

March

Miller Family Newz

"Knowing God and Making Him Known...in the South Pacific"



Dear brethren,

Greetings, I want to say thank you for taking the time to read what is going on in our world down under in New Zealand. With all that has been going on around the world, especially of late, it's a time to give thanks for all aspects of our lives that we can often take for granted as we pray fervently for those in Ukraine and for their situation. It makes us also look at our own hearts (mine especially) to make sure we are always expressing gratitude to God. The Psalmist said in **Psalm 116:12** "what must I give you, Lord, for being too good to me? The answer is gratitude. It was the British theologian John H Jowell who said, 'every virtue divorced from thankfulness is maimed and limps along the spiritual road.' How true, because without gratitude our faith becomes just a hollow religious practice and our love for others crashes and burns, leaving us feeling drained of joy and hope. Paul says in **1 Thessalonians 5:18** **In everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.** It does not say everything is God designed but it says IN it, THROUGH it and BEYOND it, He can work good. That is sometimes what I miss. In any given set of circumstances, I can either choose to whine or choose to worship. I know which one I go away refreshed from. I know one thing for sure, I cannot worship without giving thanks to God. So, let's not stop giving thanks.

As I write this, I have been laid low with Covid Melinda hasn't tested positive for it yet, we will wait and see. It has been over a year since her cancer, and she is doing well and clear at this stage.



Recently Melinda and I made the trip down to Napier where we served the church for 11 years. I preached and taught there and though it is now a small group they always show us such hospitality and warmth. It was lovely catching up with Sinai who is now living there and helps and encourages the church there along with her husband Simon. She was a student at the Bible College a few years ago from New Guinea.

I also have the privilege of teaching and encouraging other leaders in New Zealand and overseas. Technology comes with many hazards and dangers. But to be able to teach others in Blenheim and as far away as Chile is truly a blessing.

Melinda and I have enjoyed encouraging the Mafi family. We first met about 8 years ago when I was over in Tonga preaching and teaching. I invited them to come and go through our Bible College. They came went through and are now moving down to Blenheim where Paula and Mina want to establish a church among the islanders there. Each week Paula and I have our weekly prayer time and Bible study together via zoom.



During the summer we have tried to get together, when possible, with our brethren. It's always special when this can take place. Melinda and I wanted to do something with some others toward helping the Tongan brethren that experienced the

terrible eruption. Otumoetai Church and missions also came together to help get plastic drums



with food and supplies placed in them. A few weeks ago, the ship arrived in Tonga, and we received these pictures and a lovely letter thanking us for our help.



I continue to lead and teach a Thursday Bible study group. We have been in the book of Hebrews. We have a variety of members from the church who come to it.

We decided due to Covid that has hit at an all-time high in New Zealand to go to home church groups for a period of time. These are a few of our group that we meet with every Sunday together.

One of my fellow elders about two months ago retired from the SPBC and sadly had a stroke only two weeks

ago. Mike Austin is a loved member of our church and has been a great encourager to the flock. If you could keep Mike in your prayers this would be wonderful. So far, he has 80 percent recovery, and we are praying for naturally as much as God will give him.

Mike was blessed that his daughter Cheree could catch a plane from where she lives in California and arrive to support him. We took Sue (mother) and Cheree out to our favorite spot down on the



Wharf for good old “kiwi fish and chips”. Freshly caught that day.



his 11–12-year-old students. It is his first year of teaching and with lock downs and teaching online it has been a challenging year to begin teaching. But he has taken it well.

We are thankful that Nathan our youngest son is allowed back into the classroom to teach

Aaron continues to get his teaching certificate so he can train young mariners for the sea. They are planning on taking the Kohu to the Fiji Island where dentists will fly in and will have



shipping containers which are decked out as dentist rooms to help those in the remote island in our Pacific Basin who cannot get dentist work done.

Abby our daughter continues to home school her children in California. Charis our eldest granddaughter graduates in May and will go on to study at college in the fall of this year. We have not seen them for over 2 and a half years so we are looking at how we can see them before they are all grown up.

Saturday several of our ladies gathered at one of our cafes to enjoy time together to celebrate any ladies with birthdays in the past few months. This is a special group of ladies that serve in various ways in the church family. It is special too because in this picture we have ladies from South Africa, China, Thailand, Pakistan, United States and New Zealand. So, you can see that we are a multi-cultural congregation which is a blessing in many ways.

We appreciate your continued prayers on our behalf and would love to hear from you and know what is happening in your life. It feels like it's been a long time since we were able to be there with you. Please pray that we can make plans to come again before too long.

Blessings,

Chris and Melinda Miller



