

Grateful Greetings

from the Groves in New Zealand

January/February 2023

The New Year is already more than a month old! God has been doing many things here and it has only just begun! Since our last update.... Our Christmas service went well with over 70 in attendance including many visitors. I had the opportunity to speak with a young man who grew up in the Sikh religion. He seemed to enjoy the Christmas program and had many questions about our beliefs. He told me he was seeking to know more about different beliefs but sadly was not ready to accept Christ as the answer. While talking to him another one of our men waited patiently to tell me that he had finally found assurance of his salvation as a result of the Gospel message presented after the Christmas program. I had challenged the people with the thought, the Greatest Gift ever given is sitting right there in front of you! What are you going to do with Jesus?



The New Year was very low key this year. No New Year's Eve party because of Sunday services on New Year's Day. The next event was our South Island Family Camp. This year was our largest camp ever with over 170 people camping and over 200 at the daily services and events. It was a special blessing to be able to have one of our young men preach in the Victory Baptist of Ashburton "slot". Sam Reynolds had an excellent message from Ephesians 5:1, 2 entitled, "You're a Good Parent when you are a Good Child."

Another highlight in January came in finishing personal discipleship with three of our teens and sending them off to the New Zealand Baptist Bible Training Program. Lydia, Luke, and Eli are now in their first term. Nancy and I will travel to the North Island at the end of February to teach the English Writing and Grammar course. What a blessing to see these young people getting a strong Biblical foundation before entering the public university or the work force. They are joining one of our other young men, RJ, who is in his second year.

It is a blessing to have our youngest son, Stephen, visiting for a week. He is excited to see some of his old friends and to see some of the sights that he has missed since leaving the country 5 years ago.

Along with our normal discipleship, singalongs at 2 nursing homes, regular services, Bible studies and Outreach Saturdays, we have been preparing for the arrival of the Hoffmans. Health issues have delayed their arrival but it looks like they will be here next week.

One big prayer request has been dumped on us this week... we were informed that the first Sunday in April would be the last weekend we could use the School hall that has been such a wonderful meeting place for 6 or 7 years. **We need your help!** We believe this is God's way of stirring up the nest and pushing us out of the comfortable place we have been enjoying. It is time to have a place of our own. Buying land and putting up a metal building versus buying an older building and remodelling it to suit are both going to cost around \$1 million dollars. That is equivalent to about \$650,000 USD, or the sacrifice of five "fast food" dinners by every member in the Hoffmans' 96, and our 32 supporting churches! We already have about 12% of the money in our building fund and are personally working to increase that total. Would you be willing to sacrifice the cost of a few "Quarter Pounder combos" over the next few months to help build a church building in Ashburton, New Zealand? I have already been given approval by my home church and Mission board to start a building fund on the State side. One of our friends has already given \$1,000 toward the project. If you would like to invest in a growing church in New Zealand, we would be most grateful for your help! **It seems God has made it clear, it is time!**

Thank you again for your prayers! Just this week I was able to lead a young man to the Lord over "Zoom". He and his partner wanted to dedicate their baby, but it was obvious their understanding of "dedication" was more along the lines of "christening". When we got to the heart of the matter, it was the Gospel that was needed first! God is still at work!

May God Richly Bless You! Because of Christ,

Mike and Nancy Grove

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This year's theme (picked before we knew our building situation!)

Sam preaching at Family Camp



Getting Hoffman's house ready for their arrival.



Fresh Broccoli in the garden



Stephen and a college friend came to visit