



FRIDAY FELLOWSHIP
FOLKS ENJOY FELLOWSHIP TIME FOLLOWING OUR FRIDAY BIBLE STUDIES



SOULS SAVED
SOME OF THE PEOPLE RECENTLY SAVED OVER AT SOUTH ISLAND BC!



CHILDREN SING
THE CHILDREN OF THE CHURCH SING A SONG DURING A SUNDAY SERVICE

THE HUTCHENS FAMILY



August 2023 Update

It's the official first day of spring here in New Zealand, as they mark the change of the seasons on the first day of the month, rather than waiting for the equinox later on in the month. We're looking at a beautiful 18 degrees Celsius (64 degrees F) today with sunny skies - hopefully a foreshadowing of a warm spring season just ahead! Here's an update on some of the things that have taken place in the past several weeks here in Christchurch:

A good crowd during a recent Sunday service.

Early in the month, we had the privilege to see some of the first souls saved at South Island Baptist Church follow the Lord in believer's baptism. We are so thankful to see how the Lord has been blessing at SIBC, seeing people saved and added to the church. On that baptism Sunday, several of the folks from our church, Lighthouse Baptist, were able to attend and witness the day. It was a blessing for our folks to get to see the fruit of their prayers and rejoice with those who have recently trusted Christ. Please keep praying for the growing new church on the north side of Christchurch!

On our side of town, the month has featured a lot of sowing and watering. I've referenced this often in our previous prayer letters, but many times we find ourselves witnessing to the same people for many months before we see any progress. It very much reminds me of Paul's word in I Corinthians 3 - some plant, some water, but God gives the increase. Outside of regular times of door knocking and letterboxing (tract distribution in mail boxes), there were two "sowing and watering" moments that come to mind this month.

The first was with a young man who has been attending our church for several months; I've mentioned him in previous letters. A few weeks ago, I took him out for lunch and spent some time witnessing further to him. As we talked over our food, I asked him what was preventing him from trusting Christ. He spoke of his concern that there might be other religions with some truth in them as well. "Maybe Jesus was true, but another prophet or god too? I just don't know how to be sure!" I made the point that, with the claims that Jesus made concerning Himself, He's either the only way or not the way at all. "Jesus made clear claims to be both God, and the only way of salvation. If any other religious teacher denies that, either he is the liar or Jesus was. They can't both be true," I said.

That Sunday, at church, one of our men started talking with him and witnessed to him even more. I was supposed to give him a ride home following the service, but he declined in favor of walking home so that he "could think about some things." I know the Lord is working in his heart, so we continue to pray, love, and witness!

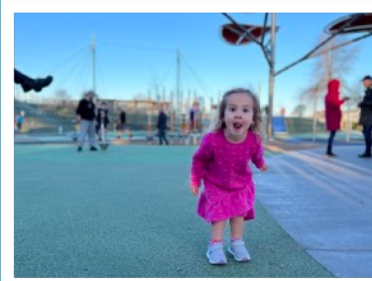
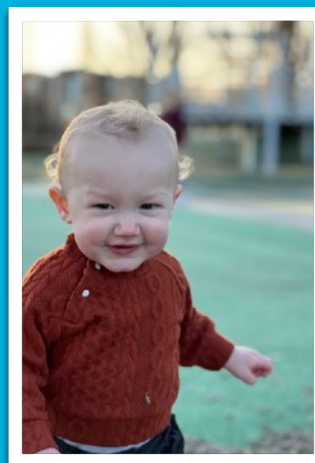
Two weeks ago, after church, I was chatting with a single Chinese lady named Daisy who recently joined our church. She was telling me that she has been trying to witness to a classmate of hers (she attends our local university), and her teenaged son, both of whom are atheists. I made the comment, "Hey, listen, if they have any interest in chatting with a pastor and asking questions, I'd love to have them over for dinner!" Later that night, I got a message saying, "Pastor Sam! They want to have dinner with you and chat!"

That Thursday, Eva and Leo came over to the house along with Daisy, and we enjoyed a couple hours of conversation. We talked about sin, creation, Jesus, God's love, God's justice, the reality of Heaven and Hell, and much more. They spoke of their previous experiences in churches they felt were nothing more than a show. They asked question after question, and I did my best to give Biblical answers. Finally, as the night grew late, Eva rose from the table, and thanked us for the meal and the conversation. We asked her and Leo to come to a service sometime, and are praying it's the start of God doing a work in their heart as well.

This has been our ministry lately! Slow and steady, with plenty of opportunities to sow the seed of the Gospel. We appreciate your prayers for Eva, Leo, Kori, and several others.

The Hutchens Family
Sam, Juliana, Emma, Alexa, Samantha, & Harrison

Family pictures



TOP: Harrison enjoys a cool afternoon at the park.

MIDDLE: Samantha is our goofball! I asked her to pose for a picture, and this was what I got.

BOTTOM: A recent, and fairly rare, snow day here in Christchurch! The kids loved running around in the white stuff.