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The quake had struck us were just half way through our series. Once the city council OK’d that public meetings could resume, we were back at it. Wonderfully, our attendance held reasonably strong given the circumstances.

And God gave us a harvest!

Some were baptized on our final Sabbath there (nine of them!), but more came in the follow-up which was conducted by the local church working with two ARIS graduates, Samuel and Amber Riemersma (who did an A+ job by all accounts).

Yes, I love New Zealand. The mountains and rivers and wild places, but even more than this, I love the people. They are a special and hardy people down there. As you can imagine, the earthquake put an abrupt stop to our meetings. We

And God gave us a harvest!

And that is my prayer for New Zealand. That it would become God’s Zone!

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New Zealand: My Glory and Joy!

By David Asscherick

It is no secret to those who know me that I regard New Zealand as “the best country on earth.” I've been there four years in a row, and have no plans or desire to stop my annual visits. My most recent visit, which I've just returned from, was a wonderful blessing, as it afforded me many opportunities for ministry and fellowship.

As we near the close of this world’s history, the prophecies relating to the last days especially demand our study. The last book of the New Testament Scriptures is full of truth that we need to understand. Satan has blinded the minds of many so that they have been glad of any excuse for not making the Revelation their study. But Christ through His servant John has here declared what shall be in the last days; and He says, “Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein.”

Ellen G. White, Testimonies to Ministers, p. 116

In the very first verses the character and object of the book are brought to view. It is “the revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John: who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.”

Ellen G. White, Sermons and Talks, Volume 2, p. 238.2

Christchurch is New Zealand’s second largest city, and it was my first stop. I was looking forward to catching up with some of those who had been baptized as a result of our efforts over the past few years. As providence would have it, I was able to reconnect with more than a dozen of them.

What a joy it was to see their bright, happy and energetic faces at church on Sabbath morning. I hadn’t alerted anyone about my arrival, so my presence was a genuine surprise. A good one, I hope! My heart leapt with joy to see Debbie and her mother sitting in church soaking up the sermon. And Theresa and Collin both looked so content and settled in their new faith.

James was making excellent contributions in Sabbath School class, and Colleen was smiling and putting distance between her and her depression. Renee and Isaac were smiling and attentive, clearly enjoying the service. Amos is a regular missionary and powerful young preacher. Adrian and Kate are sharing their love for Jesus with whoever will listen.

There is no greater joy and satisfaction in all the world than seeing those who’ve accepted Jesus Christ and His end-time message growing and rejoicing in their new faith. I resonate deeply with Paul who wrote to the believers in Thessalonica, “For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? For you are our glory and joy” (1Thessalonians 2:19-20).

Our meetings last year were interrupted by a deadly and devastating earthquake. Hundreds were killed, and the central business district (CBD) was left in war-like ruins. It happened on February 22 at 12:51 p.m. The CBD received the brunt of the quake’s deadly force; I should know, I was there.

I'll never forget how suddenly and violently my apartment began to rock. I was on the third floor and was certain my building was going to fall. It didn’t, but many others did. I stumbled clumsily down the stairs and out the door to “safety.” That’s when I saw the devastation, and I could hardly believe my eyes. A once quaint and clean city had been transformed into a dilapidated mess within seconds—20 seconds, to be precise. Scared and panicked people were everywhere.

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