Devastating Drought & Fires in New South Wales and Queensland, Australia: From Tim Waddle, pastor, Australia) While Australia normally cycles through wet and dry periods, a severe drought over the last few years is wreaking havoc with water supplies and the livelihood of farmers. While currently no COGWA members are in the fire areas, other Church of God members have been affected. COGWA does have farmers in New South Wales (NSW) and Queensland (QLD) who have been affected by the drought conditions.

According to the Australian Broadcast Company (ABC News): “Farmers are facing ruin across New South Wales and Queensland in what some are calling the worst drought in living memory, with costs of stock feed and transport spiraling.” Your prayers for drought relief, fire relief and God’s protection for His people and their livelihoods would be greatly appreciated.

Below are reports from Mark and Karen Smeed, sheep farmers in NSW, and David and Jodie Maczek who are members in QLD:

From New South Wales: The New South Wales Premier declared a state of emergency for NSW for the next seven days commencing this morning (November 11, 2019) due to catastrophic fire conditions. Catastrophic conditions occur because of low humidity, high temperatures and strong winds.

At present there are 75 fires burning in NSW mainly along the coastline from Sydney to the border of Queensland. To date three people have died and at least 150 homes destroyed. In the past few days, more than 100 people have been treated for injuries including 20 fire-fighters. Over a million hectares (2.5 million acres) has been burnt.

Around 500 schools and colleges will be closed tomorrow (November 12, 2019) because of the conditions. Those whose schools are not closed are to “err on the side of caution” and make their own decisions whether their children should attend. People have been told there are not enough fire trucks for every house, so if they call for help, they may not get it. The Fire Commissioner for NSW is predicting “the most dangerous bushfire week this nation has ever seen” and also said it is a sobering reminder of what is ahead, with the outlook indicating the next three or four months will be dominated by above-average temperatures, below-average rainfall and no indication for drought-breaking rain.

As far as we know no COGWA members are affected but we have heard of other COG members who have evacuated to safety. Please pray that God will send rain as this is the only way these fires will be extinguished. Regards, Mark and Karen Smeed

From Queensland: As of Monday Nov. 11, there are currently 51 active fires in Queensland, with
two emergency warnings.

It was reported today that Queensland is facing the same danger as New South Wales over the next few days. The Acting Commissioner of the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, Mike Wassing says, "We'll see higher winds and dry winds and heightened fire dangers." It starts in the southeast part of Queensland and runs up into central Queensland with fire warnings all the way up to Cape York Peninsula.

Forty-two local governments in Queensland have been declared a State of Fire Emergency following a period of significantly heightened fire weather conditions expected to continue into next week. The affected areas in New South Wales and Queensland combined covers the equivalent of South Carolina up to Ontario, Canada.

At this stage, the Australian Bureau of Meteorology says "while outlooks for drier than average conditions may ease for some areas, several months of above average rainfall would be needed to see a recovery from current long-term rainfall deficiencies." David and Jodie Maczek