



# Snippets from the Shires

Snippets #30

22<sup>nd</sup> September 2023

*Jesus told them, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.'* Luke 10:2

## Dear friends,

When Jesus walked the fields and paths of Israel with his disciples, he often used a local illustration to teach more about the kingdom. I imagine that when Jesus spoke the words above, he and his disciples were walking through fields bursting with ripe grain waiting to be harvested. Perhaps they pulled a head or two as they passed, rubbing the grain between their hands.

A more familiar image today is the combine harvester, busy cutting huge fields of grain. At a recent prayer meeting we were reminded that the farmer doesn't go to harvest where the grain has already been cut, but where the harvest is ripe and ready to be gathered in. So it is with HFA, God has called us to go to those places that have not yet been reached, where there are a huge multitude of people waiting to hear about the love of God. A love demonstrated by the Lord Jesus who laid down His life so that all might be saved.

Of the 2 to 3 billion people still to be reached with the gospel, its estimated that over 200 million have never met a Christian, visited a church or have a Bible in their language and are isolated.



## A Time for Change

For quite some time we have wanted to set up a network organisation in the UK to promote the work of HFA. Last time we were there we observed that several people we know were about to retire or planning to do so. That made us think of our future. What happens when Tim and Carol are no longer the face of HFA in the UK? Will the vital network praying for the work of HFA slowly fade away?

Remember our friends and colleagues who bought the house in Oz with us? They are now working for HFA from Germany. In 2022 we visited them, and they suggested that our next trip to the UK should be for an extended period – 6 months perhaps. On our return we shared the idea with our CEO who felt two years would be more realistic! Gulp!! However, as we thought and prayed about it for a while, we realised this was really sensible advice.

SO, from around Easter 2024 we are planning to be in the UK for about 2 years, working towards the establishment of an HFA Network/Association or Charity. This isn't a new idea: there are already three networks in Europe: two have been established for some time and a third has just got off the ground.



### What we don't know:

- Where we will be based
- Where to start
- Who will join us in this venture

### What we do know:

- God has this move in His hands – He's made that clear in lots of ways. A dear friend said 'God is loosening the soil around your roots.'
- We have 'in principle' approval from the HFA board and a detailed plan is being prepared for approval.
- In the UK help is nearby; staff in Europe will be available to get us started.
- There will be less rush and more time to visit you, if you'd like to see us, and talk more about this face-to-face; without compressing our visits into the usual eight-week speaking tour of the UK!

*We are so grateful for all the prayer, encouragement and support we've received from faithful friends over many years. When we first obeyed God's call to work in Tanzania a long time ago (Tim in 1996, Carol in 1988), we had no idea what was ahead. The journey so far has been exciting, challenging and continues to stretch our faith but also demands our obedience. 'Returning' to the UK is going to be interesting, especially as we reflect on the fact that both of us have served overseas for longer than we've lived in the land of our births. Some of you have been on this journey with us the whole time, others have joined us more recently. We thank God for you all, and so appreciate your partnership with us in the work of the kingdom.*

*We would love to hear what God puts on your hearts as you read this news.*

## Thank you for praying for the work of HFA

**New staff** have settled into their roles and are bringing valuable skills and gifts. **We thank God for His timely provision.**

**When our CEO** returned from Europe, he reminded us we are part of the much larger team, most of whom are volunteers giving their time and talents to reach the unreached and isolated with the gospel of grace. We saw photos of the different network groups that helped to put faces to names, and heard more about their work. **Praise God for the amazing team we are a part of, working together around the world to reach unreached and isolated people groups with the Good News.**

### A fundraising dinner with a difference

The VoM (Voice of the Martyrs) dinner was held at a Rumanian Church (fitting when many Rumanian Christians have faced great hardship and persecution over the years). We have partnered with VoM in the past, and were keen to meet one of the speakers who had been instrumental in getting God's word to a largely unreached nation. As we took our seats, this mission boss we'd never met headed straight over, sat down and shared news of the impact of HFA's contribution in making his work not just possible, but fruitful. We don't often get feedback from this region – so this was an unexpected encouragement. Both speakers spoke during the dinner and greatly challenged us all. We were reminded of the many believers in closed countries who daily risked great persecution and suffering.

One message stuck with us – the fact that there are two types of servants – the willing servant and the unwilling servant. As in Bible times, God can use anyone to fulfil His purposes, even the most unlikely of leaders, whether they are aware of it, willing or not.

**Pray for many more people in these nations to have the opportunity to hear about the God who loves them.**

### Deployment!

The local team are busy planning to launch the water drone on its final journey. This will involve 5 days on the road to the launch area, travelling from temperate Melbourne to the Tropics. Careful monitoring of currents and tides has taken place and the right time and place to launch has been determined. A new trailer which can carry a greater load has arrived.

We got a scare this week – while checking the satellite communication system, there was no response from the boat. This meant unsealing the access panel, opening the brain and two days of intense investigation. The fault was traced to a broken wire now repaired. It was a nail biting moment.

**Please pray there are no more hitches, and for a safe journey. Also, for the right sea conditions, winds and currents. Pray most of all for the safe arrival of the cargo of Bibles and for people to be prepared and ready to receive it.**

### Prayer Retreat

Local staff and volunteers will spend a day together next week at a Prayer Retreat, led by the Chair of the Board. Perfect timing! Time to reflect, learn and pray together for all that is ahead during the last part of the year. The boat launch of course, but also a board meeting before the trip North, and the AGM soon afterwards.

**The annual HFA Thanksgiving Dinner** takes place in early December. This is an opportunity to thank God for all He has done through HFA this year; and rejoice in and with our volunteers, prayer warriors and staff. This year is also a time for celebration – 5<sup>th</sup> December marks 10 years since HFA began.

**Praise God for He is faithful - 'Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus' Ephesians 3:20,21**

Yesterday, I had to attend a late-night lecture (Communist moral education). In truth, if I had not known God, I would have believed all the voices of the lecture. I feel reborn every day when I listen to God's words. I now understand how important it is to live each day with a right spirit. I give thanks to God. I also give thanks to those who helped us.



### Changes ahead at St John's Church

At the end of the year, Tim will be standing down from Parish Council. As we prepare to move, Carol will be handing over the office role at some stage. A Bible Study group and the weekly prayer meeting will need new leaders. There will be a few other gaps in the monthly roster to fill.

**Please pray for members to hear God's call to serve on the Parish Council, for others willing to take on more responsibility, and to support minister Matthew in the ministry here.**

**Pray for Revival and a work of the Holy Spirit in this place.**

**Time with an old friend.** In August a friend from New Zealand came to spend time with us before we move on. The first week, Anne was busy helping with jobs at church and at work, as we continued to work. The second week we took some leave and visited favourite

places in the area - a Chocolaterie, gardens in the Dandenongs and waterfalls. There were a few Settlers games, great walks and we did a lot of talking and praying together. It was a wonderful couple of weeks.

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Thank you everyone for your prayer and support. We are so grateful to God for allowing us to be a part of HFA and St Johns, and we long to see God glorified, lives changed, and to see His Kingdom come. Thanks for sharing this journey. With love and thanks, Tim and Carol

