

Mallee Patrol News

November 2008

A very prosperous and blessed New Year to you all!

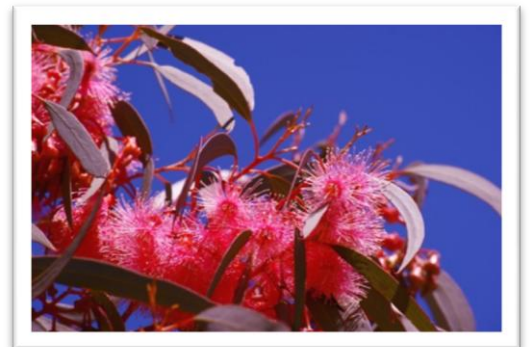
Dear friends in the Lord Jesus Christ,

It might be a bit optimistic to say that our next Christmas is only 11 months away, but it is true! So, for us to wish you a blessed New Year doesn't sound too good, but we have leaped into another year since we last communicated with you. Just think about it: nine years since we all panicked about the so-called YK2 bug. The Lord is still good to us.



Us with our crop of grandchildren

We enjoyed a very blessed time with our children and grandchildren over Christmas. They all visited us in Kerang, and Heila prepared the best dishes as only a grandmother can do! Now we are looking forward to the arrival of our fifth grandchild (middle of February) in Dubbo. Pray for Bernice and the baby; may its birth go well and may this little one grow up to glorify her Saviour.



Beautiful flowering eucalypt

South-west of Boort

A dear friend from Townsville, Hal Bubb, came to visit us in Kerang *enroute* to a wedding in Warrnambool. It was my privilege to transport him from Kerang to Litchfield where he rejoiced in meeting up with Chris, his son (and his family), who is a pilot with MAF in PNG then on furlough.

After dropping him off, I commenced my patrol. The early stages of summer could be felt as I made my way from Litchfield towards the east.

After arriving at some properties where there was no one home, discouragement got the better of me and I almost decided to go home. Then I saw someone in paddock dropping feed for the sheep. "He is a busy man and would not want to be disturbed", were my first thoughts, but I turned off into the driveway which led to the homestead.

The friendly man got out of his ute and walked up to me, reading my embroidered name on my shirt, with “Presbyterian Inland Mission” boldly stated too.

We talked a bit about the weather, the drought, the failed crop and the price of fodder; but then our conversation shifted towards things spiritual. This was a deeply committed Christian who came to the Lord after searching for truth and salvation through Catholicism. What a privilege it was to talk about “the real stuff” and to in the end



The harvest is ready ...

pray with this man right there under God’s blue skies, with the wind howling and the dust flying about!

I can’t say that the rest of my patrol was as successful and uplifting. What was uplifting was the sound of rain on the canvass of the trailer later that night. But as anyone with experience of camping will testify, what sounds like a major downfall at night, is little more than 5mm when you wake up the next day.



One of the smallest post offices around?

A major highlight of the first leg of my patrol was to travel to Noorat on the invitation of the local minister, Miles Fagan, to participate in the local field days. He rented a stall to promote the work of PIM and also met people with a view to spread the Gospel. This was a major event: we handed out lots of show bags with tracts, booklets and information about PIM. Some people enquired about the work and with the \$20.00 note we could explain where it all began and how we still follow in the footsteps of John Flynn.



Peter Walmsley hand out a show bag at the Noorat show

The ladies of Noorat also prepared lots of small parcels with some goodies for us to hand out to the folk on far-flung properties.

On our way to Rainbow

This takes us to the next leg of our patrol.

Heila accompanied me as we travelled west from Kerang where we made camp at Rainbow the first night. Being just before Christmas we found it a joy to hand out the gift parcels to the ladies. What a wonderful gesture of those who live in areas where the drought was not so severe to think of those who really felt the effects of the drought in a bad way.



Red River Gums

At one home the fellow was not altogether excited to see us arrive. It was in the middle of harvest and they were busy. I thought to just introduce myself and then get out from under his feet. The apathy changed into warmth and a good conversation started. He invited us to come back and talk about things he feels he needs to put right. Before we left his partner emerged from the house. We gave her one of the parcels and she just lit up! "It's been a long time since I could afford anything as luxurious as this!" We also offered some of the non-perishable food we received to give to those in need. At first there was some hesitance. We insisted, since some of it would be past its



It's got a story to tell!

use-by date the next time we go on patrol. They accepted the invitation and took some canned food. "We were down to our last can of baked beans today. Thank you so much!"

I believe we were able to lay a good foundation for future visits. Please pray for God's blessing to rest upon us for future contact.

I attempted another patrol mid-January and got out as far as Manangatang and Robinvale, where I camped. The temperature surged to 45 during the day and a very nasty westerly wind whipped up unbelievable dust clouds. I ascribe the fact that there was hardly anyone home to the fact that the folk were still on holiday, or just did whatever they can to escape the heat. It was still 40 degrees at 7.30pm. I packed up the next morning and



This post office at Qumbatook looks a bit like a portable set-up!

drove home.

Prayer points

- Pray for wisdom to a friend who finds it difficult to explain the Gospel to close relatives who see no necessity to live in a personal relationship with the Lord.
- We are experiencing one of the worst heatwaves of the century, with temperatures hovering around the mid-40's every day. Pray for the elderly and those with scarce water supply.
- Pray that in this drought and "climate change" people will focus their hope not on human (and often ungodly!) scientists to "fix the problem", but on God who can open the windows of heaven.
- Pray for those who, on top of the extreme drought, also have to deal with economic instability because of the international financial crisis.
- Thank God for the drop in the diesel price – it is good news for travelling padres, and it is surely good news for the farmers.
- Pray for wisdom to build up friendships of trust which lead to sharing the Gospel.

Greetings till next time.

Your friends in the Lord,

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Ghost gum with a lurking dust storm in the background

P.S. You can also download the patrol reports from our church website: www.kerangpresbyterian.org.au



Granite stone church building at Noorat