

# Northwest FOCUS

God at Work Through Northwest Independent Church Extension

SEPTEMBER 2024



## G.R.O.W. — For 50 Years!

When you enter Family Bible Church in Oak Harbor, WA, your eyes are immediately drawn to the words on the wall, the acronym GROW, which describes the emphasis of the church since its beginning in 1974! G-Grace, R-Relationships, O-Obedience, W-Witness.



A survey taken by NICE in 1972 of rapidly growing cities in the Pacific Northwest revealed that Oak Harbor had grown nearly 800% in the previous 10 years. As a result, individuals and churches throughout the Northwest were urged

to pray for the planting of a Bible church in Oak Harbor. God answered these prayers by directing Vince and Brenda Ortiz to join NICE as Church Planters, and to move to the city of Oak Harbor, trusting God for a new church to be planted.



The Ortiz family

Numerous contacts were made with City officials, school leaders, business owners, and people young and old concerning the new church – to be known as Family Bible Church. A local Junior High School was rented and 13 people came for the first service! Focusing on God’s marvelous grace and an interest to build relationships with the people attending, the church began to grow!

Since the town of Oak Harbor has a large presence of military personnel, the church has used many avenues of contact to minister to them. However, at times it was discouraging to serve these military families for a few years, and then to see them deployed to other parts of the world. That is, it was discouraging until the church recognized that God had given them the privilege to reach these men and women with the Gospel, to disciple them to serve their Lord, and then to allow the government to send them

throughout the world as missionaries! One of the founding members of the church commented, *"As I think about all that God has done through the ministry of Family Bible Church, I especially praise God for the good biblical teaching and the reputation the church has on Whidbey Island and with the military."*

During the past 50 years the believers of Family Bible Church have responded in obedience to the Word of God to honor Christ by life and service, and to impact the community and the world through their witness of the Gospel.

Today the church has ministries for men, women, children, youth, families, seniors, and the military. There have been several building projects undertaken in order to facilitate the Church’s growth. The mission outreach has been a priority through the years, not only in the support currently of 31 Global Partners (16 of these having been commissioned by the Church), but also in numerous mission trips to countries around the world – all for the glory of God!

Just recently, a celebration of 50 years of God’s faithfulness in blessing the ministry of Family Bible Church was held. Both Roy Sprague and Bob and Katherine Rodgers participated in this day of rejoicing, as well as Vince and Brenda Ortiz, the founding Pastor. Your prayers and support of NICE are a vital part of the on-going work of reaching people for Christ through the planting and establishing of churches. Without question, every new church planted is another source of world-wide outreach of the Gospel!



**So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase.** I Corinthians 3:7