

# Greetings from OZ

30 November 2011



Do you know this bird?

## JUGGLING POSITIONS

Juggling several positions – pastoral workers for the Anabaptist Association of Australia and New Zealand (AAANZ), pastors at Avalon Baptist Peace Memorial Church, and organisers of the 1643 Community – leaves us little time for our holidays (known to North Americans as vacation.) But we have become skilled over the years at combining work and holiday with our travel on behalf of AAANZ. We recently returned from a three-week road trip to Queensland where we did exactly that.

## VISITING DANTHONIA

On 24<sup>th</sup> October we drove from Sydney to Danthonia the Bruderhof community in rural northern New South Wales. We have visited the community over the years, seeing it from its beginnings in 1999 to what it has grown to be today. The community is now at about 180 residents with most living at Danthonia and a few in nearby towns. We always receive a warm welcome and gracious hospitality during our stays. We get the chance to say a few words to the gathered community at their communal meal.

The Bruderhof community supports itself with a sign business called Danthonia Designs. The manufacturing equipment was being moved from one building to another while we were there. They were celebrating 10 years of being in business. Local



2.



3.

towns throughout northern New South Wales and southern Queensland have purchased Danthonia signs and we spotted many on the rest of our trip.

The community fields were the greenest we have seen there after the good rains they received this year. We got tours of the gardens being tended by their young people. Mary encouraged the young gardeners and told them about her new favourite book, **Teaming With Microbes**.

Danthonia now has a medical clinic with a doctor, dentist, and physiotherapist. They serve people in the surrounding rural district. We also heard stories of their connections with Aboriginals in the area. The community has worked hard at being good neighbours.

One new addition is a high school for their teens. The young people used to go to the local schools but the Danthonia community was not happy with the influences their children were being exposed to so they decided to start their own school. We met the teacher and talked about films he could use to teach about peace and justice.



4.

## MEETING WITH AAANZ FOLKS

We left Danthonia the next day after their communal morning tea break and drove north about two hours to a small village named Uki where we visited former pastors at Woolloomooloo Baptist Church in Sydney. They had a family with them from Woolloomooloo and together we had a wonderful evening of talk and prayer. The next morning we joined several of them on an excursion to a local art museum and then we headed to Brisbane the capital city of Queensland.

In Brisbane we stayed with some local AAANZ members. It was good to see them in their new environment. (They moved from Sydney a year ago.) On Thursday, our daughter Moriah joined us from Melbourne. Friday we attended a book study run by another AAANZ member.

## MUCH NEEDED HOLIDAY

Saturday we travelled by ferry to Moreton Island, a large sand island across the bay from Brisbane, and had a wonderful week of holiday thanks to the generosity of a mission supporter from the USA. Photos are available on Mary and Moriah's Facebook accounts.

## BACK TO WORK

### DISCUSSIONS on COMMUNITY

Sunday 6 November we attended a local Anglican church with our AAANZ hosts and then in the afternoon spoke to a gathering at their house. Thirty-six people showed up for lunch and an afternoon of discussion about community. The discussion went well and we had the chance to meet several new AAANZ members who we only had email contact with before. In the evening five of us joined the AAANZ AGM phone call. Justin Duckworth from Urban Vision in New Zealand was our guest speaker. His comments were like a continuation of our afternoon discussion. It was a rich day.



Monday to Wednesday the Hurst crew played tourists in southeastern Queensland exploring the ancient volcanic caldera in the area and all the overlooks in the national parks.

## MORE HOLIDAY TIME

Thursday morning, we dropped Moriah off at the airport in Brisbane and went on to another meeting with a local AAANZ member. We had a delightful couple of hours catching up with him and a few young adults who stopped by our outdoor table in the Blackstar coffee shop in the West End neighbourhood of Brisbane.

## MEETING MORE AAANZ FOLKS

We then drove to Armidale, NSW where we spent the evening catching up with another AAANZ couple. The time was too short and we talked too late into the night but we are glad we had the chance to visit. We returned to Sydney in time to prepare to lead worship at Avalon on Sunday.

We left Queensland with a number of invitations to return. These road trips are always fruitful times of work and relaxation and we thank God for the many opportunities they provide.

## ANSWER TO PRAYER?

Back in Sydney we got the good news that three local Bible college students were moving into the last available

1. Regent Bowerbird, *Sericulus chrysocephalus*, Moriah was our photographer and captured this while we were in QLD.
2. Sunset view from our window at our island resort
3. One of the many macropods we saw lounging along the road in the volcanic caldera
4. Two of the various conversations at our AAANZ/Wellspring gathering.
5. Moriah at a Strangler Fig which overwhelmed another rain forest tree
6. 98% of Morton Island is National Park. We walked 5-10 km. each day.
7. Much of the area around the Caldera is World Heritage, protecting species that are threatened or endangered as are these ancient Antarctic Beech trees, *Nothofagus moorei*.
8. Waiting for the ferry to our island resort-note the photo behind our packs of the ship wrecks that form a safe harbor and helped create the reef where we snorkeled 3 days

apartment in the 1643 Community. This was an answer to prayer. We were looking forward to how our life together here at 1643 would develop now that the houses were fully occupied. Monday of this past week seemed to be an indication of what our life together would be. Several of our community members were having cups of coffee and tea together. There was good interaction between residents and our neighbours. We felt we were finally seeing the living out of our dream for this place.

And then Tuesday evening we heard of a complaint to our local council (local municipality authority). It is a long story that is still emerging. The latest is that it looks like three of our flats/

apartments at 1643 will have to be vacated; meaning seven of our residents will have to move. We are all shocked by the news and dealing with the inevitable "Why God?" questions. Please pray for our community as we deal with this new situation in the days ahead.

Thank you for your support that continually sustains us and keeps us going forward in this work.

Shalom, *Mary and Mark*

Write to us at:

P.O Box 738, Mona Vale NSW 1660, Australia  
or [m5hurst@hotmail.com](mailto:m5hurst@hotmail.com)



**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

