



Hope for Families Everywhere

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New Zealand—Keeping Hope Afloat

by Jayna Richardson

When Cyclone Gabrielle hit New Zealand in February of 2023, the devastation was vast and heartbreaking. The damage displaced thousands of people, destroyed numerous homes, caused over \$8 billion (USD) in damage, and took the lives of 11 people. But the challenges in the Hawkes Bay region also opened doors for the FamilyLife team to minister to struggling families.

The FamilyLife team organized a one-day relationship seminar in Napier with the main purpose of bringing hope and encouragement to those who had been affected by the flooding (although anyone was

welcome to attend). Even though the seminar was six months after the cyclone, the destruction in the area was still evident.

“Driving along Highway 5 through Esk Valley into Napier was heartbreaking,” said Steve Hooper, a FamilyLife New Zealand staff member. “The devastation is immense with the majority of houses uninhabitable. A sign on one property read ‘This section has lost 120,000 fruit trees.’”

The seminar ended up being the largest one-day event the New Zealand team has seen in many

years with over sixty couples. “It was also one of the most interactive audiences we’ve experienced,” said Steve. “People just wanted to talk!”



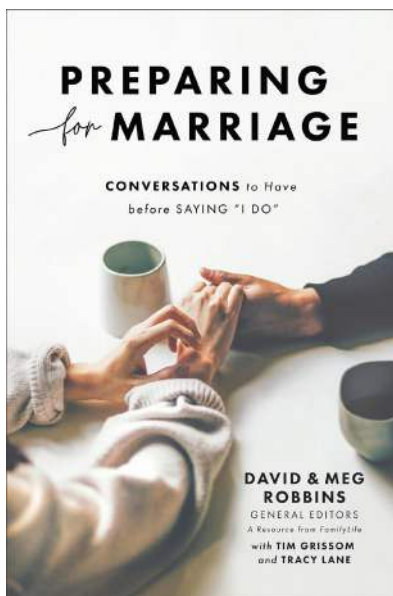
Steve and his wife, Leanne, met one couple who had been swept from the roof of their car as they were attempting to evacuate during the cyclone. “They were separated for eight hours in the water, neither of them knowing if the other had survived,” said Steve. Other couples expressed their grief at having lost their livelihoods due to their orchards being destroyed.

“The corresponding challenges of cleanup, loss, and grief were heavily impacting many couples’ relationships at home. Increased stress, anxiety, and uncertainty were evident. Our heart was to bring some much-needed inspiration and encouragement and an opportunity for couples to take a day out and focus on their relationship.”

There are still many ongoing needs in the Hawkes Bay region as families navigate the long process of getting

their homes and lives back on track. The FamilyLife seminar was a bright spot for many couples who are still working through the trauma of what they’ve been through.

“It was a privilege to offer our small contribution of help,” said Steve. “We may not be able to assist in rebuilding houses, but we were able to offer some practical tools to encourage couples in rebuilding their homes.”



New Resource

Preparing for Marriage (Revised and Updated)

Don't just prepare for your wedding... prepare for your marriage! Focusing on five essential conversations—about finances, sex, God, family, and the future—the Robbinses offer a fun, romantic study that will help you target areas for growth in your relationship.

Visit shop.familylife.com/product/preparing-for-marriage-revised-and-updated/.

Seeing Clearly in Southeast Asia

by Tony Wee

Last summer my wife and I, along with our three kids, traveled to a country in Southeast Asia where missionary activity is restricted. We were there in partnership with Unto®, Cru’s humanitarian ministry, with a goal of setting up vision clinics and performing eye exams in local churches while Cru missionary staff from that country would translate and share the gospel with each individual. All in all, we fitted 1,215 people with eyeglasses and saw 351 people pray to receive Christ!

On the second day, I was assigned a new intern as my translator. She was visibly tentative, so she asked me to demonstrate how to do the eye exam and share the gospel. I had one day of experience, so ... why not? A young woman was our first recipient seeking help for near-sightedness. After the exam I asked her to read a laminated card that had three Bible verses, each with progressively smaller font, as a



final eye test. Reading through those verses was an excellent transition into the gospel.

I shared a rudimentary gospel presentation that this intern translated. She asked the woman if she’d ever heard this before. The woman admitted she hadn’t, but also expressed, “I never knew God loved me so much.” She prayed with me to receive Jesus and left so happy. I’m ashamed to say I was shocked that such a rote presentation would net such a response. It’s a tremendous reminder that the gospel of Jesus is just that powerful.

The intern, visibly relieved, felt confident to take over the sharing. The next five people prayed to receive Christ! I found myself becoming tired because so many people were coming to Christ; what a surreal feeling.



Our family processed our trip over dinner once we’d returned home by stating our highs and lows from the trip. Kara, our eight-year-old, said her greatest high was introducing so many people to Jesus! I nearly fell out of my chair.

There are many more stories we could tell. For now, I’m just hoping to bring even more families with us on our next mission trip. Pray that we can motivate families to go on trips like this to grow closer as a family and be on mission together. Our goal is to send 200+ families in 2024 all over the world!

Editor’s note: If you’d like to learn more about FamilyLife mission trips, visit <https://www.familylife.com/missions/home/>.



2024 Events Calendar

Asia

Singapore Feb 3-May 18, 2024 Art of Parenting small group series . . . Cru Centre
 Singapore Mar 2-23, 2024 Marriage preparation course Cru Centre
 Singapore Apr 6-7, 2024 Weekend retreat for couples . . . Changi Cove hotel

Europe (Eastern)

Slovenia Feb 2-4, 2024 Marriage seminar Veržej
 Slovenia Feb 9-11, 2024 Parenting conference Veržej
 Slovenia Mar 8-10, 2024 Marriage conference Izola
 Slovenia Mar 15-17, 2024 Marriage conference Izola
 Slovenia Apr 12-14, 2024 Marriage conference Veržej
 Slovenia Apr 19-21, 2024 Marriage conference Rogla

Europe (Western)

Germany Feb 17, 2024 Marriage seminar Weikersheim
 Germany Apr 27, 2024 Marriage seminar Dinkelsbühl
 Germany Jun 29, 2024 Marriage seminar Gießen
 Germany Nov 23, 2024 Marriage seminar Limburg
 Netherlands Feb 23-25, 2024 Relationship weekend Hoogeloo
 Spain Apr 13-14, 2024 Marriage seminar Barcelona
 Switzerland Feb 3, 2024 Prepare/Enrich training Zurich
 Switzerland Mar 16-17, 2024 Marriage seminar Zurich
 Switzerland Mar 21, 2024 Marriage preparation course (online)
 Switzerland Apr 20, 2024 Marriage seminar Zurich
 Switzerland May 25, 2024 Marriage seminar Geroldswil
 Switzerland Sep 14, 2024 Prepare/Enrich training Zurich
 Switzerland Sep 21-22, 2024 FamilyLife GO outdoors Ticino

Middle East and North Africa

Due to the sensitive nature of these countries, contact global@familylife.com for further information.

North America

United States—Phone 1-800-358-6329 or www.familylife.com for a complete listing of conferences.

Canada Feb 16-18, 2024 Weekend Getaway Victoria, BC
 Canada Feb 24, 2024 Together for Good Mississauga, ON
 Canada Mar 1-3, 2024 Weekend Getaway Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON
 Canada Mar 1-3, 2024 Indigenous couples getaway Thunder Bay
 Canada Mar 3-May 5, 2024 Pre-marriage course (online)
 Canada Apr 5-7, 2024 Weekend Getaway Penticton, BC
 Canada Apr 12-14, 2024 Weekend Getaway Montebello, QC
 Canada Apr 19-21, 2024 Weekend Getaway Lake Louise, AB
 Canada Apr 26-28, 2024 Weekend Getaway Saskatoon, SK

Oceania

New Zealand Apr 12-14, 2024 Weekend to Remember Christchurch
 New Zealand May 17-19, 2024 Weekend to Remember Auckland

From a recent event in Slovenia:

“I am starting to look at my husband with completely new eyes.”

“The seminar opened both my mind and my heart; here I saw how deeply my wife and I had gone astray without realizing it before, and here I decided to make changes.”

“I came to the seminar without many expectations, but I am leaving full of beautiful and unforgettable impressions.”

Mexico—The Start of an Awakening

by Jayna Richardson

God is on the move in Mexico. Through partnerships between FamilyLife® teams in several cities, the Pastoral Council of Guadalajara (comprising over 200 churches), and other Christian organizations, thousands of people are learning about FamilyLife and God’s plan for families, and the revival is only beginning.

Months of training, planning, and preparations beginning in early 2023 culminated in a series of events throughout the city of Guadalajara in November, including an outdoor dinner for 450 couples at Guadalajara’s Central Park and a march attended by 25,000 people where the name of God and His design for family were proclaimed



with the slogan “Family First.”

One week after the march, leaders from churches and organizations joined with FamilyLife leaders from several cities in Mexico and other Latin American countries for a leadership meeting. It was a time of collaboration as individuals and organizations discussed how they can work together to reach families in their areas with the good news of the gospel. Several churches in Guadalajara have already been trained to use FamilyLife resources, including The Art of Marriage® and the Art of Parenting®. Small-group studies and additional trainings will be conducted in several cities and in hundreds of churches in Mexico throughout 2024.

David Estrella, a FamilyLife leader in Merida, Mexico, expressed his gratitude for the chance to meet with other leaders and be refreshed

in his vision. “Now we can talk about integration and above all get to know each other and listen to the work of the different teams,” he said. “We hope to continue meeting and supporting each other.”

Eduardo and Diana Rivadeneira are Global representatives from FamilyLife US and have provided training and presentations to several churches and leaders this year to help pave the way for the ministry to come. “We feel privileged and honored with what God has done this year in Mexico, a country of 130 million people. Only by His Grace. God has planted an awakening in this country, starting with the city of Guadalajara and FamilyLife Global. Together with the leaders of the region, we are ready to be used in His name to collect His harvest!”

Announcing the All-New Art of Marriage

Over 700,000 people have experienced happier, healthier marriages through FamilyLife's Art of Marriage. Now FamilyLife is introducing the all-new Art of Marriage™, a transformative marriage resource designed to help you explore new levels of intimacy, communication, and connection with your spouse.

Whether you're a newlywed or have been married for decades, FamilyLife's Art of Marriage is your path to a stronger, more beautiful masterpiece of God's handiwork.

Each session of FamilyLife's new Art of Marriage traces a Greek or Hebrew word illustrating God's multifaceted vision for marriage. By comprehending the brilliance behind God's original plan for love, marriage, sex, and romance, your marriage will be radically transformed.



- Session 1 | HESED: *Unwavering Love***
(Hebrew): The covenantal, steadfast love of God
- Session 2 | DABAQ: *Resilient Love***
(Hebrew): Sticking with each other through the highs and lows of life
- Session 3 | AGAPE: *Selfless Love***
(Greek): Sacrificing one's best for the good of another
- Session 4 | LUO: *Forgiving Love***
(Greek): Setting each other free from sin and failure
- Session 5 | YADA: *Intimate Love***
(Hebrew): Seeing everything about each other and accepting completely
- Session 6 | EUANGELION: *Missional Love***
(Greek): Missional Love. Sending Christ-followers to those who need His love

This simple practice of reflecting on these six words drawn directly from God's Word can bring a practical, radical, and transformative power to your marriage.

To learn more, visit <https://shop.familylife.com/product-creator/art-of-marriage/>.