



The Vision: to significantly impact Auckland and beyond by partnering with the Holy Spirit and transforming people into committed followers of Christ.



A Barren Landscape or the Beginning of Something New?

Down under, we are often confronted with the conflicting images of a lush paradise inhabited by many barren people – people who have been lulled into a life of apathy and self-sufficiency. As we watch the government becoming increasingly liberal and people seeking to fill their lives with anything but Christ, we can't help but feel a desperation to run all over New Zealand shouting the Good News to anyone who would listen. Among people who are tolerant of almost everything but the Christian religion, we are learning that prayer, authentic Christian living, and personal relationships are our strongest tools in winning people to Christ. We have reason to celebrate as we have seen signs of renewal these past few months.



Tongariro Crossing: Chad, on one of his hikes, looking out over Mt. Ruapehu (one of the sites where *The Lord of the Rings* was filmed).

Speaking of celebrations, we have just completed the series, *Experiencing God* (Henry Blackaby), at AIC and have seen phenomenal results. Those who have faithfully gone through with the series have remarked on a significant change in the way that their daily lives are lived. Even those who missed out on parts of the study have reported positively. We have seen the evidence of inner change through outward expressions: faithful attendance on Sundays and small groups, people asking in-depth questions and going out of their way to spend time with each other, even members smiling and laughing more! Every week has resulted in new visitors despite little advertising. Last week, as we wrapped up the series with a special Easter service, we had the absolute joy of seeing Sophie, a Chinese lady who had come from a Buddhist

background, accept Jesus as her Saviour. After having enthusiastically voiced a prayer as a new believer, Sophie said, "I thought it was such a big step before. Now it just seems so natural. I don't have all the answers, but I know I can be a Christian." And all the angels in heaven rejoiced!

Crossing through New Zealand

With much energy and many offerings of chocolate and cereal (both of which are in limited varieties here), the *Church at the Crossing* from Indiana travelled to New Zealand for a "Look, Listen and Learn" trip. Our goal was to allow them to catch the heart of AIC and find ways that our two churches could partner up better. Through our meetings, we received many nuggets of advice that sparked excited conversations for the future of AIC. Please join us in prayer as we go to God with these ideas in the back of our heads so that we will partner with the Holy Spirit in implementing new ministry strategies this year.



The Church at the Crossing with the AIC leadership team: Yes, that is my husband below (sigh).

In April, we also hosted John Johnson (*Global Missions* Regional Coordinator), his son, Will and friend, Rick Caffall. This was the first time that John had visited us since Chad had assumed the lead pastoral role at AIC. We were encouraged to read his observations: "The Auckland

International Church is striving to be a faithful, Christ-centred, disciple-making, relevant, sharing and serving community of Christ-followers in the capital of New Zealand. That is not the motto of the church. No, that is

what I saw and experienced earlier this month as I worshiped with this energetic body of believers for several days.”

We couldn't have asked for a better start to the year, but please pray that this spiritual momentum would continue to be built.

Beyond the Veil: Easter Service

As one of the members of AIC shared with the rest of the congregation, “Easter is the most important day for all of us.” This year, our Easter weekend was packed from Thursday till Sunday as we relived the days leading up to that fateful morning when the truth of an empty tomb was discovered. On Thursday, AIC saw the most number of people we had ever had at a footwashing service. Chad was blessed by being allowed to wash the feet of an elderly Chinese lady, Peng. Although Peng could not speak English and was apprehensive about having her feet washed, she eventually relented. It was a joy to see that even though there was a language barrier, there could still be a fellowship between two such different cultures through a gesture that had its roots in Christian history.



Chad washing Peng's feet.

Prayer requests

Chad has begun the lengthy process of pastoral licensing and ordination. He will travel to Australia at the end of April to have an interview with the leaders of the Australian Church of God. We also anticipate that this time will provide feedback for our current planning and help build a stronger partnership with our brothers and sisters across the Tasman Sea.

Pray for open doors as we aim to build relationships and share Christ with our neighbours. Pray for the church to unite in heart and strength to implement a new strategy to reach our community.

Praises

Praise God for the salvation of Sophie. Pray that many of our unsaved friends would follow in her footsteps.

On Easter Sunday, a teenager who had once been a part of AIC but had stopped going to church turned up for the first time in over a year. This alone was an answer to the prayers of many people!

God has begun opening doors for new relationships with the people around us. We have been able to share in the joy of a newborn baby to a young South African couple who we have started to witness to. We have also been able to befriend many of the shop owners in the neighbourhood, many of whom come from a non-religious or Hindu background. The harvest is plentiful!

Kris Rathwell, a student at the University of Auckland, has willingly stepped up to take on the role of youth leader – a role that Chad vacated when he took on being lead pastor. We have been praying that God will send the right person and we have not had to wait long! Kris is originally from the Church of God in Alberta, Canada where he was also a youth leader. Please do remember him in your prayers as he balances being a youth leader and working on a doctorate degree.

Ways to Help

- 1) Prayer – There never can be enough prayer! We would love if you would join us in praying for New Zealand so that we would be able to discern what God is already doing here and partner with Him in that. Specific prayer requests are also listed above.
- 2) Financial Support – Thank you to all our supporters. Because of you, we are able to just focus on God's work in New Zealand full-time. If you would like to help us financially, please send support to:

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