

# On Patrol September 2008

## To Tibooburra

Every once in a blue moon some padres would plan their patrols in such a way to end up in roughly the same geographical area to meet up with others.

So, the team from South Australia work their way up to the north eastern corner of their patrol area, whilst the south-west Queensland team work towards the bottom corner of their patrol, and the NSW fellows do the same, working north west.



Michael studies the Scriptures before breakfast

Call this what you like, but meeting this way padres and wives have a sort of “presbytery meeting”: they discuss their work, they pray together and for each other, exchange ideas, kick one another’s tires, and take notes on the latest in terms of camping gear.

The first week in September one of those meetings happened. It was also a good opportunity to say good buy to our friends, Andrew, Kerri and John Purcell who will move to Brisbane the end of the year. Andrew will enrol at the college as candidate for the ministry.

I drove up to Mildura from Kerang to hitch a ride with Michael Willsmore. On our way Michael planned to visit some properties, mainly to catch up on some of the folk who had suffered from serious health issues.

## Getting it ready

Pulling up in Mildura to see Michael’s vehicle packed to the rafters brought back many memories. What



itself.

seemed like a 4WD with room for nothing more, had enough space for my gear. Then, after filling up the jerry cans, we headed north.

Our first stop was at an orange farm where we picked six boxes of oranges for the folk in the central districts. These went onto the roof rack!

Then, the long somewhat monotonous road into the never-never. I could hardly contain my excitement, holding on to my camera just in case a photo opportunity presented

## Only 2.5 inches of rain for 2008

### *God's timing*

It was about lunchtime that we turned off into a lonely farm track. As we pulled up, mother and daughter appeared on the veranda.



**"The Marbles" at Tibooburra**

"Are your ears singing, Michael? We were just talking about you as we heard the LandCruiser crossing the grid!"

This was the first experience of this kind that day.

We left the main road as we turned left to make a loop of about 180kms. With the sandy outback road pointing west towards the South Australia border and the sun now making its way to the horizon, Michael expressed his concern about the person who had a bad stroke. This was our next stop. He

wondered if they would be home.

We passed a home close to the road where there were quite a few cars park. It s was a regular stop for Michael, but this time he wanted to press ahead to visit the sick person.

The way in which Michael then applied the brakes just as I was looking out my window, admiring the tones of the bush that time of the afternoon, caught my attention.

"Maybe I should just turn around. These people might know if someone is home where we going."

As we stepped into the kitchen the same thing happened: "Michael, it is good to see you. I was wondering when you will be visiting again."

Our guest looked concerned. She led the way to the lounge room to have private moment. She told about how her elderly husband, a strong outback cockie, had contracted cancer. The doctors had told him that he might not see Christmas this year.

Back in the kitchen we found him in his wheelchair. Alone; everyone else had gone outside. God prepared the moment.



**Clump of desert pea: content with a few run-off drops on the roadside**

“Any questions you want to ask?” Michael asked after he made it clear that he knew about the situation.

“Everyone is just telling bad news. They say my time is short.”

God’s timing is perfect. We shared the Good News of hope in Christ with him and his wife. He listened intently, as if it all made sense to him. Then we prayed that God would do His marvellous work of salvation in the life of this dear friend and his wife.

We left in amazement, filled with gratitude that God is fully in control. That night we prayed for our friend. And so we did every night to follow.

### *Into the deep north of New South Wales*

The tire repair in Broken Hill gave us the luxury time to enjoy a hamburger. With tanks filled up we returned on our course due north again.



Michael with Kim and Jenny

“The year was not good thus far. We measured 2½ inches since January. The dams are dry. We’ve spend more than \$80,000 on feed for out stock. It’s not looking good.”

We enjoyed a cup of coffee and had a slice or two of cake at this friendly Christian couple. We talked about God’s provision, about the fact the He does answer prayers, but the outcome is not always what we wanted. We prayed together and entrusted them to the Lord.

They still had a heart to support the work of the Lord. The cheque book came out and with cheerful hearts they contributed to PIM’s mission.

“Next time, Michael, don’t arrive here with filled up tanks. We want to fill it up with diesel.”

I thought of the widow’s support to Elijah as I stared at the bare paddocks with no sign of grass on it. Faith sometimes has its rewards!

### *Tibooburra*

The time spent with the others in Tibooburra was good. Bible reading, prayer, hearing reports of others and how the Lord is doing his work of salvation is always encouraging.

To see the vehicles of PIM with its signage on it in one place is good. Many people enquired about the work; others thought there was no Presbyterian Church functioning anymore!

Cameron McKenzie, a qualified motor mechanic,



PIM padres and wives: Henk Tiemens, Kerri, Andrew and John Purcell, Carmel, Cameron and Jacinta McKenzie, Michael Willismore and yours truly

helped fixing a broken brake line of a tourist. Meanwhile we talked to others in the caravan park. “You are doing a great job. Keep doing it,” a fellow said to me when we left.

We spoke to the truck driver whose truck was broken down along the road. Michael gave him some literature. I assume he would have read it – there is not much else to do when stuck in the middle of nowhere. Maybe it was by God’s appointment that the steering pump packed it in.

### Summary

It was trip worth the while. Michael and I got to know one another better. I was privileged to catch with old friends of my patrol days in NSW.

I thank God for the opportunity to be part of this great work.

You can be part of it too. Please pray for PIM, for the patrol padres, for resources to keep them on the road, for the people they visit, for open hearts to the Gospel, and for our friend with cancer. Ask God to show him mercy and draw him to a close relationship in Christ so he can die having peace with his Maker.

Your friend in the Lord,

Rudi

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Sunset in the never-never



Desert acacia proclaiming that spring has sprung