



December 2016 – February 2017

Australian Indigenous Ministries

Planting – Partnering – Participating



Visiting Borrooloola

by Phil Woods — Caringbah Baptist Church

Groups from Caringbah Baptist have now made 5 team trips to Borrooloola — one a year since 2012. There have also been other visits in-between by individuals or couples from our church.

We started with the idea to develop a longer term relationship with a community and church — journeying together in Christ. Our Senior Pastor *Paul Summers* contacted *Rob Alley* to discuss how and where this might best be done and Borrooloola was suggested.

The team experience has been fantastic every year — always different but always enriching. Our teams have had a huge age range, from 11 to 84 years old and every decade in between! Over the years we have had 25 different people who have made up a team of between 6-12 members each year. We have lots of fun together and I enjoy getting to know the members over the course of our 2 week trips.

Team Preparation

We have a series of team training sessions over a few months beforehand. We learn a little about Indigenous history and community of Borrooloola. We also get to know each other as a team, reflect, and learn about God's plan for our team.

I was part of the 1st trip in 2012. Through my busyness of the year, I saw God's hand helping me when as team leader I really needed help preparing for team training sessions.

What do you do at Borrooloola?

We go with a very open plan, leaving ourselves to be led by the Holy Spirit. We are there to just be.....to build new relationships, deepen existing friendships,



encourage and be encouraged and to pray and worship God with our Indigenous friends. We have helped the local church members to develop ideas for Sunday school and outreach to kids. We have been involved with and sometimes led Bible studies. This year we made up an impromptu puppet show which was a real hit with the kids!

Any surprises?

During my trips I have been surprised in many ways. This year I saw people I thought I knew well — but I saw them in a different light. I saw more of the value in us not having an agenda beyond relationship building and mutual encouragement in faith. Each year that I have been, I have felt encouragement. I have seen and experienced frustration, but most importantly I have seen and felt God's presence.

What things have you learned?

I remember thinking that the more I know, the more I realise I don't know!

This year my 2 youngest kids came along, as did my wife for the first time. Seeing each of them interact with our team and connect with people in Borrooloola has been very special. I think these trips have been very formative in my kids' faith and their views of society. My 12 year old said that he learned that prayer is real and that God answers prayers.



I have felt God's presence on our trips and seen him answer our prayers. Like last year we led a Bible study and were discussing how the church can serve the community there. At that very moment a woman came running in to the church seeking refuge in the middle of an argument with her partner. One of the local church members stepped up and helped broker a peaceful solution....praise God!

Highlights

On the night we arrived in Borroloola, one of the church members put his hand on my shoulder and told me how he loves when we come up because it encourages him so much.....God is good.

Sunday night church is usually held out in the community and is a special spiritual experience. Hearing Vincent preach with his loudspeaker turned right up, hearing his words that are so clearly inspired by God.....these are very, very special times.

Meeting new people and hearing some of their stories, and hearing the testimonies of Christians in Borroloola is a huge inspiration to me. But most of all, it is seeing God at work. Yes there are many problems, and much to do, but God is present — He is at work in Borroloola.



Kavena & Louise



Rhonda & Michelle

A Joshua Found

Last year Michael Jones from Tennant shared how he and *Richard Driver* were like Moses. *'We've been leading our people for a long time now. But we need younger men to come along so we can teach them and train them up — like Moses did with Joshua. That is what Richard and I want — some younger men to come to the Lord now so while we are still strong, we can teach them and train them up as leaders.'*

Thank you for praying — God is answering! For several months now Michael has been training up Jimmy by helping him study, prepare, and share God's Word.

Please keep praying — that God will raise up other Joshuas so there will be an ongoing team leadership for the Lord's work in this area.

A cry for faithful godly leadership can be heard right across the Aboriginal field. Please join the churches and workers in praying that younger ones will turn wholeheartedly

to Christ and willingly learn from and be trained by those with years of wisdom and faithfulness. *Pray that tomorrow's leaders of the Indigenous Church will begin being faithful followers today.*



Jimmy & Michael

It's Complicated...

by Jono Wright

Late on a November afternoon we were sitting in a remote NT community waiting for the air to cool a little so people could come out for a church service. The community was quiet with most people asleep until the skin-tearing beams from the sun disappeared behind the shadows. But somewhere there was the noise of machinery, the sounds of a construction site in full swing. A new building was going up, probably a new government project, and even though it was a blisteringly hot Sunday afternoon the contractors were powering on.

Sometimes it feels as if communities are full of contractors working for big bucks. They come in, do their work and then clear off to the next job. Meanwhile the community sleeps on.

Years back it didn't happen like it does today. If work was to be done in a community, local people were usually involved in the work force. There may be some places this still happens but we don't see it. Sadly governments and councils more often than not, deem it cheaper and easier to get contractors in to do their fast work as opposed to the training and then employing of local people to do it. I admit it is a very complex issue with no simple solution.

Sustainability is complicated out here — just as much in the church as in construction. We see people come up and rush through doing short term mission. They blow through and 'do their thing' and then clear out leaving the situation no better — and hopefully no worse. There is a positive to this e.g. something gets done. People learn about Jesus, kids

have a great time and the guys on mission hopefully gain some experience that will help them in some way mature in their walk with Christ.

All of this makes it very tricky sometimes to work out what is good for locals to be doing themselves and what is best left to the 'experts'. We face this difficulty quite a bit with young energetic people coming through looking for something to do and with the time to do it.

The Camooweal church building was in desperate need for some TLC. The paint was old, cracked and falling off revealing the bare old wooden boards you just wished could tell their stories. It would be great to have the local church get together and paint it. But then you take a step back to look at the size of the church building, and then you look across at the church people...a handful of older ladies and a couple of men and a very big job. What do you do??? **Yet again it's complicated.**

I once had a conversation with an older man out bush about care-taking of some church property. The old man fully expected there would be a Christian white person from somewhere over East who would come and care-take the property. Another time and another person expected a Christian team to appear from somewhere and complete a job of fixing up some things around a property, and he was a part of a big church full of young and strong men.

Back to the Camooweal building — and thus begins the cycle of thoughts of what to do with a job that is clearly too big for this church family. Should we ask someone else to come and help? Or the real question with the makeup of the church here is - do we ask someone to come and do the job for us, or not... We talked about it as a church and everyone thought it was a good idea to ask someone for help. Hard not to think that way really if you want the job to get done.

So, when a Mission Awareness Tour from EV Church on the central coast NSW came through in July we asked if they would be willing to help. With their coastal enthusiasm, energy and zeal to help God's people in need they said YES! In the morning they worked on the church building and in the afternoons



ran a really good low key kids program. It was a great time. The church got painted bright blue (the locals' choice) and the kids got to hear more about Jesus. We really appreciated the help and the fellowship so much, but we are still left thinking... how can we do this differently? Here in Camooweal the problem is more about numbers and age than energy and enthusiasm. Other places with numbers can have a problem with enthusiasm. Did I mention... ***it's complicated!***

Pray for the Aboriginal churches that God will stir the Spirit to give greater enthusiasm and in other places to stir the Spirit to give more numbers too. Maybe one day teams from Central Australia will be travelling 'over East' to help bring the Word and help to churches in the city too.

Pray for wisdom for the local leaders and missionaries as we walk that line of working things out to ensure the church is being responsible with what God has given us.



Greetings from Cherbourg

by Christine Moses

We have been seeing steady progress in the ministry here helped by working out the plan to see all people active in the life of the church. They are part of the preaching program now which sees *Pastor Willie* only doing the monthly Holy Communion.



Sunday school is only held about once a month with about 5 attending. I often share this role with my daughter Retta. She has also been running the Youth Outreach Ministry with Christian dance on Sunday afternoons with the help of her brothers. But this year Retta has been full-time at

TAFE, *Moses* is on staff at Townsville YWAM, and *Daure* is working so it makes it difficult to keep it going.

We have had an influx of ministry visitors from April to August from PNG, Koreans from Gold Coast, Kenmore Baptist and a few others. This is when monthly outreaches to the hospital, open air meetings and prayer walks around Cherbourg. Cottage meetings are held every Tuesday in unchurched homes and most elders share a word or testimony there.

Currently we are in liaison with our local Council for a new church building. We would value prayers about this. The church building itself has been here since 1938 and to move it or build a new one needs a lot of prayer. Please pray that God will give wisdom and guidance for all of us — and for the resource people available to assist in this future development.

Most importantly this year was the homecall of *Alzira Conlon*. She was a key person to the growth and development of the AIM Church and the current renewal programs. She played a major role both in the mental health and the justice system in Cherbourg. Her death was certainly a loss for us all.

Return to our Heart Land

by Ruth Freudigmann

Dressed in jeans, long sleeved shirts and jackets we set out before dawn from Ulverstone, Tasmania to Tennant Creek in the N.T. Eugen had been asked to speak on the Holy Spirit at the Church Birthday Weekend in early September and so it was with a spring in our steps and excitement in our hearts that we boarded the plane to take us north.

Eugen was between chemotherapy doses and in his 'up' week so he was well physically, spiritually and mentally. Many weeks prior to the date he spent in prayer and preparation which included drawing visual aids. While waiting in Melbourne for connecting flights we changed into short sleeve shirts and ditched the jackets into the carry-on luggage.

Several hours later we circled over Alice Springs and as we looked down to the dry and arid countryside our hearts knew we had come home. As I write this tears run down for a country and people we love so very much. Our arrival in Tennant was late after the familiar drive from Alice Spring so it was early next morning when the first person arrived at the door of our cabin in the caravan park.

The day followed on with visiting and catching up with church family and friends and hearing stories of new Christians and how folk were continuing to grow in their faith. It was a wonderful experience to have women run up their yards with open arms as they saw us arrive and children calling our names in excitement. Many tears were shed and the reconnecting was the sweetest thing. We truly were

home with the family. A bonus was catching up with AIM personnel, *Richard and Sue Davies* and *Rhonda Coats*, as well as meeting *Peter and Karen Dixon* and their son *Ben* who conducted the Children's meetings.

Eugen had prepared very well for the weekend. He gave the messages at the church while Richard took on the camp meetings when the scheduled speaker was unable to attend. A lovely lunch was enjoyed on the Saturday along with good friendship and much talking. Eugen helped the men with the B.B.Q. while I helped the ladies a bit. The church ladies managed well under the leadership of *Phyllis Ricky* and the input of Karen Dixon.

Spiritually we were all blessed through the sharing of God's Word. God kept Eugen going so that he had no nausea or fatigue, even on the long drive to and from Tennant to Alice Springs. To God be the glory great things He has done.

All things come to an end and after the Sunday evening service it was time to say 'good bye' once more. This resulted in many hugs, handshakes, love and exchange of phone numbers.

It was just on daybreak as we drove out of Tennant Monday morning with very mixed feelings, knowing that we would probably never return together to that wonderful part of Australia. We rejoiced to know that the Christians were in God's hands and He was continuing His work in their lives and good things were happening. Our hearts will always be in the centre of Australia, but home for now is in Tasmania.

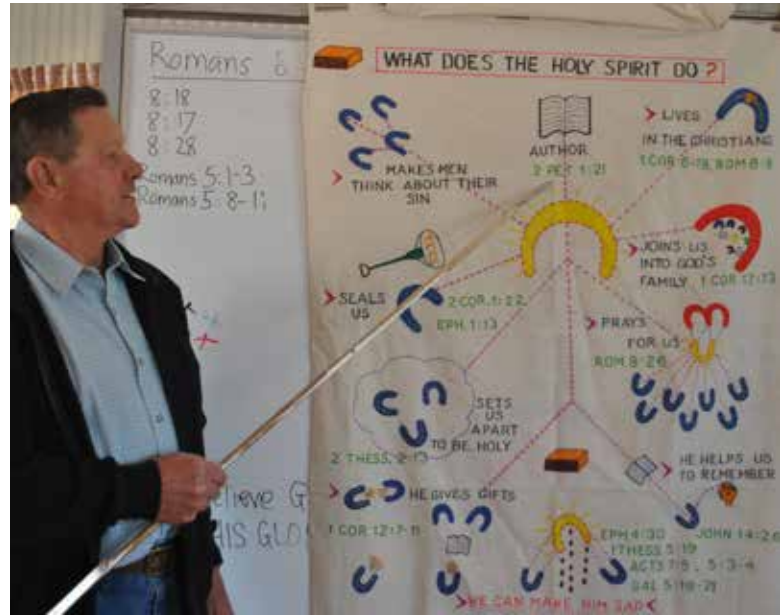
Warm shirts and jackets were pulled from the



Eugen and Ruth with Richard Driver and Michael Jones

luggage once again at the Melbourne airport ready for the crossing of Bass Strait and the landing in a cooler place. This time as we circled Devonport

airport and looked down, the sea was blue and the grass green as far as the eyes could see and yes, we knew we were home.



Newspots

Health

After a visit to a pain clinic *Deb Mckerrell* has been referred to a surgeon at Toowoomba. It is hoped the piece of bone compressing a nerve root in her lower back can be removed. Pray the surgery might happen quickly with good results. Pray for her and *Bob* as they wait on the Lord day by day for His guidance and help.

Eugen Freudigmann was hospitalized in October due to fluid buildup in his lung. Though there were some complications, he made a good recovery and began a new drug treatment in the fight against the cancer. Ruth has shared, 'All is going well so far with the new drug. No serious side effects. We trust God to use it the way He wishes.' They both appreciate your prayers for the new treatments, and for strength throughout the journey.

Betty Nicolson, wife of Council member *Arthur*, suffered a broken hip in September. After a complete hip replacement and several weeks in a convalescent centre, she is now home and doing well.

Sympathy

The sympathy of the AIM family is extended to *Simon, Tirzah, Abigail* and *Sophia McKee* following

the death of *Simon's* father. Please pray for their ongoing comfort from our Lord.

Sympathy is also extended to *Anita Painter*, a Christian leader in Barunga whose partner of 34 years passed away in September. Please pray that God will comfort and strengthen *Anita* and family as they adjust to life without him.

The cloud of grief cast its shadow across the Dubbo Family Church in early November. *Robbie Taylor* who grew up in the church died in his sleep aged 24. The funeral was huge and the grief deep among the many lives that connected with his — not the least being the *Cox* family. Please pray for his relatives and church family in this time of shock and sadness.

New Address

Former AIM leader *Mr Howard Miles* has new contact details: RM 45 Osborne House
54-60 Osborne Street Nowra NSW 2541

On Leave

Marian Quinn is on long service leave from Woolanig Homeland Christian College. She is spending time in Tasmania where her mother has been experiencing some health issues. Please pray that *Marian* will enjoy a time of refreshing before returning to the school for the start of the new year.

All Inclusive God

by Cliff Letcher

The Bible Study group that Carolyn and I attend in our local church has been studying the book of Ruth. It is a remarkable story. God uses a woman who is declared to be excluded from participation in the life of Israel and Israel's worship - for not even 10 generations of living in Israel could expunge the wrongs that the Moabites exercised against Israel as they were heading for the Promised Land. God not only brings her into the life of Israel but also includes her among the ancestors of Jesus our Messiah. It no doubt would have shocked the people in Ruth's lifetime if they had realised that their Messiah would have this heritage.

Christmas is a reminder that God is about the business of including all — even the unlovely and unwanted in His eternal kingdom. Jesus came as a poor child, who became a refugee, not a great conquering king. God does the unthinkable again and again.

History demonstrates repeatedly that God acts in ways that often shock us. Before his conversion, the Apostle Paul could be compared with a modern day militant terrorist who puts people to death because he believes that such people are enemies of God. Paul was undertaking that very thing when he was stopped in his tracks by our Lord and turned totally around. He became one who was to suffer for the Kingdom of God as he proclaimed that God loved those who were unacceptable to His people the Jews.



Our Australian history includes much sadness. Some (perhaps most) people who came here regarded the original inhabitants as not human so they could be dispossessed or destroyed without a twinge of

conscience. When God raised up missionaries to go and share the Gospel with these original inhabitants they were often scorned, abused and rejected by the society around them.

I am not simply talking about the early missionaries. In my time with AIM I have talked with missionaries who have had family members and others regard them as wasting their lives by investing in this ministry, rather than using their skills to further their career or gain financial security. There is a cost which our workers willingly pay as they seek to obey God and involve themselves in the lives of people who are often regarded as of little value in our Australian society.

When AIM asked Carolyn and myself to become involved in this work again by providing pastoral support for the AIM workers in the Northern Territory we did so willingly. It has been a delight to once again spend an extended period of time and a lot of travel to be available to discuss their work and listen to their concerns.

This year we spent four months on the road visiting the AIM centres in the NT and beyond. Each place has its own unique characteristics requiring our involvement in a variety of ways. This has been the second year of a three year appointment. Please pray that God will raise up the necessary people to minister to our workers in the field beyond our involvement in this work.

There were concerns that our workers wanted to share with us, and some of these concerns they wanted us to convey to the AIM Council. Other issues just needed to be talked through and prayed about. Still others will need ongoing action.

The support of missionary workers goes beyond financial and prayer support. It needs personal contact and encouragement. The telephone call, the letter or email, the birthday card or present can all go towards keeping a worker on the field.

Opposition and discouragement can come in all sorts of ways. So too can support and encouragement. Your ministry to our AIM workers — and through them the Aboriginal church — can be a valuable part of this ministry. We can do some of this through our visits but you can participate as well.

