

Szwarga Family

planting churches in New Zealand

Prayer Letter | September 2024

Ministry in New Zealand hums along without us this month. The highlight as it relates to the upcoming church launch is a citywide canvassing that took place late in September. Fellowship Baptist Church of Hamilton worked hard to spread the church announcement flyers across half of the town, and will complete the task several weeks from now with Grace Independent Baptist Church of Tauranga joining in the effort. God also continues to send contacts from Matamata to sister churches in the area, another open door of opportunity!

Another piece of ministry news out of New Zealand is a series of Gospel videos that are being produced for social media distribution. Bible Tracts, Inc out of Illinois is working with New Zealand-based creators on producing these Gospel videos. One exciting aspect of this project is how the promotion of the first video will coincide in the timing and geography of our first John and Romans distribution. This initial video is scripted with the theme: "Do You Have An Open Mind?" We pray that God will use these varied avenues of spreading the Gospel to plant, water and harvest the seed of the Word of God.

During September, I had the privilege to preach at a youth rally in Terre Haute, IN with several churches in attendance. We also stopped in for the Providence Baptist College chapel service and I spoke on researching and developing what God's will is for your life, and not waiting until post-Bible college. It was encouraging to see several students putting the practical points of the message into application over the following weeks. And the final week of the month was spent at Grace Baptist Church in Quincy, IL for their missions conference. We are grateful for those who hosted us this month and allowed us opportunity to share our ministry. It has also been a month full of appointments and meetings with stateside ministry contacts, friends and family.

The main impetus for our stateside trip was the Old Paths Conference and 50th Anniversary of our sending church, Northwest Bible Baptist Church of Elgin, IL. We wish that these events could be capsuled and re-experienced prior to every future church plant we are involved in moving forward. From learning the details of how the church was planted 50 years ago to the conference preaching, every aspect seemed specifically suited for a couple heading into a church plant. Attending the conference was the best investment into the planting of Heritage Baptist Church that could have been made on our behalf. We have a deep appreciation towards our sending church for making it possible.

A missions message given this past week described how Paul "assayed to go" and described how God blesses the various attempts that are made to spread the Gospel. Praise the Lord for the open doors He has given us as we "assay" to spread the Gospel to every individual and start churches in New Zealand!

Halfway through the month, we were attempting to alter a flight to better accommodate our schedule. We barely missed our window to make the change and left it in God's hand that it was not to be changed. Immediately after sitting down, the man next to us struck up a conversation which lasted two hours and ended with a thorough presentation of the gospel. Seeing as he lives on an island off the Canadian coast, the Providence of God needed to interrupt my convenience to bring the Gospel to him.

Please pray for our flight to New Zealand on October 9, the church plant preparations, and a home for us in Matamata.

Thank you for praying, Josh, Alyse, Bentlee and Raelynn

