

COWRA and YOUNG 27-29 June 2022

For this trip we had a few prayer supporters. It has become more apparent of an urgent need to encourage Principals and teachers in their ability to meet the emotional and spiritual education of children in secular schools, because the NSW Department of Education has forced all "Christian" input into religious education classes which happen only one hour a week. We have found that these teachers are quite open about their frustration with the lack of support of their own professional standards, even if they are not actively Christian. The schools which do not have religious education do have "Counsellors" but they work across schools in a larger area so are not available from day to day.

The strategy God has given us is to offer 12 booklets about Bible characters and 7 booklets about the bigger questions of our Christian faith asked by students, to be used by the teachers, not openly so much as by sharing of ideas from the booklets. The booklets are NOT for Scripture teachers use as we have had serious opposition from some in the last two years of distributing the booklets.

On our first day we called at Spring Hill, Spring Terrace, Neville, Lyndhurst, Woodstock and Holmwood Schools. Our booklets and prayers were received most graciously at the first three but at Lyndhurst, G, the receptionist, was extremely ungracious, even aggressive, as they have a chaplain for welfare. However K who is in charge of afterschool care was so pleased to pray and to receive the booklets to share when she had opportunity. Disappointingly, M, the Principal at Holmwood was most happy for prayer but could not accept the booklets on account of Department rules. We stayed the night in Cowra and had opportunity to pray for G and J, the owners of the motel.

Day two, we went to the two Cowra primary schools, Mulyan and Cowra, where our prayers and booklets were received. We also had opportunity to share booklets and prayer with R who was sitting with her children, waiting for the bus to Holmwood. After getting fuel and sharing prayer and our Jeremiah 29:11-14 leaflet with VJ we drove to Wyangala Dam School where there are only two students left and these will be forced to travel 50 km each way to Cowra, but they received the booklets and prayer, maybe in hope that God will intervene with a miracle. We drove to Koorawatha and Greenthorpe Schools, where again our booklets and prayers were received with favour. We arrived at Monteagle School to discover that the teachers and children were at Murringo School. We prayed for AM, the lady who told us this news, and trusted the GPS to get us to Murringo. It led us to a massive lake across the middle of the road so we had to get the paper map out. We eventually arrived after calling at Young North School on the way with good success, and both the Murringo Principal, A, and also the teacher from Monteagle School, S, listened carefully as we explained why we offered our booklets, receiving gladly both the booklets and the prayers. At last it was time for lunch (2.15pm) then we drove to Young School. They would not receive the booklets, Department regulations and all that, but we met R outside, waiting for her children and got talking. She is a born-again Christian and was most interested in the ministry, taking on the booklets to make a difference in her own community. We had a prayer together and we went to our motel. P and his wife C are Catholic and so we prayed for them and gave a copy of our Jeremiah leaflet.

On day three we went to Grenfell, Cargo, Cudal and Canobolas Schools. At each one our booklets and our prayers were received with grace and love. We had only one more school on our list so we drove there, to Mullion Creek. But at this school the receptionist was not prepared to take the booklets because there was a new Principal starting next term and she did not know his policy. She did allow us to pray for the school and community while we were there. We began the drive home, stopping at Lucknow for a coffee and sandwich and realised that we could be at Meadow Flat before school finished so our last stop was at this school where the Principal received us so graciously and accepted prayers and booklets. It was a satisfying finish to our trip. Thank you Lord! Our booklets had been accepted at 17 schools and God had brought us two of His own to cover the places where the booklets were not accepted. We had covered more than 1000km in the three days. As we travel we are aware that we can carry His glory and His favour to all we meet who will receive us.