



March 2021



Looking forward to a new year of possibilities



Ladies praying for Autumn before her trip to America



After years of drought...we get floods. There is no middle ground in Australia.



After months of uncertainty...they're on a plane

Greetings from Australia's Northern Territory. Unlike 2020, and unlike many other places in this world, 2021 in the Northern Territory has been pleasantly uneventful thus far. Currently we are going about our daily business as we normally would have done before the events of last year transpired. Our church has been meeting regularly since June with no interruptions. We have seen a steady increase of young couples attending church, and our core group of faithful members has grown as well. Our Thursday night Bible studies have been growing in popularity and are something I look forward to every week. We have adopted a format of making Thursday evening's topic of discussion the previous Sunday morning's message. This has allowed myself a second opportunity to clarify difficult points, and allows the congregation to ask questions, add thoughts and study details. I know that this approach has been gaining in popularity among churches in the states and I'm very glad that we have adopted it.

I am always aware of a contrast when I try to accurately report the state of things in our part of the world. On the one hand, crime rates have risen, government systems are failing, there is considerable anger and unrest among the residents of our town and it does not appear to be getting better. On the other hand, our church is growing, people have given up alcohol and drugs, families are being put back together and lives are genuinely improving. Where these two worlds intersect is through extended family. While God is working through those who are willing, the families of our church members continue to fill the prisons, rehab facilities, and drive up the crime rates. While there is often a joy and optimism among our people, just below the surface is a deep sadness and burden for those who continue to follow their own path. Once a month we skip the morning message and have an "open mic" Sunday or "Sharing Sunday" as we like to call it. It's here that you will see mothers crying for their children who have gone astray, fathers asking prayer for their sons in prison, and spouses asking God to reach out to their partners. The other place to feel the underlying hurt in our communities is the funerals. So many funerals. Please continue to pray for our people as they follow the Lord even through these times of trouble.

In other news... we finally shipped Autumn off to college. She is currently attending Pensacola Christian College in Florida. After securing all of the necessary clearances, scheduling one of the very few flights off this island and agreeing to a two week, self-funded quarantine upon return, Jen was able to take her over and help her settle in. Last year was a year no one could have predicted. Despite the set backs we are glad that she was finally able to transition smoothly to this new stage in life and we are grateful for the extra time we got to spend with her. Please pray for her as moving to a new place is always a bit daunting. When that new place is 10,000km from home that adds a whole new dynamic. To further complicate things, we are not at liberty to fly over without wading through significant red tape and quarantine requirements. Given the price of air travel I'm not certain we would have been visiting very often anyway but I think it's harder when it isn't even an option to consider. She has been missed in Barunga and the people here ask about her every week.

After the wild year 2020 was, I am reluctant to plan anything. Nevertheless, I have set a few goals. 1. I want to continue what we are doing and find small ways of improving. There's something to be said for faithfulness so we will continue to crack on with our current schedule to the best of our abilities. 2. I want to open a book shop/ lending library at the church to get good Christian materials and media into our community. We already have a room ready, we just need to put up shelves and stock them. 3. We want to expand our reach beyond Barunga in a practical way through the efforts of not only us, but our congregation as well. Thank you for joining us in praying for these goals.

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