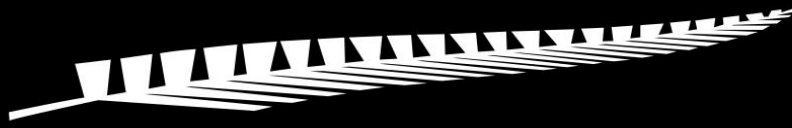


October 2021

Miller News from New Zealand



Dear Brethren,

Well greetings from down in the South Pacific. We constantly thank God for his daily blessings, constant guidance, and protection as we navigate through life to the far shore. I have been leading a study for a year on the book of Acts every Thursday morning with a group of 14 members. We will be coming to Acts 27 in a week. What caught my heart was Paul on a ship heading to Rome. By God's providence they struck a violent wind called an Euraquilo (Northeaster) (Acts 27:14). And were tossed about in the Adriatic Sea (Acts 27:27). The sailors feared they would run aground on the rocks and were trying to jump in the lifeboat. But Paul gave this warning **"unless you stay on the ship you cannot be saved"** (Acts 27:31). I think we can learn a lot from these words and this story. The Christian life is a **voyage. In many ways life is like a ship on a sea.** There will be days when all is well, clear skies, gentle breezes and the water is calm. But there are times when the seas of life get



rough, the night comes and the storm blows in. These can strike fear in our hearts like these sailors felt. We hit a sand bar of suffering and our plans and hopes crumble in the surf and our hopes begin to break apart. Much like the world, we are all in a storm and it is easy to do what these misguided sailors did and abandon the ship and everyman for himself. But let this be a warning for us all. Let's not be like these sailors but heed Paul's words, **"Unless you stay on the ship you shall not be saved"**. During this Covid period we can all resort to panic and be every man for himself. Instead, we must **cling to Jesus and stay with his body the Church.** It was Jesus who said, **"the gates of Hades will not prevail against it."** (Matthew 16:18). Ancient cities were surrounded by walls. The gates were primary places for holding courts, transacting business,

and deliberating on public matters. See Job 29:7; Genesis 19:1; Psalms 69:12; Proverbs 1:21. Jesus is saying that all the plots, strategies, deceit, and evil planned at the gates of the Hades

against the church **will not stand**. That promise has been remarkably fulfilled. The lesson is **don't bail out on Christ and his church and try to branch out on your own**. If we do, we **WILL DROWN and not make it to shore**. Keep close to God's amazing grace and we will eventually make it safe to the far shore.

During this period of Covid we have been experiencing lockdowns or isolation and it has been wearying for Christians and especially as an elder and leader of his church. I have seen

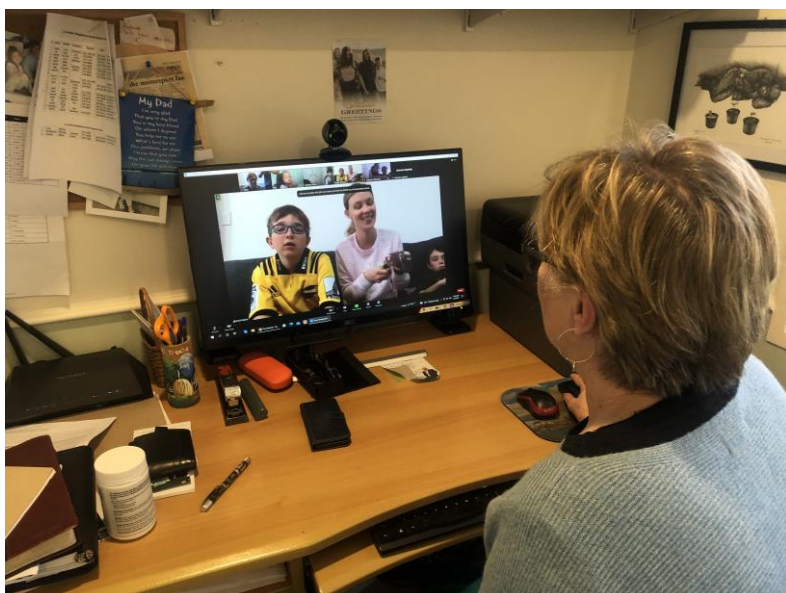


Christians slowly pull away from the fellowship and staying home and living without the church. So, we keep encouraging members to fellowship in small groups as much as possible. Don't jump ship but stay (in the boat) with the family of God.

As I mentioned we have been working our way through Acts every Thursday Morning with a group of 14 Christians. It has been good for members and some of our older and younger members to be able to get out and fellowship and be fed spiritually. We have a lunch together and this has allowed a



rich time together.



This last month it was exciting to see a young lady named Hope (above) be baptized into Christ. Hope is from South Korea and moved to New Zealand to study to become an architect. She moved to our city and one of the members brought her along. She met one of our single young men and the relationship has been developing and with studies from Trish (one of our ladies) and others she put Christ on in baptism. Hope is already

serving and helping Melinda and other teachers in the children's classes and is learning the Bible stories as she goes.



We have had several lock downs in which Melinda has been involved in teaching the children online (see above). Though it is never an easy way, we are thankful for technology and Zoom.

Melinda organized the Secret Sisters for the ladies to take part in and encourage each other. They all got together to share and reveal their secret sister. And Melinda brought a short lesson on encouragement.(see

left)

Dianne the lady I baptized a few months back has slowly been deteriorating. But Heather and I popped in to encourage her at the health care center. We are grateful that God has it in his hands.

One of our young men Paul Mafi plays for his high school rugby team. The "Barbarian 1st XV" They won the Bay of Plenty Secondary schools Sam Cain High school championship. It was wonderful to see his progress. I have studied the Bible with Paul on several occasions.

We have been trying to develop the young boys in our church as speakers and song leaders. It is always so encouraging watching them take the lead. (see next page)



Recently Melinda and I decided to go away for our 40th anniversary. We went to the South Island and our eldest son Aaron and Angelique decided to join us. New Zealand is spectacular and very beautiful. We did a helicopter ride up into the Southern Alps and saw the Fox Glacier and the Victoria Glacier. We did some wonderful exploring. What was exciting was they wanted me to get back on the Snow Skis. I was rather dubious as I'm getting old and didn't want to have any bad falls. But I decided to brave it and after 30 years of not skiing it came right back again. We skied

the Remarkable Mountains. Just an amazing spot in the world to see and be able to go to the top and ski down. If it never happens again, it will be a wonderful memory.



While there Aaron and I got to know a ski instructor, Mario from Czechoslovakia. He brushed us up on our skiing and took us up to the highest spots to ski down. Rather frightening. When we were on the lifts, Aaron and I had this wonderful opportunity to share about the Lord with him. He is Greek Orthodox but had a religion which he never followed but had no idea about God's will for his life. We shared and answered his questions. I was

very impressed with my son Aaron who challenged him about clinging to a religion but get to know Christ. Mario said "he has never had these conversations before of such depth on spiritual things while going up on chair lifts. Our prayers are that Mario had some seeds laid deep within his heart.

I continue to have some great studies on. One is with Corben the new Christian brother and Paula, David Ross and Aaron on Friday mornings. Corben is growing steadily. We will be starting Colossians soon and he is preparing to teach one of the sections along with the other brothers.



Well, once again thank you for your prayers, support, and encouragement we get from you. Please keep our new Christians in your prayers like Corben, Deryek, Dianne, and Hope. We know the evil one continues to devise schemes to trip all of us and so we must stay alert. (1 Peter 5:8-9) Again thank you for your love and interest and support of us.

Blessings from New Zealand

Chris and Melinda Miller

