

Hawke's Bay Update

February 2025

The lead-up to Christmas and summer is a good time to engage with people about the Saviour as we celebrate the festive season, and people are less tied up with work and routines. It is also a good time to find people (and youngsters) free to join us.

We were out on the streets regularly in the Christmas season, using a simple Christmas quiz to engage people and share the reason for the season. It is good to find young people out as high schools and universities finished up for the year. We also attended events, one being the Napier Christmas Parade where we entered a Nativity float and dressed up as shepherds to pass out the Good News in the form of children's Christmas story books to young ones eager to take any freebies.

We also headed to events over the time. For one of these we had a handful of young people joining us. Kevin enjoyed teaming up with one of the guys and they were able to proclaim the gospel to a group of six teenage boys and a teenage girl wearing a small cross neckless walking on the edge of the crowd. The lights of "I really didn't know the truth of who Jesus was and what He came to do" began to come on in their eyes as Kevin walked them through God's love story for them at the end of the quiz. Hearts were embedded with heavenly seed; Christmas time is the perfect time to declare the birth of the crucified risen Christ."





Some days on the streets can feel hard-going and although they are still worthwhile, we do prefer days where time flies because of the many good conversations we have. One afternoon as school was finishing was such a day. Teenagers were hanging around the bus stop after school and were willing to do a Christmas quiz. A few of them listened quite sincerely before moving on.

Another group listened even more intently as Maria quizzed them and then summarized the Gospel. As she was sharing the Gospel, more stopped by to listen in out of interest. She sensed that we should really challenge them where they were at with the Lord but hesitated with the timing. Andrei, our fantastic intern, stepped in to continue the conversation as some boys wandered off with tracts and candy canes but five keen ones remained. He asked them what would stop them from trusting in Jesus as Saviour today and talked them through what counting the cost would be. We could see on the faces of these young men that they were really considering what we were saying and taking it seriously. They shared about addictions they had or content on social media that questions Biblical truths as reasons they were hesitating. Yet they understood the seriousness and urgency of trusting in Jesus. It was super encouraging to hear that several of them are already involved in a local youth group, "one sows, another waters, but God causes the growth."

After a break for Christmas with our families, we headed to Bay of Plenty, to Thornton Beach, to serve with others from Auckland for a beach mission over New Year. We ran a kids' program for 6 mornings and family programs in some afternoons and evenings. This time we also added in a youth program in the evenings which the teens took some time to warm up to but by the last night they were enjoying themselves so much they stayed late chatting with the team overboard games. We enjoy building friendships with campers from year to year and being able to connect and be a light over this holiday season.



From there, Andrei went to Forest Lakes camp where he spent a week as cabin leader, discipling boys' day to day as they engage with all that camp has to offer. Maria was at Lake Learning, an intensive weeklong Bible camp in Taupō, where she teaches six sessions on children's ministry.

Praise God for:

Many great ministry opportunities over the Christmas and summer season.

Young people to involve and train in mission.

Many encouraging conversations from our times on the streets.

The Lord's work in the lives of those we have been ministering to over time.

Please pray for:

All those who have heard the Gospel over this time.

Wisdom as we make plans for the year ahead.

The upcoming School of Evangelism in our area.

Those who we partner with in various ways for the sake of the Gospel – and pray for more labourers!

Coming up:

19-25 January – Highland Home Kids Camp (Maria & Kevin)

24-27 January – Festival One (Andrei & Maria?)

2-7 February – Waitangi outreach with Karuwhā (Maria & Kevin)

14-15 February – Art Deco outreach

16 February – 8 March – School of Evangelism

10-14 March – Staff conference

18-21 April – Auckland Easter Show (Maria)

22-25 April – Riverbend Kids Camp (Andrei)