

# Greetings from OZ

17 May 2011

Wow, where has the time gone? Our last "Greetings" was written in the heat of summer and now we are experiencing the coldest May days and nights in years, headed into winter Down Under. We will try to paint a picture of our life in the last few months. Our travels included trips to Melbourne, Canberra, and Perth, Western Australia, all while trying to maintain our schedule here in Sydney. Quite a juggling act at times!

## SURRENDER

We were in Melbourne the end of March for the 2011 Surrender Conference (<http://surrender.org.au/>). Their website says, "Since it first ran in 2004, the mission of SURRENDER has been to invite, inspire and inform an emerging generation to respond to the radical call of Jesus." We had an information booth about AAANZ.

During the two-and-a-half days of the conference we talked to many people, handed out AAANZ literature, and sold a few books. The brochure "What Is An Anabaptist Christian?" was the one people took most often. There is still plenty of "introducing Anabaptism" work

to be done here in OZ and NZ. Mary would ask people when they approached our table "Do you know about Anabaptism?" and the answer was usually "No".

## THE CAVE AND THE DEN

Sunday evening after the conference, we moved to the Cave, a church building used by Praxis for offices and teaching. On Monday 28 March we taught two sessions as part of the Praxis programme (<http://www.praxis.org.au/>). Tuesday we joined an Urban Seed city walk (<http://www.urbanseed.org/>). Our daughter Moriah is on staff with both Praxis and Urban Seed. She leads walks through the centre of the city for high schoolers and introduces them to city issues like homelessness. Tuesday evening we led a workshop on "Peacemaking Starts With You" at the Den, one of Urban Seeds' buildings. Over twenty people attended including folks from AAANZ, Urban Seed, Collin Street Baptist, and home churches. It was well received and we stood around answering questions till after 10:30pm.

## LETTING FAMILY GO

Back in Sydney, we had our son Micah and his family with us for over a week as they moved out of their house, had a yard sale, and flew out of Sydney on Monday 18 April. They returned to Harrisonburg, Virginia after being here in Sydney for almost a year. Needless to say, we miss them. They were a vital part of our life over the last months. Sadly, things did not work out for them and they felt the need to return to the States.

1. Mary explaining Anabaptist Christians
2. Mark at our information table at Surrender
3. Conversation about dealing with violent people
4. Mark matching grandson Jair, hands in pockets
5. Shawna and Jair in the new 1643 community house



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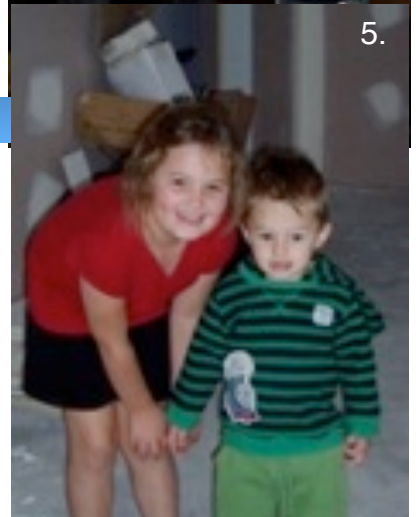
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## GRIEVING WITH MUSIC, FOOD, AND DANCE

Shortly after they left we drowned our sorrow in a feast of music, dance, and wonderful international foods at the National Folk Festival in Canberra. Moriah joined us in this long weekend of music and culture that richly fed our souls. One song in particular, "Ibrahim", convicted us about how refugees are treated in this country. You can listen to it at: [http://www.reverbNation.com/artist/song\\_details/7836531](http://www.reverbNation.com/artist/song_details/7836531).

## DISCERNMENT ABOUT INVOLVEMENTS

We were home in Sydney for half a day before flying to Perth, Western Australia for a conference and some work on behalf of AAANZ. In that short time we received a phone call with an invitation to do some teaching in Asia. We have a number of people who act as a discernment group to help us make decisions about how we spend our time, what to say "yes" to and what to turn down. In this case, we met with two from the group to process this decision and decided we are too busy with commitments we already have. How to spend our time wisely is an on-going prayer concern. There is so much to be done and so many opportunities to do it but we want to be good stewards of our time and energy and make the right choices.



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- 6. Bouncing street entertainment at the Folk Festival
- 7. Hot chocolate in Perth with our AAANZ-WA trip organizer, Nathan
- 8. Hamming it up with Mary G
- 9. Speaking at the Anabaptist Gathering

The first four days of our time in Western Australia were spent at a Wellspring conference. Wellspring is described on its website as: "...a dispersed ecumenical community of men and women who seek to follow Christ, live prophetically, see God's presence in each moment and person, and work for reconciliation and practice peace." (<http://www.wellspringcommunity.org.au/>) We are part of the community and try to attend its national

gatherings every two years. This year's conference was excellent and provided us with rest and inspiration. We had the opportunity to listen to Mark Bin Bakar, an Aboriginal man with a creative ministry of reconciliation and healing for his people. Watch a video about him and his alter ego Mary G. at: <http://www.abc.net.au/tv/messagestick/stories/s2911937.htm>. Later this year we hope to host Mark (Mary G.) at our church.

After the conference we did some teaching at Vose Seminary, the Baptist Theological College in Perth, and visited with AAANZ folks in the area. Saturday morning before we flew out to Sydney, we spoke at a local AAANZ gathering. The theme of the morning was "Following Jesus" taken from chapter three of *The Naked Anabaptist* by Stuart Murray.

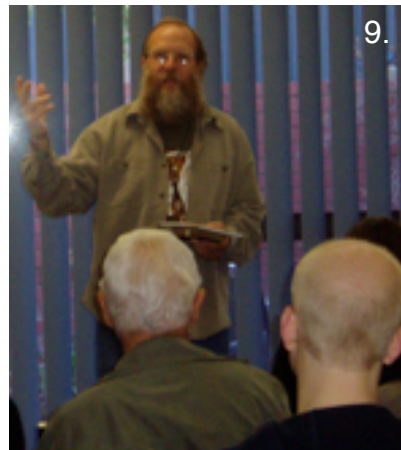
We're home again at the 1643 Community and back into our routine of life and work here. We thank you all for your prayers and notes of support. You are an important part of what we do.

Shalom,

*Mark and Mary Hurst*

PO Box 738 Mona Vale NSW 1660 Australia

I'll try to put the photos (plus other photos) on our blog so you can see them better.



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Contributions may be sent to: Mennonite Mission Network, Box 370, Elkhart IN 46515-0370 and must be clearly marked as a designated contribution for the Mark and Mary Hurst

