

Greetings from OZ

4 September 2011

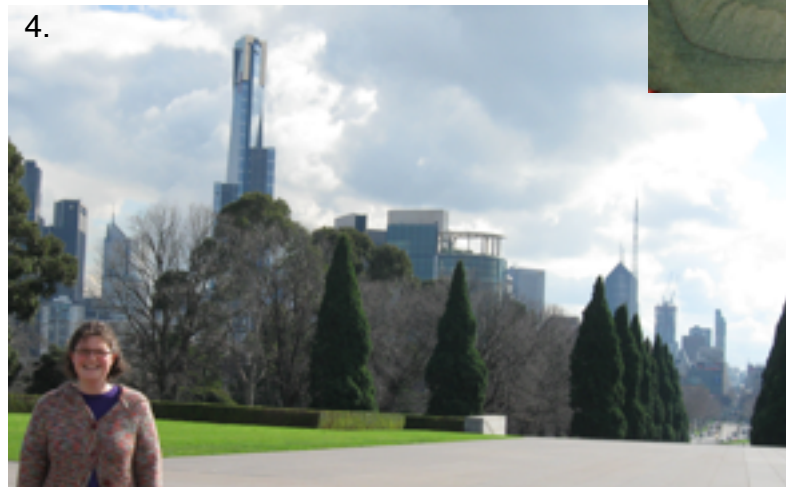


Thursday was the first day of Spring Down Under. Our days are getting warmer and longer. Mary gets to stay outside in her garden later and later each day. Mark is thinking of giving up his indoor winter swims and returning to the nearby ocean pools.

Mark had a first-time experience in July – attending a Baptist Assembly as a Baptist pastor. It was interesting to observe how our state Baptist Union operates and conducts its church business. It really was not that different from Mennonite conference gatherings we have been to in the U.S. and Canada. Mark even found old friends to catch up with over lunch.

Mary flew to Launceston in Tasmania (Tassie) on July 26 for two days of teaching at the Launceston Polytechnic Institute. She was one of four trainers leading a workshop for Alternative to Violence facilitators. The best part for her was discussions she had with one of the other trainers over the two days – discussions about faith.

She used time after her teaching for visiting AAANZ folks and other friends around northern Tassie. On Sunday July 31 she spoke at City Baptist Church in Launceston. (You can listen to her talk at: <http://citybaptistchurch.net/worship.htm>.) The pastor joined AAANZ as a member after Mary's visit.



After church at Avalon on July 31, Mark drove to Albury, Victoria and then on to Melbourne the next day. He visited our daughter Moriah, delivered some of her belongings to her, left the car in her parking area, caught the bus to the airport, and flew to Launceston where he was met by Mary. Using the home of local AAANZ members as a base, we continued visiting AAANZ folks around Tassie's north coast.



The evening of the 3rd of August we had an AAANZ drop-in. Fifteen adults, two babies and one teenager attended. We had a discussion of issues raised by the group and enjoyed cups of tea and a

variety of tasty goodies. (There are benefits to visiting Tassie, even in the cold and wet of winter!)

Several people told us about meeting some Mennonites from Canada, now living in Tassie. We got their details and tried calling them while there but failed to make contact. Mary phoned them on our return to Sydney. When Mary introduced herself the woman said, “We know who you are. People keep saying when they find out that we are Mennonites, ‘You should meet Mary and Mark.’”

Friday August 5 we flew to Melbourne where Moriah met us at the airport with our car. We drove to a camp near Ballarat where we were the speakers at the 2011 Seeds Network retreat. The Retreat is an annual event for the four covenant groups who are based in Melbourne, Bendigo and Geelong in Victoria. This year there were about 25 adults and 10 kids. We did two presentations and had numerous conversations with folks over the weekend. We had an AAANZ information table set up and sold about \$100 dollars worth of books.

Sunday afternoon and Monday morning, the 7th and 8th of August, we spent time with Moriah and then headed to Sydney Monday afternoon. As usual for these trips, our time was full of good conversations, renewed friendships, meeting new people, and getting the opportunity to introduce Anabaptism.

Back in Sydney we resumed work with Avalon Baptist Peace Memorial Church and contacting AAANZ people around OZ and NZ by phone and Internet. We started a film night at Avalon scheduled for those months with five

1. Mark and Mary relaxing in Botanical Gardens near Moriah’s in Melbourne
2. Seeds Community on Retreat (Mary in lower right taking photos)
3. Seeds small group discussion at retreat (Mark in background with our literature table)
4. Moriah, our daughter near her home, behind her a main street in Melbourne
5. For our ‘volunteer time’ we help our elderly neighbours around their garden. Here Mark helps paint the fence while Mary was pulling weeds.
6. Mary pinning Mark’s jeans quilt/comforter into the frame, ready to knot at the church
7. Mary at film, soup and bread night
8. Mark talking to members of our congregation at film night
9. Mary helping serve soup
10. Crowd at Film, soup and bread night
11. At church in August, church members serve snacks at the Loosely Woven concert which raises money for Amnesty International



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8.

Sundays. Our first event was a big success. We showed a film called “Our Generation” about the needs of Aboriginal people in northern Australia. We had a well-known speaker to introduce the film and speak afterwards. Soup and bread completed the evening and the full house (over 120) seemed to agree it was a worthwhile event. The pressure is on for October to maintain the high standard we set in July.



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The four-bedroom apartment at the 1643 Community has still not been rented. Please pray that God will lead the right people to us. Thanks.

And thanks for your continued support.

Shalom,

Mary and Mark

Write to us at:

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Australia

or m5hurst@hotmail.com



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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 MST



Anabaptist Association of Australia and New Zealand

