

The Harvester

Lifelines, growing in Christ through outdoor experiences

“What shall I return to the LORD for all his goodness to me?” -Psalm 116:12

This has been a season of knowing God’s great bounty. We recognize His mighty work during our time in New Zealand, and praise Him for His goodness both here and abroad.



New Zealand Shepherds

Much of our role in NZ was to mentor younger staff, passing on what we’ve learned, so they can bear more fruit personally and in ministry

January marked the beginning of a three-month stint in New Zealand. Our family would not return home until the end of April as we followed the Lord across the globe to plant the seeds of the Lifelines ministry “down under.” We could not have been more blessed by the experience—the highs and the lows—which taught us dependence on the Lord and gave us a front row seat to see His remarkable work and to relish the beauty and diversity of His creation. In three months we hosted or participated in five conferences, met all the Cru staff in the country, and worked closely with the staff and students at Otago University in Dunedin, where we lived and worked. “I can’t believe I have done five years of ministry without knowing this stuff” Cam, our Otago co-worker, commented, raking his hand through his hair. By God’s grace, he and our whole staff team were super receptive to the experiential learning and character growth concepts we modeled. Dre, the campus director, explained that they didn’t have a common language or strategies for how to help students grow in Christ-likeness. It was apparent that God had brought us in to fill a gap. It was a delight to see the staff team implement concepts we had just taught them days earlier, and then to see the student leaders enthusiastically teach those same lessons to their peers. The team there is interested in beginning a Lifelines ministry in Otago, and they continue to carry on the Lifelines DNA in our absence. Praise the Lord!

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For the 15 students who came to Christ while we were in New Zealand

For the staff team we were part of in Otago and their eagerness to employ all that we taught there

For the more than 1,000 Gospel experiences we offered students here in the Northeast this academic year

For Dan’s opportunity to serve students in the Ozarks on summer project this June



To learn more details and see photos of our months in New Zealand, check out the wilderness ministry posts on our blog: intothewilderness.org

Making all things work for good (even those that seem bad!)

If you ask our kids what the most memorable part of New Zealand was, they will tell you “the flood.” At the outset of our trip, on our drive down the west coast of the south island, heading toward Dunedin, we were caught in heavy rains and abandoned our tents in favor of a night at a motel. Our spirits were dampened from that day’s news that our housing contract had fallen through just days before we were to arrive, and we did not know then that more challenges were ahead. At 3am we were awakened to find water pouring into the room under the walls, and the floor buckling beneath us. In 15 minutes the water had risen three feet inside the room; once outside, we waded in a sea of floating debris up to my chest, with Micah and Aliza pinned to our backs. The next morning showed the devastating results of the flash flood, including the loss of our just purchased minivan.

That is how we arrived in Dunedin to meet our NZ teammates. Bedraggled, homeless, and without transportation, we were completely dependent on the Lord and on the help and provision of our new team. This was God’s kindness. Our Kiwi comrades did not feel threatened by our presence, nor did they feel like we were coming to try to “fix” their ministry; on the contrary, they served and loved us and we were bound to them in gratitude and humility. And we had the joy of seeing God’s provision for housing in His miraculous way—just hours before we had to leave our temporary shelter. We will remember the flood, but we will also remember the fruit that came from it.



Ministering Together

One of our greatest delights was that we served alongside another Lifelines family—the Lovejoys. Mark is the director of the team in Oregon, and he and Alicia have three boys of similar ages to our own. While Mark and Alicia became fast friends to Dan and I, our kids became like siblings, calling themselves the “Lovefields.” We could not have made it without the mutual encouragement of these dear ones.



Thank you for your prayers. We are very aware that every success we experience, and every life changed, is a result of God’s work, for His glory and our joy, and we share that joy with you as we soldier together.

Looking Ahead

What’s next? Our hope is to send another Lifelines team to NZ next spring to extend the bridge that we’ve built. Eventually we hope that God will raise up New Zealanders to develop and lead a Lifelines ministry that will reach Kiwi students on their own turf. Meanwhile, the Otago campus director, Dre, and his wife Mic, are coming to visit us this December. Yay! Dan and Mark continue to mentor Dre from a distance. And, for the time being, my plan is to finish school with the kids while Dan serves students on the Ozark summer project. We will spend much of July at our National staff conference in Colorado, and wrap up the summer by hosting a ten-day white-water rafting training in Maine. We appreciate your prayers for each of these events!