

# NEWS FROM DAVID AND GRETA

## DECEMBER 2023

*We hope that you will take a few minutes to read what has been happening in our ministry recently. The Perspectives section reveals why Jesus is not returning to earth just yet.*

**In October and November, Greta and I visited the following churches:**

- **Church Unlimited, Auckland City campus** – Due to my being down with a cold, Greta ministered unaccompanied and greatly encouraged the church.
- **Gold Coast Chapel, Australia.** Led by our friends Marshall and Rochelle Gray, this church has surged from around 300 people to over 1200 in the last three years. We spoke at all three Sunday services and the hunger in the evening encounter service was profound.
- **Hopepointe Church, Caboolture, Australia.** Last year, leadership passed to Ben & Rachael Curtin, graduates from Bethel School of the Supernatural, USA. We ministered prophetically to them and the new leadership team that has formed around them. We also ran a *How to Pray and Change Your World* seminar to which the majority of the church came, an amazing turnout.
- **Good News Church, Maungaturoto, NZ.** Led by Paul & Natalie Chambers, also graduates of Bethel SOS, Good News Church is a vibrant and significant church in Northland. The evening Holy Spirit encounter service drew many, including some from other churches. Again, the spiritual hunger was very evident.
- **Liberty Church, Whakatane.** While senior pastors Grant & Abby Bateson were on Sabbatical, we spoke at the morning service and had an enjoyable and fruitful lunch meeting with the leadership team.
- **The Upper Room, Auckland.** After fourteen years of effective ministry, founding pastors Craig and Kim Heilmann are moving to Australia and the church is transitioning to new leadership. The messages we shared spoke encouragement into the new season ahead.



During mid-November, we took the opportunity to **celebrate our 15<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary** overseas. We continually thank the Lord for bringing us together after the deaths of our beloved former spouses - strangers brought together through a series of amazing God-incidences, or Godwinks as some call them. **Finally, we pray that you will have a blessed Christmas and New Year and enter 2024 with renewed hope and strength.**



**December 1-2:** Morrinsville Baptist Church. Leaders' retreat.

**December 3:** New Day Church, Orewa, Auckland. Sunday meeting.

**December 10:** Freedom Church, Waihi Beach. Sunday meetings.

**January 21:** To be confirmed.

**January 28:** Church Unlimited, West Auckland. Sunday meetings.

## PERSPECTIVE



**Many are asking if the current war in the Middle East and other world events are pointing to the imminent return of Christ to earth.** While these events are signposts, I do not believe his return is just yet. And here is why.

Speaking of signs that would point to his second coming, Jesus said, *“When you hear of wars and insurrections, don’t panic. Yes, these things must take place first, **but the end won’t follow immediately.**”* Then he added, *“Nation will go to war against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be great earthquakes, and there will be famines and plagues in many lands, and there will be terrifying things and great miraculous signs from heaven.”* (Luke 21: 9-11 NLT).

**Some of these terrifying things will be** the roaring of the seas (Luke 21:25), meaning the weather becoming violent, hatred towards and persecution of Christ’s followers (Luke 21:12), and global anger towards Israel (Luke 21:23). While many of these signs have occurred in history, they have intensified since we entered the 2020’s. However, Jesus asserted that the end is not yet.

**This is because he revealed another great sign that would signify his imminent return:** *“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, **and then the end will come.**”* (Matthew 24: 14 NIV). This does not mean that all people will merely hear the gospel. It also means that multitudes will hear and believe, and so be saved. And when the full number of the Gentiles (non-Jewish peoples) believe, then all Israel will be saved. (Romans 11: 25-26). Only the Lord knows what that full number is. I don’t believe it will be a minority of the earth’s population. The great ministry of the Holy Spirit to the nations is to *“convict the world of its sin, and of God’s righteousness, and of the coming judgement.”* (John 16:8 NLT). **And he is excellent at his job.**



In the words of Charles Spurgeon, the greatest preacher of the Victorian era:

“It would be easy to believe that at our present rate of progress the kingdoms of this world never could become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ. Indeed, many in the Church are giving up the idea of it except on the occasion of the return of Christ, which, as it chimes in with our own idleness, is likely to be a popular doctrine. I myself believe that King Jesus will reign, and the idols be utterly abolished; but I expect the same power which turned the world upside down once will still continue to do it. **The Holy Spirit would never suffer the imputation to rest upon His holy name that He was not able to convert the world.**”

Currently, there are over six billion people on earth who are not believers in Messiah Jesus. His return now would exclude them from God’s Kingdom. The Holy Spirit would appear to have failed in his mission to convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgement, and Satan would appear to have won. **As this is inconceivable, it will not happen.**

Before his return, the Lord will release an outpouring of his Spirit upon the Church to engage in the greatest move of prayer and mission history has seen. A great number of people will be saved, which is why I believe the return of Christ is not yet. Father God does not want to shut anyone out from his Kingdom. As the apostle Peter explained, *“The Lord isn’t really being slow about his promise [to return], as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. **He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent.**”* (2 Peter 3:9 NLT)



**At the recent Amsterdam 2023 global evangelism conference**, delegates agreed that the next decade will see the largest Great Commission effort in the history of Christianity. Billy Wilson, global chair of Empowered 21, organisers of the conference stated, *“Things aren’t going to get better, but in the middle of the drama and trauma, we will not be afraid, we will not hold back and **we will preach the gospel to every person on earth.**”*

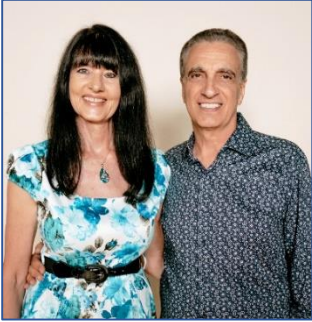
If we the Church do our part in prayer and mission, the Holy Spirit will do his part. And then the Prince of Peace will return and usher in his Kingdom in all its fullness upon the earth.

God spoke long ago through the prophet Isaiah, *“Open up, O heavens, and pour out your righteousness. Let the earth open wide so salvation and righteousness can sprout up together.”* (Isaiah 45:8 NLT) This is God’s heartbeat for a lost world. May we the Church pray and work for this to happen.



Blessings,

*David and Greta*



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