

December 2009

G' DAY!



**Craig &
Tomya Peters:**  **Australian Missions**

Merry Christmas!

So many things make this kind of a weird way to start a newsletter. For one, it's almost 100 degrees outside! Although I lived in southern Louisiana for almost 11 years and saw my share of balmy Christmases ... at least it was Winter!

It's wonderful to witness our first Christmas "down under". The Summer version is all they know down here. And it will be great seeing it from their perspective. I even hear that it involves BBQ and beaches. Perhaps not a bad swap!

In addition, this term has been so loaded up that I didn't even see the end of the term coming or the fact that I hadn't sent one of these newsletters out in a

while. My apologies for that.

I would like to take this opportunity to Thank you for your support and to wish you and your family a Merry Christmas ... and a successful and blessed New Year!

And as you look toward that new year, please think about the idea of an Aussie Mission trip. The exchange rate slide and economic issues have pushed the ticket prices down. And you have free accommodations with us once you arrive!

Keep in mind that Seasons are opposite. It is Summer here ... which is Peak Tourist time. It also means tickets are much more expensive. I recommend US Spring or Fall to come here and enjoy the pleasant temperatures.

Again ... may this be a blessed time for you and your family!

A change of Plans ...

One once said, "Life is what happens in between the things you can control." Then you discover you control very little.

We had grandiose plans to have all 5 of our kids and their families here for Christmas. Most would travel at their own expense. But between the Global Economy and deflation of exchange rate ... none of us will travel. It will be

just the Australian Threesome. Keep our children in your prayers as they try to make arrangements to be with family for the holidays.

Still trying to figure out how to play our annual New Years Eve around the world basketball tournament while we are all around the world from each other ... (We'll let you know how it went)



Thanksgiving “Down Under”

So ... last year we had our first Thanksgiving away from the States. It's always interesting to experience being in a culture that does not celebrate our cornerstone holidays: 4th of July, Thanksgiving, Memorial Day and my Birthday!

Last year, Tomya and Micah were in the States getting things ready for our daughter Mickenzie's wedding to Matt Hyatt. So I cooked the bird and actually had 16 people crammed

into our tiny little apartment.

This year we posted our invitation to our Thanksgiving Feast on Facebook. The result was ... we had 49 attend this year. We had 2 turkeys, lots of mash potatoes, gravy ... and all the trimmings (except Cranberry stuff). What a night. It started at 6:30 and the last guest left around 1:30 am. Most of the crowd were members of Men of God (a fortnightly Men's Bible study) and Sisterhood (the women's equivalent).

But we also had a few people we have connected with here who came as well. I work out at a Gym 2-4 times a week due to health needs ... and a man I see there often came and brought his wife. We also had a waitress, we met the week before, travel an hour to enjoy her first American Thanksgiving.

We even had American Gridiron (NFL) playing in the background!

We are so Blessed!

**Pray for Sam
White and
Satish Samuel
as they move
into the next
stage of their
service of God**

Two Students Graduating

It's hard to believe that Sam White and Satish Samuel have been in school for 3 years. Each has excelled and already bless many of the churches of Australia. Both have been asked to spend a year with their Sponsoring congregations and will then travel North to Coffs Harbour to

work with a new church plant.

In addition to their quality studies, each has been busy serving the Saints. Satish has developed a weekly Radio broadcast in the Tamil language and Sam, almost single-

handedly keeps many of our vehicles on the road.

Each also finds time to Preach and Teach throughout the region.

I will miss our lunch chats and family times!

And then there was One ... kind of

2 years ago a young/talented man named Dan Bray started attending MSOBS. He was an Electrician by trade and was well paid. Dan attended most of his first year at MSOBS out of his own personal Savings. He succeeded as a Student and Evangelist ... but his funds played out after about 9 months.

This year due to a generous gift from the States, we were able to scholarship Dan for \$1000 a month. That

sounds like a lot, but due to cost of living it only covered a third of his expenses for being here. The remainder was raised, but has always left the finances tight.

Dan started a job as an Electrician this week. The hope is to replenish his savings and create a cushion so that he can afford to serve others in addition to attend school. He hopes to return as soon as April of

this next year.

We have no other full-time students lined up. But we have several part-time students who will attend 1-3 days a week.

This is the door of service the Lord has provided and we will serve Australia faithfully in it.



Blue Mountain Trip

Have you ever lived in a popular Tourist area, but never see the sites yourself? Well, we live in one of the most beautiful places in the world, and yet hardly ever travel recreationally. We live 20 minutes from downtown Sydney and have been there dozens of times this year, but only 2-3 times for fun.

We were blessed by two couples we mentored in a Parenting series called, "Growing Kids God's way".

In all we led the group for just short of 6 months. We do not charge for our time and services (Our Visa won't allow for that ... and we just wouldn't and never have before).

But as an unexpected bonus ... they booked two nights for Tomya and I to "get away for a romantic weekend in the Blue Mountains".

I can see the Blue Mountains every day that I go on top of the Car Park of our local Shopping Centre. But we had never been. It only took just over an hour to get there.

What a change of pace! To describe it ... It was like the Grande Canyon with trees in it. It was quite lovely! Many of you saw a video we created.

2009 Financial Status

Many of you remember our Mission's own Financial Crisis of April through July. Many of you responded by graciously increasing your support or sending one-time gifts. And whereas your efforts salvaged the Mission, the funds are still quite close and are guarded closely.

These past two years we have used our personal funds to finance our ministry as well. And Paid for the extra fuel and travel costs to serve congregations. The result has been that we have served some 20 congregations this past year.

The problem we have is the funds we currently have to operate on are not sufficient to continue many of these trips, services and expenses related to being at Camps and Youth Days where I can recruit.

If you can help us raise a working fund we can get a lot more accomplished. Our Goal is \$1,000 per month. This will cover airfare, Camp fees, Office supplies and other travel expenses.

If you have any questions, contact me or our Sponsoring church: Park Central church of Christ.

A Micah Moment ...

Can you imagine taking most 15 year old girls out of her country and away from all of her friends? In most cases you would put them on suicide watch. But Our Micah has really thrived. She attends everything we do ... plus is active in the Youth of at least 3 congregations. She manages to keep up with her studies ... and even is scheduled to take her

ACT test this coming weekend to get ready for University.

Her other passions include: after some 6 months, she is already a Green Belt in Taekwondo. She enjoys hitting people!

She has also made a name for herself by perfecting and baking hundreds of dozens of chocolate chip cookies (Bickies over here). She is asked to bring them to nearly

every Church function.

She also has the reputation of being a compassionate ear to listen to problems and surprisingly sound counsel for a 17 year old.

But all that said ... chances are she will not read this. But her Mum and Dad are very proud of her!



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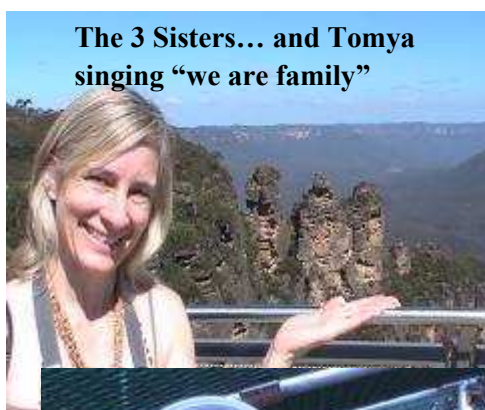
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20th of each month for
International Banking
considerations

We're all on
Facebook.
Look us up!

Hello! I just wanted to bring you a few thoughts from the other half of the team. I have been busy right alongside Craig. Working with the students we have is one part but the bigger part has been reaching out to the young men and women who are striving to dig deeper into their walk. Some are taking classes part time. Others are involved in studies and ministries around the city. I have spent a lot of time with a group of ladies in a bi-weekly study as well as other involved efforts. I have also been blessed to teach at a week-end retreat and do 2 Ladies' Day in other states. I have enjoyed a study with a Chinese girl this past year. She is home for a short visit and will return after the holidays. Mostly I cook lots of food and wash lots of sheets and towels. Our house is always full. It fills the empty nest feelings just a little. Hope you all have a great holiday season.

All for Him,
Tomya

Our Life in Pictures



The 3 Sisters... and Tomya
singing "we are family"



Classroom before facelift



After Facelift



Gold Coast Retreat and Youth Day



The Wrath of Micah
Now a Greenbelt



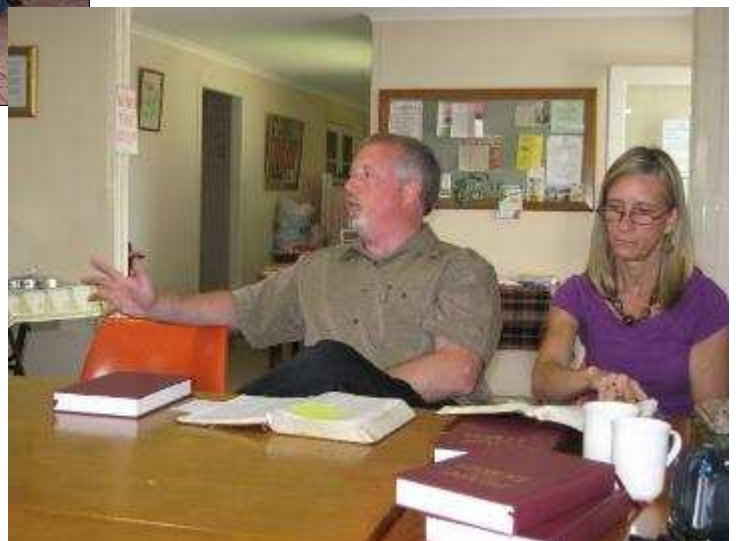
Gold Coast Retreat with the Nerang congregation. Tomya did a great job with the women and I worked with the men. Our theme was about Unity and Peace in the congregation.

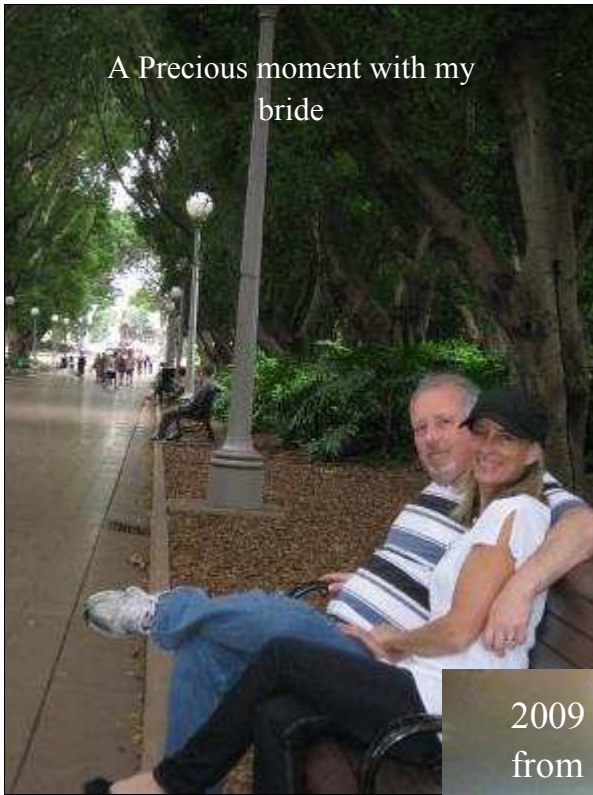
MAD Camp 2009 I was blessed to be invited to this Camp. Teens from 5-6 congregations were involved. It was MAD!



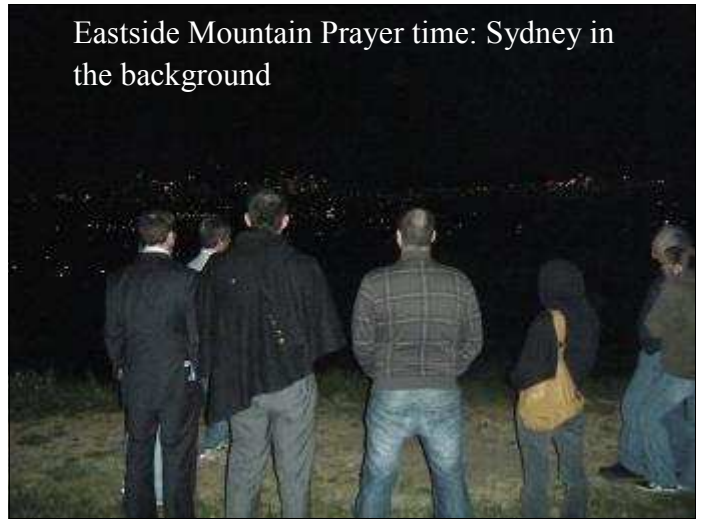
Sisterhood and Men of God meet every other Thursday, Siblinghood is the combination of these 2 groups and meets Quarterly ... Incl last night at our house.

Here I am preaching at a congregation in Coffs Harbour. Coffs is one of the newest church plants in the country. It is 7 hours North of Sydney and is known for their Bananas.





A Precious moment with my bride



Eastside Mountain Prayer time: Sydney in the background



2009 Thanksgiving at our house: 49 Participants from 8+ congregations ... and at least 5 nationalities



Above ... 4 beautiful Chinese students we study with. The One next to Tomya (Jada) will be baptized tomorrow!!



Our newest resident: Cara and her fiancé Grant