

Szwarga Family

planting churches in New Zealand

Prayer Letter | May 2025

After crossing the six month mark for services at Heritage Baptist Church of Matamata, the church officially chartered on May 24! There were sixteen charter members, plus teens and kids. The Charter Service was held on a Saturday as part of Fellowship Baptist Church's annual missions conference. The conference's theme this year was *The Open Door: Local Church Planting*, in anticipation for the next open door for a church plant. It was a fitting celebration for their first church plant to charter as part of this conference. There were an estimated two hundred in attendance from Fellowship Baptist Church (Hamilton), Grace Independent Baptist Church (Tauranga), and Heritage Baptist Church.

One aspect of church planting that requires continual improvement is the children's ministries. We have been blessed to average twelve to fifteen children in our Junior Church and Sunday School, which also presents difficulties for a new church! May was a month of improvement via a Children's Ministry workshop at Fellowship Baptist Church, a worker's breakfast, and additional help coming through new memberships and volunteers. Curriculum, programs, worker schedules, technological helps, and training were all refined this month through much effort, primarily of the ladies. One emphasis of the church is to provide opportunities for serving. It is a joy to have individuals learning a new aspect of ministry at all times.

Shortly before chartering, Pastor Jono Millar taught the church on the financial support of a pastor, a message that was very well received! Many within the church had never heard New Testament giving explained Biblically and most have now been involved financially supporting the church. Up until this point, the church has principally been funded by the two churches named above and your support. As the three aspects of an indigenous church are self-propagating, self-supporting, and self-governing, **it is our goal for the church to become self-supporting in short order; please pray with us to this end.**

Earlier in the month, Limuel and I only had fifteen minutes to knock on some doors on a particular day. Our time was restricted due to extra time in prayer beforehand. We prayed for God to bring us to the one person who needed the Word. At our first door, Limuel introduced the Gospel of John to a young lady, Ashley, and her two kids. She immediately announced that just hours before she had prayed and asked God to send someone with the Bible to help her. We were given opportunity to share the gospel with her that day. A similar instance occurred the following week. After spending time in prayer, we were led to a street across town where we met Carrie. Another young mom, readily searching for God, but having no one to guide her! Her health battles have led her to believe in the supernatural after growing up non-religious. What a great opportunity again to share the gospel of Jesus Christ! Two doors down was Duan. This gentleman quickly described an encounter he had the previous week at a pit stop two hours from home. An American man gave him a tract and mentioned he was friends with another American starting a church in Matamata. Turns out, this was the evangelists with the Children's Workshop who also made a pit stop and providentially met Duan the week before God providentially sent us to his door. After connecting the dots, we returned and witnessed more fully to Duan, who is not yet ready to accept Christ but acknowledged God is indeed chasing him! This was the first time he said he's heard the message of what Jesus has done for him. **Pray for these individuals.** There were more open doors and gospel witnesses than usual in our outreach last month, thank you for praying!

One particular answer to prayer from last month's letter. Grace Independent Baptist Church signed for their church building; **pray as they go through "due diligence."**

Thank you for praying and sacrificing for the gospel's sake,
Josh, Alyse, Bentlee and Raelynn Szwarga

