

‘You walk away each day feeling content’

Melissa Petersen

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Introduction

Three and a half years ago I decided to leave the beautiful land ‘Down Under’ to experience the ‘Land of the Long White Cloud’, otherwise known as New Zealand. I had previously visited the beautiful South Island (for prac-teaching) and had fallen in love with the country, but my appointment was to the North Island and I had no idea what to expect as I headed to Napier.

I arrived in New Zealand together with Hayden, my husband of only two days. We’d bought a van from friends before arriving and honeymooned around New Zealand for a couple of weeks, before heading to Napier. When we arrived, flats were in short supply. So we lived in our van for awhile waiting for God to provide. And He did. A landlord chose us above many other prospective tenants because I was working in a Christian school. God has provided many times since. After only six months our van broke down beyond repair. You can imagine our surprise when a Christian teacher I’d met from another school came around with her husband and said, ‘We’ve been impressed to give you guys a car, as we have two’. So, we now have a 1995 Nissan Pulsar that God provided. He has also helped us find a home to purchase and has answered so many other prayers.

It’s not easy leaving your comfort zone and venturing into a job you’ve never done before, and in another country. But there’s also nothing more wonderful than watching God take you under his wing and show you his loving care and protection. Over the years God has opened my eyes and helped me see that teaching is not just a job; it’s an opportunity to share Jesus with His precious little children. When you go into class with that outlook you walk away each day feeling content with what your children are learning. That’s the beauty of teaching in an Adventist school.

If you haven’t guessed already, my passion is for God and for seeing his children receive the best Christian education they possibly can. When I go to school each day I want to know that my children are going to enjoy learning about Jesus and will want to

know Him more and more. I like to teach my Bible lessons in an exciting place that the students will enjoy; a place that provides for a special time which they can spend with their Heavenly Father. This year that place is our ‘Prayer Castle’. We all go inside for worship each morning. The castle pulls out from the wall for worship time and is then pushed back up against the wall so we can carry on with other learning activities of the day. The children know that place is special, and more importantly they are learning that our time with God is special.

The last few years have been a huge learning curve for me. I have been blessed with real Christ-like people who have stood beside me and uplifted me as a teacher, even when I felt I was making some mistakes. I’ve learned that if you’re willing to let God use you, He will truly bless you and change your life forever. In turn, you’ll change the lives of those you teach, and many more. I’m learning and experiencing the truth of Proverbs 3:5-6:

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make your paths straight. **TEACH**

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1 Mrs Petersen and her class.

[Photography: Petersen collection]

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