

Hawke's Bay Update

February 2024

The lead-up to Christmas is a great time to share the gospel. The festive spirit is a good starting point to talk to people about the reason for the season. We tried to get to several Christmas events and entered the Napier Christmas Parade (where we received an award for third place!) Another bonus over summer ministry is more volunteers who have extra time as work and school had finished for the year. Maria really enjoyed teaming up with some school age girls for outreach and they were excited to give out tracts and talk with people.

At events and on the street we shared the gospel with dozens of young people by starting with a fun Christmas quiz with two significant questions to share the Gospel from: "If Santa was real, do you think you have been good enough this year to get any presents from him?" and "Do you think you have been good enough during your whole life to get to heaven when you die?" Maria would then explain that heaven is a perfect place, we're not perfect people, so how does anyone get to heaven? People usually look puzzled which is an open door to explain the reason for Christ-mas.

At one point Maria offered a retired man a Christmas tract and he declined, saying that he already knows what Christmas is about but the kids have forgotten. They talked for some time on the state of the world and the generational changes. After a while he brought up that he was brought up Catholic but he questioned why God doesn't intervene in what's going on in the world. His questions reminded Maria of the scoffers Peter wrote about. She started to explain that God is waiting patiently for people to turn to Him and actively drawing them to Himself before He judges the world - and the judgment won't just be on the Hitler's of this world but on anyone in the streets of Hastings who hasn't trusted in Him. At this point the man decided it was time to leave.

After a short break for Christmas, we headed to Thornton Beach to join the On the Edge mission there. It was a small team but we worked together well to run a kids' program



each morning and some family events in the afternoon and evening. There were many good chats to be had around the camp ground and often Kevin could be found chatting to one of our neighbours who had some controversial ideas but was in a searching season of his life and softened towards the truth over time.

From there we parted ways – Kevin to join Jeremy in speaking at Forest Lakes Camp. He found it exciting to join Jeremy in this role as they had the opportunity to impart truth, inspiration and encouragement into the lives of the teenage camp leaders and the kids that have come from all over the area.

Maria went to Lake Learning, a Bible camp in Taupō where she has been teaching on children's ministry as part of the camp curriculum. It has been a joy to have some at camp who used to be in kids' programs that Maria was involved in, or their kids used to go to their programs. God has been at work drawing people back to Himself, even if some had gone wandering for a while after hearing the gospel.

Praise God for:

- good times of outreach in the lead-up to Christmas
- various people to team up with in ministry
- His provision of finances and the strength we need to meet the challenges that come up in this ministry.

Pray for:

- more labourers
- upcoming ministry – both specific events and regular day to day stuff
- us as we head into the new year routines, to use time well for God's glory

Coming up:

- Wairarapa Bible Church kids' program – 15-19 January
- Outreach roadtrip (TBC, Maria) – 22-24 January
- Festival One (Maria) – 25-29 January
- Waitangi hikoi – 3-7 February
- Art Deco outreach in Napier – 15-18 February

