



chad and diane davenport  
 SAMS TO NEW ZEALAND: NOV/DEC 06 NEWSLETTER

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

**Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!** We have been preparing a slideshow containing pictures from the events of 2006 to present at our New Year's Eve service. And we have more photos than we have time to present...an excellent indication of what a fantastic and full year this has been! Meanwhile, we hope that you've found time in the midst of the busy holiday season to connect with the one whose birth gives us reason to celebrate. We wanted to share with you a few ways that this message continues to impact us and those in our community.

**Family Day Outreach**

We have continued to look for ways to connect with the many in our community who are disillusioned with Christianity and avoid church. On November 25, we provided a community event for parents and kids to have fun, relax and get to know others (complete with bouncy castle, ice cream and espresso trucks, water balloon toss, tug-o-war, as well as ways for them to find out more about who we are). Although the turnout was less than we had hoped for (around 50), some really good things came out of it. Nearly the whole church turned up to help out. We learned some important things so that the next event will be more effective. One local pastor that attended encouraged our group, "Your church did a great job. Just keep at it. It takes time"



The triumphant team of "Balloon Volleyball"

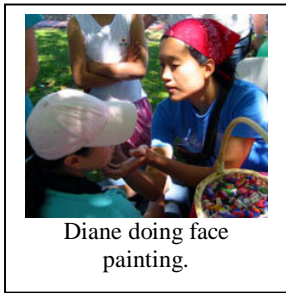
All the adults who attended got to enter a draw for a prize at the end. The woman who won was a young Maori lady who had checked out everything from a distance and left before the winner was announced. When I phoned her that evening, she seemed unsure of my intentions. However, her demeanor completely changed when she was presented with her prize. She even called her neighbor over to show her what she had received. Our hope is that even in small, unexpected ways, people might reconsider the good news of Jesus who loves them.

**Te Atatu Christmas Parade**

The following weekend, several thousand people turned up for this annual Christmas event. Our church decided to participate by running a booth with free balloon animals and face painting. Diane, Danette and several others also spent many hours creating a float for the parade that advertised our upcoming launch in February and had the theme, "The 12 Days of Kiwi Christmas" (see below for words). A couple days before the parade, in the final stages of preparing the float and 600 flyers, the parade coordinator told me that we could not hand out anything religious (despite it being a Christmas event). She asked what kind of information our flyers contained.



Characters from our "12 Days of Kiwi Christmas" float.

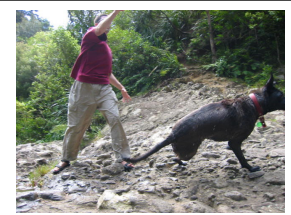


Diane doing face painting.

I told her it had pictures of people in our church, details about the church, a candy cane and the story of its background. She said, "Oh, that's fine," and left it at that. I guess she didn't know that the candy cane was created by a Christian who wanted to tell the story of Jesus through a piece of candy (white for his purity and virgin birth, red for the blood he shed for our forgiveness, the shape of a "J" for Jesus, etc.). We decided it was better for us to be bold about presenting the true Christmas message and prayed that we would not get stopped before handing out the flyers. 600 flyers got handed out without a hitch. In short, the message of Christ was distributed to all without restriction. I was so proud of our team who went out of their way to spread the joy of the season.

## Christmas and Summer Holidays

Most people probably don't talk of "Christmas" and "summer" in the same sentence. However, down here, these are just two of the many events that we've been celebrating. So many things have happened over the past few weeks, we're not really sure how to report them...gatherings with our neighbors, preparing dinner and gifts for some people in our community, Christmas Eve with the church family at our house complete with white elephant gift giving, carols and Diane's honeyed ham with roasted plums and pears (yum)! Chad continues to try his hand at gardening, but finds more success with weeds than with vegetables. Missy continues to learn new tricks, the latest being that she has learned to speak on command (more of a high pitched yelp at the moment, but we're working on it). Diane's parents just got into town, and Chad's parents and brother are coming in early January, so we're looking forward to finally getting some family time. Our families have not seen each other since we were married two years ago.



Chad and Missy enjoying summer with an old-fashioned game of fetch.

Thanks again for your support and encouragement over the past year. The challenge has done much good to help us mature and grow closer to that which God created us to be. We are as excited as ever as we anticipate the good things God will do in 2007. We pray that God will lead and strengthen you with his Holy Spirit as you step into the New Year.

### Prayer Requests:

- For a leadership meeting that we are having on January 25<sup>th</sup> to plan for the rest of the year.
- For our very first family camp from Jan 27<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup>. We hope that people will come away from it inspired, refreshed and ready for the church relaunch.
- Most details are coming together for our relaunch in February, but we are still on the hunt for a new church facility. We see great advantages of having our own place throughout the week, but there is just not a lot of available space within our price range. Things are moving more slowly as many people go out of town for the summer holidays. Please continue praying about this with us. We look forward to sharing good news of God's provision soon.
- That we would have a chance to rest with our families over the next few weeks so that we are ready to do this relaunch fully refreshed.

### Praises:

- Chad has found some local pastors to help coach through the relaunch.
- Some of our close friends in the church are getting married. Chad gets to officiate his first wedding ceremony. Now, where to buy a nice suit? (The only suits Chad owns dates back to his marching band days.)

## So what's a New Zealand Christmas like?

Do you know the 12 days of Christmas Kiwi-style? Here's a bit of culture for you. Feel free to sing along. Maestro, please....



Allison and Isabelle dressed in piupiu, carrying poi

*"On the first day of Christmas, my true love gave to me a pukeko in a ponga tree (a long-legged black and blue bird in a fern tree). On the second day of Christmas, my true love gave to me...*

- 2 kumara (yams)
- 3 flax kits (bags woven from flax leaves)
- 4 huhu grubs (some people eat these!)
- 5 big fat pigs! (see picture at top of newsletter)
- 6 poi a twirling (soft balls on strings that are twirled – used in Maori dances)
- 7 eels a swimming (eels are probably the same thing everywhere)
- 8 plants of puha (like watercress)
- 9 sacks of pipis (a shellfish)
- 10 juicy fish heads (ours were made of cardboard)
- 11 haka lessons (the haka is a Maori war dance)
- 12 piu piu swinging (a flax skirt still worn for traditional Maori programs)

## Ways to Help

- 1) Prayer – We would love if you would join us in praying for New Zealand, and particularly the many young unchurched adults of west Auckland. Also see [www.chaddavenport.org](http://www.chaddavenport.org).
- 2) Financial Support – Thank you to all our supporters. Because of you, we are able to focus on ministering in New Zealand full-time. If you would like to help us financially, please send support to: Church of God Ministry, P.O. Box 2420, Anderson, IN 46018 (Memo: Chad Davenport, Project #42.11235)