kept a lot of people in bed. We spent the four weeks leading up to Easter studying the reason Jesus came to die, the Atonement and the Passover and topped it off with the Lord's Supper. It is difficult having it too often due to the ceremony background of the people we minister too. To them, having ceremony makes them right with the spirit world. The Lord's Supper is very much ceremony to them (mind you so is church). Trying to break this down is an ongoing process.

Anzac day brought a special Ghan to town and we worked a very long day as it normally comes in at 2pm. Instead it came in at 3.30am for the Dawn Service. We were there from 2am turning on all the lights, setting the stairs and making it all look good. I, Cathy got the wonderful treat of personally checking in country music singer John Williamson who got on the train to travel north in the afternoon. We get a number of 'famous' people travel on the Ghan which is usually a good experience.



Our Amoonguna Bible studies have been continuing. Phil taking the Tuesday one through Firm Foundations and I, Cathy on Wednesdays, am taking a family through a Bible based parenting course. I have to modify & simplify each study due to the language difficulties and cultural differences and it is a slow but rewarding process.

As usual, we designed and made the banner for the Katherine Christian Convention and sent it up on the Anzac Ghan for the following weekend.



We are sorry to say that the toilet block has not progressed and owing to the discussions with our AIM Directors it will remain on hold as we make some changes in the ministry here. Once we see where the changes take us we will re-assess and see if the current design and position is still the best.

We are still continually blessed by those who have caught our vision about helping our chaplaincy role at the hospital and have donated their time to find, buy or make things we need for our hospital chaplaincy & outreach ministry. You all know who you are and we thank you for being such an encouragement. If you would like a practical but different way to help the ministry here, drop us a line, we can tell you the options with no obligations.

Late May, we had the Palmer family (of 5) stay onsite in their caravan for a number of weeks. Tim wonderfully prepared & painted (in between the rain & frosts) the roof of the church white bus as the roof was very rusty.



Over time, a number of local people have donated items (such as furniture) to be sold cheaply to our church folk. In the past we have raised a bit of money this way for the church but things were piling up faster than we could move them recently. We also had personal things we would like to sell so we decided to have garage sale. With the help of the Palmers, we sorted & priced our way through lots of stuff. We held the sale in the church Friday night & Saturday morning and the church made \$400 and we only had a few boxes of stuff left over for another one later in the year. How great it felt to have a good cleanout. We personally made enough money for Phil to buy a new gadget for our 4WD that could not be justified in our normal budget. The money raised by the church stuff has been put away for a new bus.

The church also had an old Mazda bus that was retired when the church was handed down a Toyota coaster a few years ago. It was suggested we put the Mazda bus up for sale at the Garage sale as well, and believe it or not, it sold the following week! Another \$500 in the kitty for a much needed replacement bus.

Now, do you remember in our last newsletter when Phil sat beside Dellery as she

Bus fundraising

The NT has the cash for cans program running which we have been using personally as we collect bags of empty cans when walking the dogs. After hearing of the success of the Tennant creek AIM church at collecting cans we thought it would be a good thing to try here. We have got our church mob (at least some of them) motivated to collect cans as we begin fundraising for a smaller replacement bus. We really want the church mob to fundraise the money for the bus themselves and not rely totally on white handout as they do for everything else. As cans are rubbish to our mob, it took a while for us to convince them that we can get money for them. Can collecting is great as none of our mob work and this at least gets them into doing something beneficial even if for an hour or two a week. It also cleans up their homes & community and in the 1st 6 weeks they have raised \$135 (from 5c/can).



One day we took the truck & two empty wheelie bins out to Amoonguna Aboriginal Community. They are "not permitted" to drink in the community (*even though most of our cans come from within*), so after Bible study, one of the families took us around the boundary to a number of popular drinking spots. We filled both wheelie bins with crushed cans and at



one spot we hit the jackpot. It was a great morning. *Mind you, I ran over one of their dogs and had another jump off the truck and roll down the road! FYI, both dogs were ok.*

We are looking at getting a 12 seater mini van that will be just for picking up the sick & for being able to go to conventions & outings in small groups.

If you would like to receive our newsletter by email, please let us know.

If you have been thinking about supporting us, please note our support details.

All of our support is being channeled through the Westminster Presbyterian Church (WPC) so that we can be paid a wage from it.

Support that has been sent in our name has been signed over and put into the WPC-Kelmscott-Stuart fund. This bank account is purely for the support of our family.

So if you are considering supporting us, please use these details.

Please write cheque/money orders to:

'WPC Kelmscott Inc—Stuart fund'

For direct Debit:

Bank: Commonwealth Bank

Account Name: WPC Kelmscott Inc—Stuart fund

BSB: 066156

Account No: 10244652

Reference Note/Payee details:

Please use your Surname for ID as all gifts going into this account are received.

Phil I have of late taken up reading again. I do enjoy reading, but usually forget what I have read 5 minutes after reading. So I stopped reading anything that was wordy - which is most of my books, and only read light stuff - such as 4WD mags. My personal Bible study was suffering and so was my whole spiritual walk. Put that together with my dissatisfaction with the job, and I was not a happy camper. So I have set aside a couple of hours each day to getting myself back on track. It takes me that long to read a chapter or two of a Theological book! But it is helping me huge amounts and I am becoming a happy camper again. But to every upside, there is usually a down side. With all this reading, my language/communication skills with Aboriginal people has suffered - see prayer points.

Cathy It has been quite a challenge to modify/simplify the parenting course for use with an illiterate group of people that don't speak English unless they are talking to you (and that's not often) and who are from a different culture and have a different world view. We used this course ourselves when Joshua was little & we have been amazed about how many things are still current & happening positively within our family thanks to this course.

My work at the train station and it's increased responsibility has its rewards. I was recently awarded employee of the month called the "Bringing Service to Life award" for May. I received a pin, certificate, & gift voucher. A copy of the nomination form is also included and it was very humbling. I have been sent thankyou cards & been given flowers by guests over the last few months, but this award was for service to the company & not to guests.

Another highlight at the train station was that we were recently duped into participating in the TV show 'Undercover Boss'. You will definitely not see me (or Phil) on the show as I had already met the CEO who was undercover and they were scared I would recognise him through his disguise. We are told it will be on later in the year and we were just 1 of 4 areas of the company to be 'checked out'. Mind you, our station/team won the best team award!

Josh Hello everyone, in the past few months there has been a few changes, one of which was me transferring from Army cadets to the Air Force cadets.

I have also been doing quite a lot of work in Art, mainly fan art of video games. But my main piece was a felt artwork which was inspired by the **kērussō** word meaning "To proclaim" in the context of the New Testament. Speaking of school, I have been doing so well in some of my year 10 subjects that I have been allowed to do some stage 1 subjects next semester which would normally only be accessible by year 11 students (I'm quite excited).

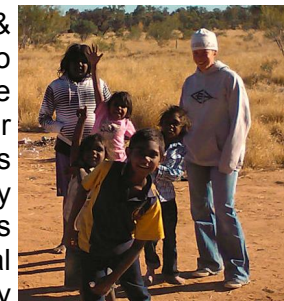
I have also been exploring how many video games have been inspired by some aspects of the Bible, such as the PSP remake of the original 'Squares' (now Square Enix) 1991 snes video game Final Fantasy IV. This game includes characters & locations inspired by Cain & Abel & the Tower of Babel. This allows me to quite easily bring up the topic of God among fellow gamers.

Also before I forget, I just reached the magic 180cm mark! Nearly caught up to Dad!



passed away in hospital? Well just a few weeks ago, someone told us her husband Edwin has passed away. He had not been home the previous 2 weeks that I had tried to pick him up for church and so had assumed he had gone bush which he had done so many other times. It was not so when the police confirmed he had died and his death was under investigation. We are still awaiting the official word of cause of death, but we along with many others are devastated as he was a gentle man, a new Christian and a delight to have in our church.

Naomi continues to be a huge blessing to both our family & ministry. Not only does she sneak off to the hospital to do our chaplaincy when we are busy and surprises us, she completely enraptures the kids before, during & after church. She has such a gift. She cooks meals and treats too which we have much appreciated. She has been happy working at the special needs school during the week days but has recently been working also at the Yirara Aboriginal Boarding college as a house parent. We consider her very brave, but she just loves it and if Yirara sounds familiar its because many of these same teenagers attend the AIM church. This is great as Naomi gets to build stronger relationships between the church and the Yirara students.



So what's in store for us family wise? Well it's that time of year when the tourists come though and it's always encouraging when some of them are already friends and yet other basic strangers become fast friends. We have a number of people booked to see us in the next few months.

Now for our latest news...So what is in store for us ministry wise? We have for some time seen the large church bus as a millstone around our necks. The church is going backwards financially, it creates a dependency we are trying to break, no-one waits at the gate (we have to wait for everyone), and most just come for a free trip to the shops across the road and many more reasons. At the end of the day, most only come to church because we get them out of bed and pick them up, not because they have a desire to worship God. This is shown by the few people who have turned up when the bus has been in for repairs a number of times in the past two years. Well everyone has been praying about this bus situation for some time & we all agree now is the time to make the biggest change the church has seen forever - the bus is going up for sale! This is a catalyst to ensure that many other ideas for ministry here can begin. If you want to know more about the reasons behind this change & what we hope it will achieve, drop us a line or wait until the next newsletter! In the *Ministry In The Alice* section we will elaborate on this and let you know how it is going.

So with that, please take care until next time... **Phil, Cathy + Joshua Stuart**

Ministry In The Alice

Ngkarte-kenhe areyeke ayeye akwete ilaye. (2 Timothy 4:2a)

A while ago, December 09 to be exact, I promised to write about the pastoral care barriers associated with working with tribal Aboriginal people. One thing led to another and it was forgotten. Cathy kept receiving letters asking when this topic was going to be addressed. So she has humbugged me and here it is.

Now in the March 2010 newsletter (*available online*) I talked about some aspects of Aboriginal World View that have to be known and understood when dealing with tribal Aboriginal people pastorally. Well, not only does World View play a large part, so does their culture(s) and how much they have been influenced by the dominant western culture and how much they have assimilated into the Australian culture.

So when dealing with each individual, there are many factors to take into consideration - where they are from, what western influence they have had and what is my relationship status with them. Do I have a relationship with this person or not? And if so, how strong is this relationship? You see, relationships is one of the things that makes the Aboriginal world go round and relationships between Aboriginal people and white fellas can take a long time to build - years in fact (and can be damaged or destroyed by careless actions or words in minutes). And even when you think you have made it, you learn you have a long way to go. So how much liberty you can take in asking questions and digging around in a person's life is dependant on how strong your relationship is with that person. But in saying that, many Aboriginal Elders have died taking valuable historic details and stories to the grave because they did not think the younger generation was ready or even worthy of receiving that information!

So you can imagine how difficult it can be when doing our hospital visits/chaplaincy and therefore meeting people for the first time! We often don't know these people from a bar of soap and so have no idea where that person fits and so we have to default back to the basic denominator - little assimilation and this makes for difficult pastoral care. Mind you, many don't care and just want us to fix them up as we are God's Ngangkere (healing man). So, first pastoral care hurdle - how good is my relationship with that person I am dealing with.

Next hurdle in pastoral care issues especially in a big town like Alice Springs is the fact that the relationship will never be as strong like it would be if you lived in an Aboriginal community with them, seeing them everyday. In most Aboriginal cultures, it is rude to ask too many questions. A major part of pastoral care is asking questions. We like to know how people are going in their walk with God - if they have one, what are they struggling with etc, etc. We like straight out answers so we can pray for them and help them out in areas of need and especially not say or do things that you know they are sensitive about!

But in Aboriginal culture, they don't ask direct questions. They find out what they want to know by watching and observing or by asking in roundabout ways. Like when

we meet someone, be it for the first time or whatever, we ask questions. That is polite in our culture, even if it is just chit chat. To meet someone or walk over to another person of our Australian culture and not say boo is deemed as rude, but not so in Aboriginal culture. It is the opposite. And this can be very hard to get used to.

So often, when we do ask pastoral or even general questions and we don't have a strong relationship with that person, then many times we'll just get 'yes' answers to our questions, especially if they don't understand and they don't want to be shamed. Also, often it is rude to say 'no'. And forget about asking questions with options - such as this or that, or either, or. You'll probably get a 'yes' answer to both.

Catechism questions, questions in front of others at Bible study nearly always get a non response by people in their late 40's and above. The younger generation are more attuned to answering questions at school. But then again, if too many of the opposite sex are present, they might be too shamed about getting the answer wrong and so again will remain silent.

Many Aboriginal people don't like other people to know when they have done wrong or when they are struggling. It is easier to suffer in silence than to admit sin and be shamed especially when it is deliberate sin that requires church discipline. So the next pastoral care hurdle - questioning can often be seen as rude.

Closely associated with the last pastoral care issue is this one - in Aboriginal culture, it is rude to push yourself into other people's business. You are in turn told what they want you to know. So pastoral care can very much be watch and wait and glean what you can. So the next hurdle is - be patient, don't push yourself into other people's lives. They will tell you in time if they want you to know.

Next is interaction with the opposite sex. In Aboriginal culture, there is more division and separation between the sexes. Men talk and interact with men and women with women. It is seen as rude if a man or woman joins a group of the opposite sex or even an individual without being invited. Now for us here, this hasn't been an issue, in fact the opposite is true. I talk more with the women and the men talk more with Cathy. Don't ask me why, it just is. But when it comes to hospital visitation, Cathy (and Naomi while she is with us) visit the ladies and I the men. So this pastoral care hurdle is to play it safe and have same sex interaction until you know what is ok.

Lastly is when it comes to visiting Aboriginal people in their homes or camps. Most times their homes, yards and camps are by invite only and we wait at the gate (if they have one) until we are invited in. Even if the door is open and the music is blaring, wait. A good strong relationship lets us into the yard. They are so used to pushy white people, who don't care about protocol, the last thing we need is to be tarred with the same brush. So the last of the pastoral care barriers that I can think of is privacy. Just as the inside of our bedroom is private to us, so is their space, be it their camp and or yard and home.

I hope this has been helpful. It did take me 3 weeks to write it racking my brain for examples. When you are involved in something long enough, you do forget as things become natural to you. It is even harder to remember when teaching people who come to help you until they have made a mistake and then you realise what you should have told them!