



# GRACE COMMUNION INTERNATIONAL

*Living and Sharing the Gospel*

## NZ Update – 13 February 2014

*A big hello from Auckland!*

**7<sup>th</sup> NZ Christian Network Congress:** Last Wednesday evening Louis and Alasi Smith and I travelled north to attend the 7th NZ Christian Network Congress, which brought together 140 Christian leaders.

On Waitangi Day morning we stood in blustery wind and rain for over an hour at an interdenominational church service attended by hundreds of people on the Treaty grounds at Waitangi. The prayers and readings were given by a number of denominational and political leaders. The sermon, given by Baptist National Leader Craig Vernall, compared the church to a midwife with Maori and Pakeha as the parents bringing forth the birth of our nation in 1840. The missionaries and church had a huge role in the foundation of NZ, and this year marks the bicentenary of the first sermon in NZ, given by Samuel Marsden on Christmas Day 1814.



The Christian churches are seeking to draw attention to the bicentenary as another opportunity to preach the gospel in our country, which needs it now just as badly as it was needed in 1814!

The Congress, held the day after Waitangi Day on Friday, focused on three major topics: 200 years of Christianity in NZ; the advance of secularism; and the state of marriage and family in NZ today.

We were delighted to have Louis and Alasi with us at Auckland services on Saturday, where Louis gave a sermon entitled "Reflections on 2013".

**Refresher Weekend:** Our special weekend at Waikanae is now only 2 weeks away! Maureen notes that the weather in Wellington hasn't been very warm of late, and the rooms at El Rancho no longer include a bedspread. So if you are not hiring the linen and bedding (\$10 per set) at the camp, you will need to bring blankets or a sleeping bag along. You can review the general information about the weekend at <http://bit.ly/MYJnCo>.

**Prayer Requests:** We have a number of New Zealand members and their families who are going through a few trials at the moment. Please remember them in your prayers.

**Invercargill:** (from the Evans) Life is a bit different post the Southern Light shop but we are now wondering how we fitted it in! Several of the families we provide support for have had crises in their lives (there's a lot of it about) so that has kept us busy. Les has not been able to travel very far for a while so we are looking forward to a trip to Rotorua. His new hip and knee are doing fine but the other hip and knee are starting to niggle so he may not get much reprieve. However we did the Invercargill Surf to City by bike at the weekend (12 km) so quite an accomplishment especially trying to keep up with three children aged 12, 10 and 9! (it was never going to happen!) There were about 3000 in the ride! Southern Light is alive and well as a church and 'future outreach' so watch this space.



**Adrian Gordon:** The Wellington congregation recently celebrated Adrian Gordon's 21<sup>st</sup> birthday which was on Waitangi Day, and paid tribute to his achievements. Adrian held the official torch at the National Special Olympics 2013, coming first in 100m and 2<sup>nd</sup> in Long Jump. He has an impressive list of sporting successes under his belt. In 2014 he will be attending Weltech, following graduating from High School in 2013 and participating in work experience programmes.

Regards to all,

Rex