

Prayer Points

- For our health as each of us has been sicker than we have been for a very long time.
- For continued wisdom in regards to our work and life here.
- That we'll be disciplined enough to convince the bank we can move into our house.
- For Josh who is being persecuted at school by teachers and students over his Christian beliefs.
- For the AIM workers to find the appropriate people to help craft and then test the Bible 'stories' they have been allocated to form and that when finished, all the stories will be used by the Aboriginal people themselves to tell God's story to their countrymen. Pray that the 'stories' will be accurate to God's word and easy to remember.

Praise Points

- That Naomi has found a job for a few hours a day that works around the ministry here.
- For the help that Naomi has been.
- For the opportunity to buy a house and give us the hope of moving away from the church.
- For the opportunity to go to Adelaide for the wedding.
- That Joshua is growing into a lovely young man standing strong for the gospel and being passionate about sharing God's word with all who will hear.
- For the opportunity to do the Bible Storying workshop.
- For the opportunities that these Bible 'stories' will present to the Aboriginal people here in the Central Desert.
- For a very short summer!

Stepping Out With the Stuarts

March Newsletter, 2011

G'day from Alice.

Oh dear it's April already, but as we look back, we have had an extremely busy start to the year to which my empty diary testifies. I have written a diary for seven years and I have a six week gap from late January till Mid March. I just never got around to filing it out each day. Thankfully I was able to back fill some of it, but there are still lots of blank days - oops!

As our last newsletter went to print we were about to have another funeral. Well what a contrast! Both funerals attracted about 400 people and of course both Aboriginal. So compared to our last one where we had our car and truck roofs used as trampolines, everyone yelling, screaming and laying on the coffin and leaving a wheelie bin load of rubbish all over the place, this one was a peaceful, quiet, and respectful funeral where the children sat at their guardian's feet. At the end of this funeral, Phil just had to thank them for the respect that they showed!

Christmas came and we spent it as a family, just the 3 of us (*and the dogs*) - first time ever! We bought all our favourite foods, snacks & drinks and decorated the house as though we were going to have a party and the 3 of us sat down and watched DVDs all day. In between DVDs the two of us sat in our new inflatable toddlers wading pool (*Christmas present to ourselves*) to escape the heat! Unfortunately there was no room for Josh (*not that he would have sat with us anyway - shame job*). It was a very special day.

Smokie & Luther



Unfortunately thanks to the many drunks we have in town, the Todd river bed is full of broken glass. One night before I went away, Luther stood on a piece of glass which went through his front paw. It was infected before we got home and by the next day was swollen to twice the size! After a trip to the vet and forking out a pretty penny for my troubles, it took nearly two weeks to return to normal.

Due to the trouble in the Alice recently, we have had to leave the dogs out at night to have full access to the block - usually, we had them locked up in the middle of the yard. When I went away, Luther as usual went into sulk mode, but this time Smokie took up my spot as leader and increased his protection of the family. Cath reckons it was amazing to see him change like he did. They chased people off the block when they jumped the fence at night, but it also meant they barked at lot more at night to move on trouble makers. When I came back, Smokie straight away went back into his submissive role. You've gotta love Kelpies.



Contact Details

Phil, Cathy & Joshua Stuart
PO Box 31, Alice Springs, NT, 0871
H: (08) 8955 5271, Mob: 0417 983 385
stuartmob@stuarts.id.au
Web: www.stuarts.id.au



During December & January we spent our 'spare' time building Naomi's room, ready for her arrival. Also in January both Phil & I spent many hours at the hospital in ICU sitting with a lady from church called Dellery who was on life support. Her husband wasn't coping so we spent much time comforting him. Phil & I took turns & on my visit to the hospital they told me that they had arranged for the closest family to

be on the bus arriving in the morning and that they were struggling to keep her alive as she was deteriorating rapidly (the grog had destroyed her). It was Phil's turn in the morning as he sat with the family as they turned off the life support machine. While they waited for the drugs that were keeping her alive to leave her system, Phil was called to an adjoining room to pray with a girl whose 10 week

old baby was dying. After the baby died, Phil returned to Dellery who passed away soon after. It was a real tough day for him. It was the first time he had to watch people pass away. It was especially hard watching Dellery's family who were very confused and distraught as she didn't die straight away after the machine was turned off. They couldn't understand why. It took two hours for the drugs to wear off, and they kept thinking that she was now going to be ok. Dealing with the family's confusion was harder than watching her die. Unfortunately Dellery's family were big drinkers and it took over two months before they buried her in Tennant - they kept drinking away the funeral money.

Soon it was time for Naomi to arrive and my (Cathy's) new position at the train station meant that at some point I would have to go to Adelaide and see in person much of the stuff I was trying to learn. Knowing Naomi was booked to come up on the Ghan on the following Monday I arranged to go down on the Ghan on the Thursday before. I arrived in Adelaide midday Friday and learnt as much as I could over the weekend before surprising Naomi at the Adelaide train station. I was able to get her upgraded with me for a spoilt trip back to Alice.



So Naomi arrived and with her enthusiasm and readiness to get into ministry, we embarked on a few projects that we had been putting off. We re-sorted all the huge storage cupboards at the back of the church - it took Naomi days to sort all the teaching materials. Next job was to empty all the hospital gift bags I made up last year and Naomi took stock of what we had and repacked them and noted what needed to be sought. We then made posters for teaching purposes to go up on the front wall of the church. We then took a couple of days off for personal stuff (see page 7) and then Phil left for a 2 week course (see page 4). By week three I handed over the Sunday school lessons to Naomi & how nice it is to watch someone who can & loves to teach children. Next big project is to make the Katherine Christian Convention banner.

As mentioned in the last newsletter we did move our Ammonguna Bible studies to the morning and it has been a good move. With this success we also trialed moving the church service one hour earlier to 9.30am. This meant the bus run leaving at 7.30am, but it has been worth it. It has been cooler & we have been picking up more people. Yirara College has also been happier with the earlier start, so we have finished our trial and decided to keep the earlier start time.

A few weeks ago one of our ladies got a call as a kidney had become available. Joy is a most deserving recipient who has been truly looking after herself since she was diagnosed with kidney failure many years ago. We are pleased to tell you she has responded extremely well to her transplant and as is now back in Alice from Adelaide and is hoping to return home to her family in Lake Nash this month. We will miss her dearly. She has had to live a long way from her fella and

BIG NEWS FOR THE STUARTS!

Lets be honest, Phil & I are heading towards 40 fast and we don't have much behind us. This thought combined with the concern from family, many friends & supporters of our current living situation led us to consider the possibility of buying a house. A house in Alice Springs away from the church and one of the worst areas in Alice.



Many would remember Cathy's grandma passed away 2 years ago. After some time her funds were distributed and we were allocated enough money for a deposit. We did not have any history with credit with the bank nor a lot of savings so we were only allowed to look for an investment property. We did not mind as at least we could get into the market. So we have bought a house. Just a small 3 bedroom house but it is in a much nicer and quieter part of town and we have great tenants. We have done a little renovating (of course) and the rent covers the majority of the repayments. There is currently a 12 month rental agreement in place giving us time to sell the caravan and get used to a mortgage. We have reworked our whole budget to be able to practice paying the mortgage for the next 12 months for our own peace of mind and that of the banks when the time comes for us to be an owner occupier. The fact that we had our casual train jobs for over 12 months was vital in our application for a loan, so we feel extremely blessed and it gives us something to look forward to when the days are dark here. We know this has put many minds at ease every where as the situation in Alice deteriorates. We plan to move in about this time next year.

*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-K 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 When I was told that I had to go away for a compulsory AIM workshop (on 'storying' - see *Ministry in the Alice for details*) for 2 weeks, I was not a happy camper. I have only ever been away from Cath for 2 weeks once before back in '99. We don't cope well without each other. But what made it worse, I did not want to do this workshop! I was going kicking and screaming. I had enough to do at Alice, and with me going away, Cath and Josh had to pick up my work. Also, as Alice has gone downhill, I was worried about leaving them alone, but fortunately the dogs stepped up their protectiveness. So, off I went. But alas, after a day or two at the workshop, my opinion of the course was dramatically changed, I started enjoying the workshop! When I saw what the workshop was trying to achieve, I was able to embrace it and see how it could benefit our mob. Cootamundra was so quiet and clean - it was a culture shock for me. I fell in love with the place and didn't want to go back to Alice (except to be with the family of course!). Also, Cath has been wheat intolerant for a few years now and as a loving husband, I would often pay out on her over it. Well, guess what? I am now wheat intolerant as well! I can still hear Cathy laughing!

Cathy Now when Phil went away I thought I'd have some time to myself, but what an imagination I have! With Phil away, I was the only person at the train station with a forklift licence to do Phil's job, and so I had some horror days. With the extra jobs of the dogs, extra people to visit at the hospital and the property maintenance to do, I was so busy that instead of lying awake each night for hours while he was away (as I usually do) I collapsed in bed every night and was asleep in minutes. By the start of the second week I was so run down I got sick. I got so sick that I came home one morning feeling so bad that I accidentally left the front gates wide open and collapsed on the lounge. 1.5hrs later I got up to feed the dogs only to see the front gates wide open. I flew out the door thinking that I had lost the dogs, only to scare poor Luther half to death as I flung the door open at high speed. I was so happy to find him at home, but then decided Smokie would be harder to find. Before I got halfway to the open gates, Smokie came running out from under the church bus wondering what all the fuss was about. Anyone who knows me and my lack affection for the dogs would never have believed their eyes as I cried and hugged the dogs. I was so happy! I was so sick and don't think I could have handled losing the dogs, and praise God that He didn't give me more than I could handle. I was sick for two more weeks!

Josh Since I last wrote, I have had 2 girlfriends, one for 8 weeks and the other for a week. I joined a new school (the senior college) at which I have become famous for my strong Christian views, which many despise me for. Recently dad bought me some Christian T-shirts with thought provoking and parody logos. I wear them to school to so that even the deaf know I'm a Christian. I have also preached 3 times in the last 6 weeks. All my time lately has been spent either preparing sermons or Christian messages for school & church, eating, sleeping, school/homework, Cadets and playing the newly released Pokémon White Version. I have become quite a collector lately, keeping toys in their packets which I would never have considered doing when I was younger. If any of you readers out there have Facebook and wish to keep in touch more regularly with me, my Facebook name is "Joshua Isaac-Schweitzer Stuart"



Box 489F
Alice Springs NT 0874
Phone: (08) 8959 5500



Joshua Stuart
Date of Birth: _____
Expiry Date: 28 Feb 2012 Principal: *[Signature]*

2011 Student ID Card

Yes Josh with long hair!!

children for years, soon she will be able to go home to them to live!

Since Christmas, we have had a hold up with the toilet block. As the church block is wrongly zoned, we need special documents justifying our position to be able to move forward. I have been trying unsuccessfully to get one of these documents as there are just a couple of people in the whole of Alice qualified enough to write it! So I continue to email & make phone calls until someone gets sick of me and does it. Stay tuned.

Now Naomi wanted to find some part-time or casual work within the schools here in Alice. Unable to find anything on the internet or such, she arrived here a little concerned. We assured her that jobs flow when employers hear that the job seeker has already moved here and has somewhere to live. Sure enough a few phone calls at the beginning of the week had Naomi sorting through numerous offers a few days later. She has a great job just a few hours in the middle of each day in a support role at a school catering to special needs children. This job works perfectly around all our ministry things.

In the last week of February Phil went away for a two week course, so Joshua took on the leading and preaching for both Sundays. The first week Joshua was so sick he should have stayed in bed, but he soldiered on and made us proud. We had a record three bus loads of Yirara students & six carers as well as two full bus loads of our church mob. Naomi was inundated with 15 Sunday school kids of which I could do little to help with Josh so sick & in church by himself. It all worked out and we were all exhausted at the end. However, the next week Naomi flew home for her brother's wedding, so it was just Josh & me. We had told everyone there would be no bus run that week - *we did not want Josh to be left alone at the church*. It was also a non-Yirara week, and as Josh & I waited, just 4 people turned up and they weren't from our mob either! What a contrast to the 130 or so we had the week before. It was cosy & personal & Josh still did great, but we were disappointment at the lack of commitment from our mob.

The end of March saw Phil's mum Gwen fly over for a week so that Phil & I could drive down to Adelaide for a wedding. We left on a Thursday afternoon and got back on the following Sunday afternoon. Long drive yes, but worth it. The eldest son of close friends who we have watched grow up got married and we were thrilled to be able to share in their special day.



Well, what can we say except nothing is normal around here. You make plans, but things always crop up. All we can say is that we are glad God is sovereign! Please keep our ministry in your prayers. We have such a burden for the people and some days it can be so overwhelming!

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

Ministry In The Alice

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

Many of you may know of the appalling condition Alice Springs has slid into over recent months. Alcohol fuelled violence, sex abuse, break-ins etc have spun out of control. Latest stats say that break-ins have gone up 450% since 2004 and sex assault 97%! It has become too much for the Police to handle and many calls to Police go unattended. We gave up calling them due to their lack of attendance, but sometimes you just have to try, so we called them again 2 months ago at 7:30pm, as did friends two buildings up the road. There was a drunk Aboriginal man upending wheelie bins and throwing glass bottles at the passing cars. Our friends were told when they humbugged the Police that they were the 110th caller that night (remember this is only 7:30pm) and there was no way anyone was able to come out that night. The Police are so stretched and the gaols are full in Alice and Darwin.

To give you more of an idea of what it is like to live in Alice, more so the CBD and around the grog shops - of which we live over the road of one of the worst, please if you have access to the internet go to the web pages below and read them. Yes I know the names are long, but if you go onto our newsletter on our web site, you can copy the web address and paste it into your browser.

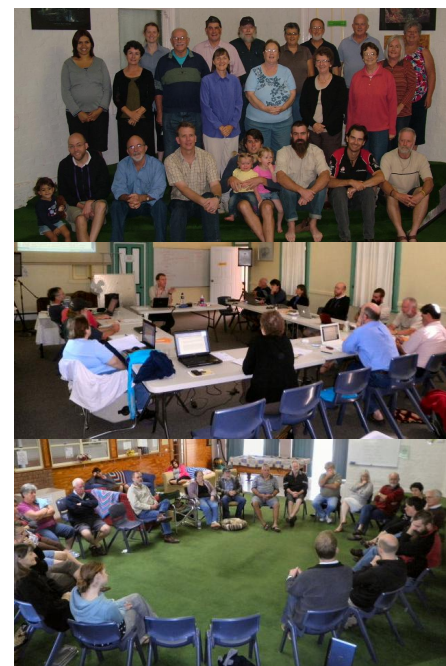
<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/destroyed-in-alice/story-fn59niix-1226008040782>

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2011/03/02/3152426.htm?site=alicesprings>

Now since these stories were written, the Town Council has put up large generator powered work lights around the trouble areas in the CBD. Unfortunately, this has now moved the trouble out of the CBD and some of that trouble has joined up with our trouble, making it double trouble! You go to sleep at night with the yelling and screaming and the dogs barking at nuisance people and people coming over the fence. Everyday we are confronted by Aboriginal people defecating and urinating outside our fence and on the shop wall across the road. Seeing fights is an everyday thing. The other night I heard this woman screaming outside the gate. Her fella was kicking and bashing her up. She was calling for someone to call the police. I went outside to investigate and saw him dragging her by the hair and kicking her, so I went and confronted him. He left and as per usual, she followed him. Ah! Sometimes you think why bother?

Now we are not alone here. Ours is just one story amongst a growing multitude. This week with parliament here in Alice, there was a huge public protest over the government's inaction. Having to put up with all this day after day, night after night really tests people's patience and tolerance of Aboriginal people. It is not right that you can't feel safe and relax where you live. In fact, the friend who lives just up from us is the property manager of the units she lives in. The occupants of these units are regularly fending off break-in attempts. It's not right. Even Naomi was verbally accosted on her way to the toilet the other night by drunks at the back fence. We are looking forward to moving to a quieter part of town next year, to get a break from the trouble each day, to sleep well at night knowing that someone isn't coming over the fence, and to be able to see the people your are ministering to afresh and not feeling tired, haggled and resentful.

What Alice needs is prayer. White people are being bashed even in daylight in the CBD, shops and homes are being broken into night after night. It won't be long before people are so fed up that they will take matters into their own hands and vigilante groups start to pop up. We pray that if it's God's will that He will bring revival to this depraved town, or at least, clean it up!



AIM Bible Storying Workshop "OneStory"

"The majority of the world's unreached people groups are made up of oral-preference learners, who often have no written language of their own. In order to reach them, OneStory works with mother-tongue speakers to develop and record worldview-sensitive, chronological Bible "story sets" for each specific group - typically 40 to 60 stories in a two-year period. Mother-tongue speakers spread the stories to others. These story sets form the beginnings of an "oral Bible" to be told and retold for generations." onestory.org

AIM was able to organise for it's workers the 4 week 'OneStory' workshop, but was compressed into 12 days!

Here we had to learn the art of story telling and learn how to craft parts of the Bible into 'stories' as best we could for each of our Aboriginal people groups.

Now as the Aboriginal culture has an animistic worldview and spirits play a large part in their lives, we were given 14 stories from the Bible relevant to animistic people. This set covered Bible teaching from the creation of the spirit world through to the book of Acts. Once a person memorizes all these stories they have a broad picture of God's plan and action to redeem sinners. *Obviously there are many more stories which could have been included but our time was limited!* These 14 stories covered the story telling aspect of the workshop. Each day we would be told one of the stories and we would have to learn it together and someone would try to retell it - exactly. It's harder than it sounds! On the second last day, we all sat around and each one in turn told the story they had chosen to specifically learn. Many of us changed the way the story would be told as though we were telling it to our mobs back home.

The second part of the workshop was learning how to choose stories to fit a specific theme and then the process of storying. The two main parts of storying are facilitating the story - *that is putting together the resources*, and crafting the story. Crafting is ideally done by an Indigenous person, who once they have heard a few versions of that part of the Bible, talked it over, drawn pictures to help them remember, they then make it into a story to tell others using words and expressions familiar to their people group. The story then has to be tested by telling it to a person who has not heard the story before, and after discussing the story, fix any problems that need to be fixed. To understand the process we tried it out. Working in pairs, one as Facilitator and one as Story Crafter, we had different Bible parts to story and test and then teach them to others in the group.

One of the things which impressed us all about 'OneStory' is the absolute commitment to make the stories line up with the Scriptures and that can take 12 months or longer for a facilitator to get the story set right to recorded and then use. The process is precise and thorough.

Now AIM as a group has chosen 19 stories for our first set. Our broad theme is "God is the Winner!" Each AIM centre is going to work on two or three stories, finding a suitable person to be the crafter and then others for testers. In October, we will all meet again to discuss our progress.