

A PAGE OR TWO FROM PALMERSTON NORTH

(NEW ZEALAND)

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A message from:

***Kent & Rachael
O'Donnell***



44 Suzanne Gr., Palmerston North 4414, New Zealand. Ph.: 011-64-6-3544944. E-mail: kentus73@gmail.com

Greetings brethren, family, and friends.

As you will see the last 6 months have been very eventful. I hope you enjoy catching up with our work...

OUTREACH

STUDIES

Back in 2015 Nathan Franson came to NZ for several speaking engagements especially on the subject of Mormonism. We have kept in touch often since then. Earlier this year Nathan put me in contact with an ex-Mormon living in our area named Leon who had reached out to him. I messaged Leon and he was very enthusiastic to study. Since then we have got together almost weekly to do just that. Our discussions have been challenging but always cordial.



[*]

In the 4th week of Feb. a group of both students and instructors from the Bear Valley Bible Institute-NZ, showed off our "beautiful feet" (Rom.10:15). Included in the team were a young couple visiting from USA, Scott & Brittany Simpson. The plan was to do a day's door-knocking in 5 different locations: Petone, Wellington, Porirua, Carterton, and Masterton. Unfortunately the weather rained out the Porirua leg and hampered the other days too. Nevertheless, we still got some good work done: 1,132 doors knocked; 487 conversations had; and 23 Bible study contacts.

Since that effort, I have driven out to Masterton each Thurs. to share the gospel to a lady called Tai (pronounced "Duh-ee"). Michael & Phoebe have taken turns going with me which I have really appreciated, and Sophie de Thierry came the last time. Tai has often expressed her thanks that we travel so far to teach her the Bible and she has been eager to learn. We still have a ways to go yet, but the signs so far are that she is "good soil".

In recent months we have had more than a few members from the community simply walk in off the street to visit our worship assemblies. From these another 3 regular Bible study contacts have resulted which is very encouraging [Michael, Margot, & Jeff].

BAPTISM

One of these walk-in visitors was Daniel Clausen. He came our way on a Sun. morning and had a long talk with my brother Todd. He also attended the mid-week class on Tues. We arranged to get together the following Fri. and had a Bible discussion for 4 hours covering many matters of doctrine and questions Daniel had been wrestling with for a long while. He repeatedly stated his desire to know the truth and be doctrinally right. When he was convinced from Scripture that baptism is not a work that earns salvation but rather a simple act of submissive obedience, he was ready to go for it. Ideally, I would have liked to spend more time forging certain points in greater detail, but Daniel was soon to be leaving town and then the country, so I thought it best to "make hay while the sun is shining," so to speak. At about 6:15 that same evening (Mar. 16th) Daniel was immersed for the forgiveness of his sins. I really hope to have further opportunities in the future to complete what is lacking in his faith (cf. 1Ths.3:9-10)



CAMPAIGN

We were blessed to have another troupe associated with Freed-Hardeman University come to our shores again. The 34 campaigners consisted of 24 FHU students, 3 high-school students, and 7 older adults. 10 of them were assigned to work with us in PN, while the rest were divided into

groups that went to help congregations in Auckland, Hamilton, New Plymouth, Wellington and Porirua.



Our FHU campaign team
(can you spot the Kiwi dressed for winter?)

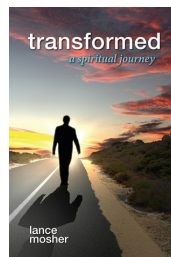
Due to jetlag and relative inexperience in house to house evangelism, we kicked things off with a laid-back day of letter-boxing (distributing printed materials) just to get their feet wet (a shower of rain made this quite literal ☺).

Each morning we had a training session where I taught them how to keep good records, ways to approach people at the door, and acquainted them with a Bible study tool. While I think they got a lot of good from these classes, the best learning comes from getting out there and doing it. To their credit, and despite their nerves, each student went manfully forward trying to develop interest among the Palmy residents in searching the Scriptures [of course, the ladies went bravely womanfully forward...(well, you get the idea)]. Below are the relevant campaign statistics:

<u>FHU CAMPAIGN 2018</u>	
Houses letter-boxed:	1500+
Doors knocked:	2266
People spoken to:	833
Bible study appointments set:	8
<u>Breakdown:</u>	
* 3766+ households directly or indirectly given an opportunity to hear the gospel.	
* Average doors knocked per day worked:	378
* Average people spoken to per day worked:	139
* Number of doors knocked to set a study:	283
* Number of people spoken to set a study:	104

Aside from evangelising, our FHU guests taught Bible classes, presented sermons, led singing, planned youth group activities, encouraged the local brethren, and gave our families the opportunity to exercise a spirit of hospitality. They were a pleasure to host, work alongside, and spend time with. I think the blessings & benefits of our joint participation were indeed mutually shared and will have a far-reaching future impact. ***A big "thank you" to all those whose organisation, support, and prayers made this event possible.***

Lance Mosher, who labours with the Porirua & Wellington congregations, wrote a book about his conversion journey. It's a good tool to share with denominational members or searching friends. I recently gave copies to a few people here in PN that I think will likely read it. Hopefully it will cause them to question things and they will get back to me.



CONGREGATION NEWS / CHURCH ACTIVITIES

We welcomed in the New Year with a dinner gathering at Malcolm & Sue Neall's. One of the more memorable moments of the evening was when the barbecue got barbecued! Some of the meat was really juicy and the fatty oils caught alight. The flames quickly developed a life of their own and by the time we got it under control the grill was beyond saving. Despite this, the rest of the night was a great time together.

CAMP, CAMP, ANOTHER CAMP, AND TWO MORE CAMPS

January & February are always busy and exciting months of the year. Of course, this is the NZ summer season, which also means camp season.

The PN Family Camp was held during the 3rd weekend of Jan. As it turned out, we were using a different site for the 3rd time in row. However, this one ticked all the boxes and we're hoping to secure it on a regular basis. Another potential difficulty was that our original speakers were not able to make it, but thankfully Charles Williams willingly filled in the gap. He preaches with the New Union COC in Manchester TN, which has been a long-time supporting congregation of our work. Charles spoke based around the theme "*Living Soberly, Righteously, & Godly*". His experience & wisdom came through very clear in each lesson. Not only this, but he easily interacted with all the brethren in a warm & friendly way.

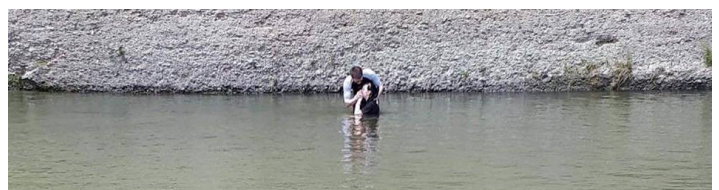
As always, there was a lot of fun to be had, with sport, games, swimming, singing, hikes, and activities for the kids, etc. A wonderful thing to happen was the baptism of Brittany Piper from New Plymouth in the nearby river (see pic. below). At least 11 congregations were represented during the camp, and over 100 attended worship with us.



Top: Most of the campers.

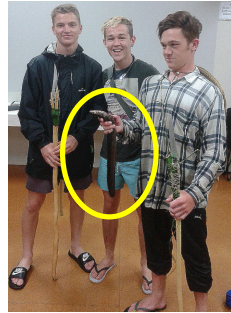


Middle: Kid's tie-dye activity.



Bottom: Brittany's baptism.

The weekend following, the **Hamilton COC** had their **family retreat**. **Dale Byrum**, from Kentucky, was the visiting speaker, and did 6 talks on the subject *Faith/Hope: Theory and Practice*. Dale is very down to earth and his lessons were simple yet practical and were well received. Again, it was a great occasion of fellowship with fine brethren from many different places. Among other fun pursuits, some of the young "natives" created their own spears to go eeling. Their hunting expedition was actually a successful venture (see below & right).



Four days later we went to another camp organised by Kane Piper of the New Plymouth congregation in a town called **Tongaporutu**. The location had a river to swim in and a nearby beach with extremely beautiful scenery all around it. **John Jones** delivered the lessons.



The annual **New Plymouth COC Lectureship/Camp** was held over Easter weekend. This is perhaps the largest gathering of the NZ church members at one time and is always one of the highlights of the year. **Ron Harper**, from the Minerva Drive COC, in Murfreesboro, TN was the keynote speaker. His topic was *"What Would Jesus Say?"* He also brought his wife Janie and son David with him. Ron was instrumental in helping the New Plymouth church become an established congregation in its early years, so this trip was a great reunion for them and several Christians over here.



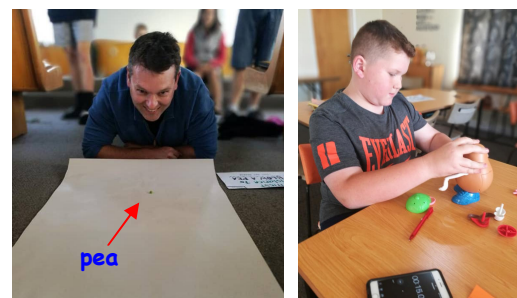
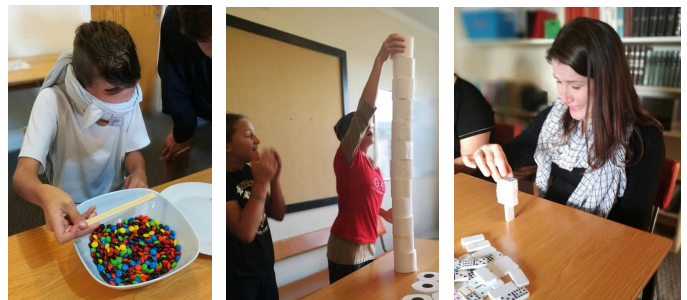
Finally, at the beginning of June, there was the **Queen's Birthday Weekend Camp** coordinated by the Porirua congregation. This was held in conjunction with the FHU campaign, so as you can imagine there were a lot of people present - reportedly 144 came to the Sunday worship which is the biggest number since the camp originated. Some exciting team competitions were had, along with the usual sports, board games, and other indoor/outdoor endeavours. One of the more entertaining events was a rugby match including NZ players and Freed students. There were a few sore bodies as a result! (Us older [wiser] ones just watched).

Because this camp is primarily designed for teenagers to middle-agers, the focus of the lessons were aimed at that demographic. The main thought was *"Life After Youth Group: Growing Up With Our Faith Intact."* I was assigned the topic *"Is It Time to Toss the Toys?"* emphasising the need to be spiritually mature in order to earn respect, trust, greater responsibility, and the right to be heard. Other lessons included: *Tug of War: Flesh and Spirit* (Trevor Major); *Christians Got Talent* (Daniel Boyd) *Whose Faith Do You Have?* (Keith Copeland) *Reality Check* (Tim Robinson) *Where Is Your Place?* (Kevin Moore). If you would like to listen to any or all of these, use this website address: <http://poriruachurch.com/series-2018-qbwc.php>

OTHER THINGS

One of the members of our parliament has proposed a new law be enacted. It is called the **End of Life Choice Bill**. It is basically another push to legalise euthanasia and assisted suicide. There are many good social, medical, & other non-religious reasons why this would be a bad law-change. Of course, God's Word is our primary determiner in moral matters, and based upon its teachings we certainly shouldn't support any such bill. The public of NZ have the right to make submissions to the government in regard to proposed law changes. So, after preaching a lesson concerning the biblical view of euthanasia and assisted suicide, during the adult class each member of the PN congregation was encouraged to, and shown how to, make a submission against this bill. In recent years the list of regulations enacted that are opposed to Christian principles is growing. We pray this is not one of them.

The Jensen family organised a **World Records Party** for the Palmy brethren. It consisted of doing small silly stunts against the clock or measuring tape. Some of the feats were grabbing *M & M's* with chopsticks, making toilet paper towers, stacking dominos, blowing a pea the furthest, and constructing *Mr Potato Head*. These were followed by awards and a pancake supper.





The Bason family also arranged an **international dinner**. Everyone had to bring a meal item from a different nation and there were prizes for the best dish, the weirdest dish, and the most obscure country.

We were very sad to say **farewell to the Ed & Michelle de Thierry family**. They have moved to Melbourne, Australia to take advantage of a job opportunity. It's not an understatement to say this leaves a big hole in our congregation - considering that they are a family of 7, they will be missed!

Our oldest living member is **Winnie Kerr**. The brethren make sure to see her regularly. Here is a shot of Rachael & Phoebe paying a visit.



YOUTH

Our young ones really enjoyed having the **FHU students** here with us and made them feel very welcome. It was good to see them building friendships and working together during the campaign. During their stay they came to a dinner and a winter bonfire at the Paki's house - the singing was tremendous. The students also put together a "Minute to Win It" youth event which was both crazy & amusing.

A couple of **service projects** our youth participated in were a 5 course meal they prepared for the adults of the congregation, and making cookies for rest-home folk.



Left: All the cookies made.

Below: Delivering a box to a rest-home.

TEACHING / WORSHIP

Having done several stand alone sermons, I started a **series on First Timothy**. The brethren have received the lessons well so far, and have given me good encouragement.



Kids in Rachael's class with memory vs. awards.

The **Sun. morning adult Bible class** is continuing through Acts, and I am teaching the **teenage class** on the Holy Spirit. The **kid's classes** have been addressing the Judges.

In our **Tues. evening midweek class**, we are discussing biblical stewardship based upon a chapter in Mike Winkler's book *God's Blueprint for a Growing Church*.

We are often blessed to have **guest speakers** at PN. After our camp in January, **Charles Williams** took a Tues. class. In March, **Danny Rader**, from Bridgeport AL, did a sermon. **Ron & David Harper** did a 3 night gospel series for us after the NP camp. And during the FHU campaign, **Joshua Hester**, **Jacob Moseley**, and **Kevin Moore** spoke.



My brother Todd & I with Charles Williams

Lance Mosher also has a **YouTube** site called Topical Bible Studies. He filmed me doing a lesson titled *"Six Approaches to Measuring God's Will."* Check it out at <https://youtu.be/gHBZM98CIks>

FAMILY NEWS

- ☞ **Chloe** has graduated from homeschooling and is now at hairdressing college. She is doing very well.
- * Chloe was a little put out having to give up her room for a guest.
Me: "You should read 1Pt.4:9."
Chloe: "I am being hospitable; my room's occupied right now!"
Me: "Did you notice the second part of the verse?"
Chloe: "What?...Ohhh."
- ☞ **Ethan** has decided to stop soccer for a while and try his hand at Brazilian Jujitsu which is a wrestling-based martial art.
- * He was in a starring role for a trailer promoting Lance Mosher's book *Transformed*. See it at www.transformedjourney.com
- * *Rach:* "Was what you just said sincere, or were you just being a smart-alec?" *Ethan:* "Can't it be both?"
- ☞ **Michael** won another bagpipes competition.
- * His impression of watching Brazilian Jujitsu: "It's just a bunch of fat people sitting on Ethan."
- ☞ **Phoebe:** *Me:* "I haven't spanked your behind in ages."
Phoebe: "Yeah and I haven't broken your arms either."
- ☞ **Rachael:** A group of us went to the Rural Games held in Palmy and there were lots of public competitions. Rach had to conquer many of her "that's gross" instincts as she tossed a cow pat and milked a fake udder. She also allowed Ethan to use his target throwing skills and was doused with a bucket of water.
- ☞ **Kent:** I went to pick up Chloe from crossfit and noticed smoke coming through the vents of our van. I investigated the motor (under the front passenger seat) and discovered an electrical fire. I was able to put it out, but much was roasted beyond repair. Goodbye family van - you served us well.
- ☞ It was great to have our good friends, the **Matt & Jo Parr family**, visit from Aussie. They came to our camp and stayed with us for a few days. Pic.'s are on Facebook if you're interested.

Until next time, all the best in Christ,

Kent, Rachael, Chloe, Ethan, Michael & Phoebe O'D.

Sponsored by Central C.O.C., 200, 25th St. N.W., Cleveland TN 37311. Ph. 423-476-8941; Contact: Randy King, @centralcocfamily.com

* [Photo credit: "Walk this way..." Tom Driggers, <https://www.flickr.com/photos> (modified by KO)