

Australian Missions: March 2010 Brisbane QLD

Brad, Ronya & Orian Johnson



Prayer Points

1

Stacey W. from West End as she seeks permanent housing and prepares for the birth of her child.

2

Give thanks and pray for Kyle as he begins his journey as a new brother in Christ.

3

Brad and Ronya as they begin to let go of some ministries in order to focus on others.

4

The Cleveland ladies as they implement some new ideas for outreach.

5

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The Water Dragon

So there we were. Sitting around at picnic table at South Bank Parklands having enjoyed tomato and bologna sandwiches. Justin, Wayne, Jackson, and Kyle had gathered to meet me for lunch from different parts of the Brisbane CBD for a time of fellowship, food and study. We had just finished the food part when a beautiful water dragon, about two feet long, showed up near our table for a hand out. Recognising an opportunity, I said to Jackson, "My boy Orian has been after one of those for the last two months. Do you think you could catch him?" "Of course!!" he responded enthusiastically. The others looked on doubtfully as he spent the next five minutes manoeuvring into position to dive on the beast. Most fortunately, a pigeon landed in front of the lizard, distracting him long enough for Jackson to make his dive and grab him. It was at this point I let the team down. As Jackson made his grab, I was supposed to be ready with one of Ronya's picnic baskets to receive the lizard and snap the lid shut. When the lizard landed in the basket he bounded straight back out (I was too slow) onto our table, then onto an adjacent table, much to the surprise of the surrounding German tourists who



JOE SAYS;
Watch TV, stay asleep.
Consume, obey.



yelled something about a baby crocodile. The lizard ran though their carefully prepared meal scattering sauerkraut, sausages, and Heineken everywhere. By this stage Justin and Wayne were laughing so hard (both on their backs) that they were attracting attention, so we discretely moved away from the area.

Last Wednesday, I baptised Kyle Powell, one of our newest West End visitors. Kyle is nineteen years old and lives in a boarding house in a sleazy part of the city. He is trying hard to make something of himself, and is attempting to finish high school at a community college. The boarding house he lives in also houses several grumpy alcoholics and other difficult personalities, so it is really a difficult environment to be in. Jackson introduced Kyle to West End last month, and I held two studies with him before he decided to commit his life to God. As the West End family grows, I need to spend more time in the city. These guys need a lot of encouragement and direction. Right now, I travel in one day a week (other than Sunday) and meet with whoever is available. Sometimes all the guys make it (Justin, Wayne, Jackson and Kyle), and sometimes it is just one or two. I also meet with the more troubled members of West End, as they are able. From time to time one of our volunteers is able to join in during a work lunch break. Justin and Wayne are making spiritual progress, but are a bit more street hardened than the other two. On the teaching front, we are partway through a series entitled, 'What is your story?' It has been really interesting to explore the stories of members and visitors in terms of turning points, stumbling blocks and values.

There are many exciting things happening at Cleveland. Some time ago, the leaders of the congregation embraced the idea that great preaching, great worship and an active family life is what grows congregations in Brisbane (anywhere?) and have worked to make it happen. We have been learning new songs on Wednesday night studies for use on Sundays. The preaching roster has been revised and themes have been developed that point people towards a personal relationship with Jesus. Our newer families are being nurtured into meaningful involvement. On Wednesday nights, the group will be participating in a series on postmodernism and its impact on Jesus' body. From Cleveland, Ronya and I draw human resources for other outreaches that we are involved with. The growth of this group will be a marathon, not a sprint, but we are greatly encouraged by the progress and commitment of the people who meet at Cleveland.



Left: Stacey removes a splinter from Jamie's foot.

Right: Katherine is an amazing lady.

Above left 1. Kyle Powel is baptised at Southbank parklands.

Above left 2. The twins Nicki and Beth recently celebrated a birthday.

Below blocks 1,2 & 3. West End walkins take part in "Your story" series.

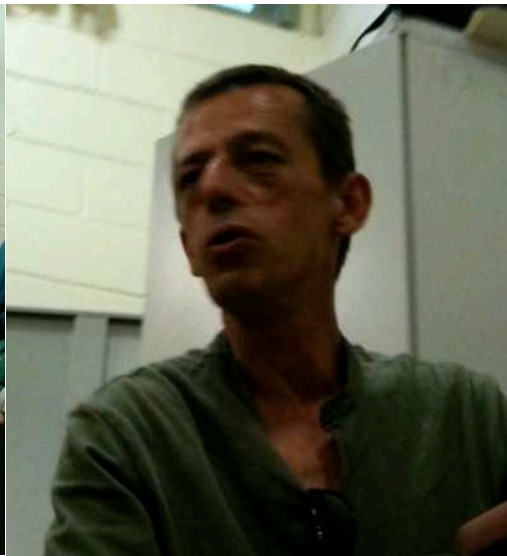
Also as a part of the excitement at Cleveland, the kids classes are taking on a new shape as we settle in with our new curriculum. There is still much to organise in this area, but the kids are already reaping the benefits from a more purposeful approach. The ladies at Cleveland have also resumed meeting on Thursday evenings once each month to share a devotional and prayer together and talk about ways to minister in the community, and also to our own members who need extra encouragement.

Details, details, details. The dates for camps are approaching quickly and the seemingly endless details to be worked out are flowing at full speed. The new event "Mission Moree" is taking a lot of attention as we set out to envisage circumstances we have little experience in. This means I end up doing a fair bit of research, speaking with people who are competent

in this type of outreach and aboriginal culture in general. Under these circumstances, Ronya and I are having to let go of some of our direct involvement with the other events, particularly camp Orion. We always knew that we would have to do this eventually, and the path to "hands off delegation" has not always been smooth. In the Horizon Ministry group, in particular, we have had vigorous discussions on the values that will drive us forward; and in some cases we have not found answers. We are both convinced that letting go is what we need to do. Facilitating the establishment of ongoing, functional, ministry teams is a priority for us and it is not always clear how the organisational groups will end up looking. We need much wisdom for insight, and above all, humility in the awareness of our own

limitations about how much we can do.

There are many people we love to be around, and Katherine Cardinal is one of them. Katherine started attending West End about four months ago as a volunteer, and has become an important part of the team. She has a degree in education, but recently changed her life direction in becoming a primary state school Chaplain in a challenging socio-economic area. Chaplains are at the forefront of the remediation of societal ills here, and scrape by with meagre resources and poor remuneration. We are so glad to be able to encourage Katherine, and such as we are able, provide resources and ideas. Stacey Power, in particular, has worked in Chaplaincy earlier in her career and is a great help to Katherine as she begins this journey.

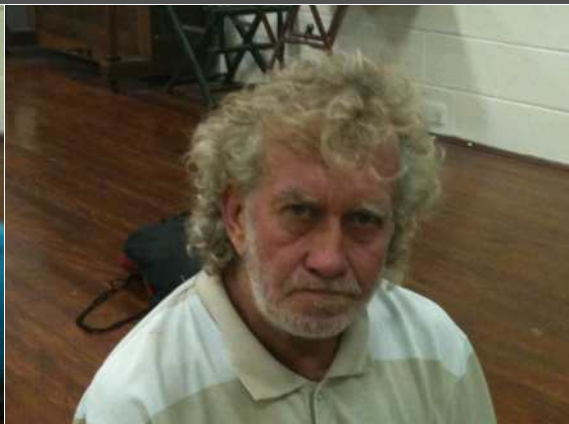


What is your story? Why are you here? Where are you going?

Two weeks ago I was digging in my front garden with my neighbour, Richard, the Dutchman. He is an interesting guy who has ridden his motorcycle through Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and pretty much everywhere else I have ever heard of. While we dug, he said, "You are a church man. What do you do when the Jehovah's Witnesses show up on your front door and try and tell you they follow the Bible?" A really positive discussion ensued, in which we both were able to agree that the Bible is should be understood as its authors intended for it to be understood, and in its proper context. I have held studies with Richard previously and will continue to do so. The next concept that I will explore with him is what are some of our human responses to the authoritative word of God. Prayer and wisdom of thought are needed. Richard and his wife Joke' are fast becoming great friends.

Also due to contact with our neighbours, Ronya recently started volunteering at a local Dutch Retirement Village close to our home. There are residents from Australia, but 60% of the residents in this particular facility are of Dutch origin. Joke', Richard's wife, is the activities director for the assisted living residents there. They are always looking for volunteers to help with extra activities, and Ronya had been looking for a new opportunity to serve in our local community, so after a few conversations with Joke' and a visit to the Retirement Village, she

Who can I trust? What is a family? Does anyone care?





MY NAME IS TRAVERS

AND I CARE.

I will listen to you in your pain and share with you what I have found. I will serve you and expect nothing in return. I hope that you can have some of the peace and certainty that I have found.

signed up to volunteer every Friday morning. This has been a great opportunity for Ronya to deepen her relationship with Joke', while also serving some lovely older members of our community. One of her first activities was to cook Poffertjes (little Dutch pancakes) for their morning tea. After cooking about 200, everyone seemed to have satisfied their sweet tooth and to be pleased with the little visit with the culture of home.

Women's ministry opportunities are continuing steadily, as well. Ronya has met several new folks at Orian's school and is developing good relationships with several of them as she becomes more involved as a school mum. Two of the ladies, Allie and Vanessa, have already joined her at the bi-weekly ladies bible study that meets on Thursdays during the school term. Also, Allie's sister who was visiting her from overseas also came to the study during her stay in Brisbane. It is very exciting to see this circle of influence widening.

Thank you for your love and prayers. I hope you have enjoyed our annual report and look forward to hearing feedback and any questions that you may have.

Grace and peace,

Brad, Ronya and Orian Johnson

