



Hawkes Bay Update

February 2023

CHRISTMAS OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES

The few weeks leading up to Christmas were busy ones full of opportunities to share the gospel on the streets and especially in the weekends at events.



Maria and Kevin took several girls to Rotorua for two nights. They joined in with others, including Mark Breetvelt, for outreach at the Saturday market. Kevin spoke at the Malayalam prayer meetings and the girls ran Sunday School with Maria's oversight (to give the regular teachers a week off). It was a good time of team-building, fun, fellowship, equipping and serving.

Kevin led a team in the Napier Christmas Parade with a nativity scene float, with angels and shepherds giving out Christmas tracts along the way. They were well-received by the onlookers as some were excited to see baby Jesus and the real reason for the season promoted.



The following weekend Maria and Kevin had a stall at Flaxmere Christmas in the Park, helped by three intermediate age girls and a couple of other locals. One pre-schooler tugged her mum's arm and said, "Those people must believe in Jesus."

"Why?" she replied.

"Look, they have a baby in a manger!" the girl pointed out. She went on to adoringly hold the baby doll while the team chatted with her mum and they took some

photos for the family.

At that same event, Maria had the opportunity to share the gospel using Bible 'magic' (object lessons) along a Christmas theme.

BEACH MISSION

For a week over New Year OAC runs several beach missions around the country. Maria was in the Thornton Beach team where she has been previous years, joined by Kevin and a teenage girl who used to come to Hastings holiday programs as a child. There was also the leader and three others from Auckland to work alongside.

The team camped at a holiday park for a week while they ran a kids' program each morning and family events in some afternoons and evenings. Campers – new and old – loved having the team there and many good conversations happened over the time.

As Maria and others were lugging all the heavy equipment out to the beach for a games afternoon, one man pulled up in his UTV and offered to ferry it out for them. Chatting on the way, he said he loves the work the team do and if his grandchildren were in the area, he'd send them along too!

At the kids' program, Kevin by far won the "favourite story-teller" award for bringing the serial story to life from day one. There were also games, memory verses, Bible stories and crafts. The gospel was shared over the week and about a third of the 25 kids or so who came showed a real interest in learning more about Jesus. As Maria observed them go through a simple gospel booklet, she was intrigued to notice that "Jesus is perfect, He is the only one who has never sinned" was mind-blowing news to three of the children! Such is the world we live in now, with children who have no Biblical background at all. However four kids eagerly took Bibles (with parental permission) and have started reading them.

Some kids also came back during free time in the afternoons – to play games, draw or give the team thank-you cards. One of the older girls asked about the physical location of the Bible stories we were telling, so

during this time Maria showed them some photos on her laptop of Bible places from family who have travelled there. It sparked much interest.



Praise and prayer points

Praise God for some good times of ministry in the lead-up to Christmas and for opportunities to share the gospel at events.

Praise God for many blessings at beach mission – the warm reception from campers, a sunny week (even if it has rained most of the time before and since), interest in the gospel, two teenagers who could join the team and were great value, and more.

Pray for all those who have heard the gospel over this summer period, that they will trust in the Lord Jesus and meet other believers who can follow them up.

Pray for the young people that have been joining in outreach ministry, that they will catch the fire and make it a way of life into their adulthood.



Maria at Christmas in the park in Flaxmere



Kevin & Jeremy at the Rally breakup at RBC

UPCOMING MINISTRY

Early Feb – working in with at least three different churches to help with promotions at the start of the year, to invite people along to various ministries. There are also regular ministries Kevin and Maria are involved with that will start back up.

6 Feb – outreach at Waitangi Day celebrations

16-19 Feb – outreach at Art Deco festivities

19 Feb – Kevin preaching at his church, Napier Elim

Ministry on the streets.

Hope booklet delivery in the lead-up to Easter – Kevin is heading up Napier and Maria in Hastings again.