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A bimonthly newsletter from

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***Taking the Gospel to Porirua,
New Zealand***

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The light of Jesus Christ is shining brighter than it ever has before in Porirua, New Zealand, and we are sincerely grateful for your prayers and support that are making this work possible. May the name of our Lord continue to be lifted high.

THE CHURCH IS NOW MEETING IN PORIRUA

The two Saturdays before our inaugural service we had letterboxing thrusts, despite less-than-favorable weather, saturating the neighborhoods closest to our meeting place with leaflets introducing the church. The Christians in Wellington have been a big help with these outreach efforts, which have already resulted in an ongoing Bible study.

May 8th was the date of the Porirua church of Christ's first worship service. There were seventy-eight in attendance, mostly Christians from the Porirua area, Wellington, Hutt Valley, Foxton, Palmerston North, Wanganui, and New Plymouth. As far as I know, this was the first time a church according to the NT pattern has assembled in Porirua, and we really appreciate the support of our visiting brethren who helped make this such a joyous occasion. The school hall where the church is meeting has not only proven to be a suitable facility in a good location, but the acoustics are amazing! We shared a potluck meal afterwards and were joined by three local boys who wandered in from the playground.



The following Sunday, without our out-of-town guests, we had twenty-six in attendance, thanks again

to the support of the Wellington brethren. And at the third meeting of the church we welcomed our first official visitors from the community – two ladies, one of whom brought her baby, and a family of five. A Bible study was set with the baby's mother, who brought three of her five children the following Sunday. We're planning to start a children's Bible class within the next couple of weeks.

VISITING WORKERS FROM THE USA

Dan Ashby, a Freed-Hardeman University graduate student, arrived May 11th for a seven-week missionary internship. He is teaching the mid-week Bible classes in Wellington while he is here, and to prepare for our campaign he has accompanied me on Bible studies and door-knocking and has learned how to drive on the left-hand side of the road. Lance and Kristen Mosher came May 18th for a three-week survey trip to gather firsthand information for their proposed move next year to join us in the Porirua work. Ralph Gilmore, professor of Bible at FHU, arrived the following day for a two-week campaign with a group of eleven fellow-campaigners, including Doug Watts and Jeremiah Tatum (son and grandson of former NZ missionary Bill Watts), and nine FHU students: Lacey Billinger, Lisa Bundy, Miranda Graham, Charlotte Higgins, John Jones, Wayne Scott, Courtnee Sheridan, Lauryn Talbert, and Caz Williams. Christian families in Wellington have pitched in to help us feed, transport, and accommodate these much welcomed workers.

FIRST MAJOR OUTREACH IN PORIRUA

The main focus of our campaign has been to introduce the Lord's church to the community with the twofold aim of (1) giving every household in the Porirua region an opportunity to learn God's will, and

(2) leaving a good impression. We have been distributing two pieces of material – a letterboxing card and a more detailed brochure, both of which read: “A new church is starting in your area, with opportunities to learn, to grow, and to serve,” including our meeting times and location, our contact details and website address, and an offer for a personal Bible study or Bible Correspondence Course. We letterboxed every home (placing the cards in mailboxes, which is legal in NZ), except when a “No Circulars” sign was posted, in which case we door-knocked and offered personal invitations, along with a brochure and an offer to study the Bible.



The campaign has been a tremendous success, although not without its setbacks. Ralph had to return home a few days early to be with his wife who broke her wrist and needed surgery. On rainy days we had planned to position the campaigners at the entrances of the main shopping center to hand out brochures, but security put a stop to it only after the first few minutes, though not before a Bible study had been set! Our last two boxes of materials got held up at customs, and after attempting to resolve the matter by phone and getting transferred from one department to another and another until the bureaucratic red tape became too thick to maneuver through, it was decided that I needed to personally visit the customs office in Wellington to sort it out. I took samples of the materials, and when I presented them to the customs officer, she said, “I got one of those in my letterbox the other day.” To make a long story short, she went out of her way to help us, we got our boxes, and the customs officer received another invitation to attend our church services.

Despite these difficulties and a couple of days of inclement weather, over the two-week period approximately 18,500 homes were personally visited, covering the entire Porirua area. This has included knocking on around 4,190 doors, and a total of 19,313 pieces of literature have been hand-distributed. Ten Bible studies have been set, with eleven additional good contacts to revisit. We have also been having visitors from the community attending our worship services. In addition, the campaigners have assisted

the congregations in Wellington and Porirua on Sundays and Wednesday evenings, conducting the worship services, presenting edifying lessons, and teaching all the children’s and adult Bible classes.

NZ Christians have been greatly encouraged, the Lord’s church has become much more visible in this community, and potentially around 50,000 residents have been given the opportunity to make heaven their home. Immediate benefits notwithstanding, the full impact of this campaign will not be evident for months and even years to come. Thank you to all who have supported these faithful laborers in the Lord’s harvest field (Luke 10:2). To God be the glory!

BIBLE STUDIES AND CAMPAIGN FOLLOW UP

The Bible study with the Muslim gentleman (contacted through door-knocking in April) has unfortunately terminated, but Ann (reached via letterboxing in April) has been having weekly Bible studies for five weeks now and has been trying to get family members to join in. Of the ten studies set during the campaign, not all have continued, but we are still sharing the gospel with those who are eager to learn. Over the coming weeks we plan to revisit other contacts and attempt to further their interest in studying God’s word.

MOORE NEWS

The limp that Lynne now walks with from the ankle she broke back in February is becoming less pronounced, and steady improvement is expected over the coming months. She has also been driving some, and the prospect of returning to normalcy does not seem as remote as it once did.

Loren and Kaitlyn continue developing friendships among their Kiwi counterparts, and I’ve been noticing a slight change in their accents (especially Kaitlyn’s). We have started a children’s singing period on Sunday mornings in Wellington between worship and Bible class and are helping get the weekend youth group activities up and running again.

We very much appreciate all who have joined us in the Lord’s work here through your support, prayers, and encouragement. May God bless you richly.

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