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Network Brings the Gospel to New Zealand

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It is known as the City of Sails. Auckland, New Zealand's largest city located at the tip of the country's north island, is home to one million people and nearly as many boats. It's also home to Shine TV -- the country's premiere Christian television station. Their goal is to reach the country's more than four million people with the gospel.

"The mission really is about just communicating the reality of the relationship that every person can have with God who loves them, Jesus who loves them," said John Fabrin, chief executive of Shine TV. "We want to encourage those who are Christians and those who are not yet Christians with the Good News."

According to the census, more than 50 percent of New Zealanders say they are Christians-- and not surprisingly. Christian roots go deep in the south pacific nation.

Anglican missionaries first brought the gospel to New Zealand in the early 1800s where it spread rapidly among the native Maori people.

"We're coming up to our bicentenary of the arrival of the Gospel in New Zealand and the Maori people took on board the Christian faith in huge numbers after that first visitation," said Glyn Carpenter of the New Zealand Vision Network.

Today, about 20 percent of New Zealanders say they attend church regularly, but Carpenter says the country's spiritual compass is off kilter.

"God's heart for New Zealand is like that for other nations that we worship Him," he said. "We have slipped away from the core of the Gospel, lack of care for the needy, the lack of faith in the one true God - when people move away from God the people perish."

But Shine TV is doing their part to keep the message of Christ alive and relevant in New Zealand. In addition to airing numerous Christian programs, the network produces its own weekly public affairs show called "N-Zone." News director Allan Lee hosts the program along with news and sports presenter Brooke Dobson .

"What we're doing that nobody else is doing in New Zealand, is we can tell them stories about what God is doing, what God is doing here, what God is doing overseas," he said. "There are great stories out there. Fantastic stories that make me realize that God is working every minute of the day and we can tell those stories and that's the real excitement."

Among its various Christian programming, Shine TV also airs the 700 Club and Christian World News to New Zealanders.

"(It's) just marvelous to have that connect with Christian World News and CBN," Fabrin said. "(We) feel like we're part of this family together."

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