

Presbyterian Inland Mission
...beyond the furthest fences...
South Queensland Patrol



Spring 2009

This is our second newsletter since commencing work for Presbyterian Inland Mission in South Queensland. We have now travelled 16,500 kilometres visiting 485 stations. We have met many people in a multitude of locations in various circumstances doing all fairly much the same thing. Trying to survive the drought although in isolated patches it hasn't been quite as desperate as in other places. It has been great to have the opportunity to prepare this newsletter at this time because we have been confined to Charleville because of wet weather. What a difference rain makes at this time in boosting optimism, what a change it makes to everyone's demeanour.



We have also met up with quite a few tourists when we get to a town for the usual requisites, fuel, water, bread, meat and fruit/vegies. The logo on the Cruiser seems to attract them. They also have some stories to tell of their travels. Some months ago one intrepid traveller was trying to tell us that you should try to avoid the bones of the dead animals on the road. Ever the sceptics, we had to get a new tyre repaired because it had inherited part of the bone structure of one of the two that make up the national emblem. On our last patrol we had to use the hydraulic

jack to change a tyre only to discover that some of the oil had escaped from the reservoir. Thankfully we were able to make a compromise and use some olive oil in the jack. Fortunately we didn't have to raid the jack to cook the dinner.

It is really sad to see so many deserted houses in the patrol area. So many stations would have been successful businesses in the past but are now just left to ruin.

The south and south eastern area of South Queensland would have been predominately growing sheep for wool prior to the demise of what was once a thriving industry. The infrastructure associated with this great industry is also left to rot, not to mention the decline in the essential workforce.





The trend across rural areas is that properties have to increase in size to remain viable but of course this further bleeds the country of its people, which in turn has a detrimental effect on the rural and business community. Less people, more isolation and fewer services.

When we are not on the road we go to church in Charleville and we also attend the bible study when here. The church is very supportive of PIM and us. We appreciate and value their support. It is an odd experience just to walk down the road to church.

That privilege is not available to the people that we visit. We take this privilege of convenience so much for granted.

We seldom visit anybody within an hour's drive from towns in the patrol. There are more than enough stations to visit as it is. We feel that it is the responsibility of the churches in the towns to service that need. Life in the outback is extremely difficult for a Christian. It is not easy to get to church and there are so few to have fellowship or to share your faith with.



We have enjoyed some good times with people from within our patrol area. We don't know what benefit our visiting can be to others, they too lead busy lives. After all what is the general response from all of us when we have 'religious callers'? We have not found many people that see the need for us to pray openly with them and have not engaged in many spiritual discussions. At this stage in our visiting we listen politely to people airing their grievances, talking about their lives and their families and feel that in this way we are getting to know them. We have met up with several though, that have suffered unimaginable tragedies. Some have had concerns with succession planning or knowing when they have had enough or maybe just the isolation.

But now a righteousness from God apart from the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished-he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus. Acts 3. 21-26

Let us not be under any false illusions here as there are so few people out here who have a genuine relationship with the Lord Jesus. This is a real mission field, but isn't that the case everywhere? We are part of a fallen world and we mustn't forget that even Satan believes in God.

In the Lord Jesus whom we place our trust,
Derek and Joan.

